



Welcome to the City of Prosser

City Administrator Position Open - Apply by November 23, 2015



Population: 5,845 (2015 Estimate)

Tucked away in Washington's Yakima Valley is a small town with a big reputation. With the Rattlesnake Hills to the north, the Horse Heaven Hills to the south, and the Yakima River in the center, the scenery is captivating and provides wonderful opportunities for outdoor recreation such as fishing, boating and other water activities. It is a welcoming community known for being the real life Mayberry, USA, as well as the birthplace of Washington's wine industry.

Welcome to Prosser, Washington! Picturesque scenes abound from the City's Historic Downtown to the outskirts of town where rows upon rows of grape vines stretch into the surrounding hills. Listed as one of the "10 Historic Towns in Washington That Will Transport You To The Past," Prosser's historic downtown showcases its past along with attractive offices, stores and services. It is a vibrant place that retains the small town feel that residents and visitors appreciate.

Best known for its agriculture (wheat, cherries, apples and grapes, among other crops), Prosser boasts over 30 wineries and is the destination for many tourists coming from the Northwest and beyond. It also offers the Walter Clore Wine and Culinary Center

which is named after the researcher who developed the local varieties of grapes. The Center promotes Washington State agriculture by engaging visitors to learn, experience and appreciate the quality and diversity of Washington's wine and food products.

While Prosser is a small town, it thinks big. It is a proactive community where residents carry an inordinate amount of community spirit and pride. It is an open-minded place where residents seek new ideas and opportunities to improve their community. It is also a friendly place that has friendly people! Neighbors know their neighbors and support each other. Having such a caring and in-the-know community is one of the many reasons Prosser is listed as one of the 40 Safest Cities in WA. The City was recently recognized as one of the 100 best communities for youth by America's Promise Alliance two years in a row.

There is always something to do in Prosser. The City offers an active community theater, an emerging music scene and traditional events with the town's annual activities, such as:

- Red Wine & Chocolate festival (*February*)
- Discover Prosser and the Opening Day of Prosser Farmer's Market (*May*)
- Bill's Berry Farm Cherry Festival & Scottish Festival & Highland Games (*June*)
- Old-Fashioned 4th of July Celebration, Bill's Berry Farm Berry Daze Festival & Peach Festival (*July*)
- Prosser Wine and Food Festival (*August*)
- Prosser State Day Celebration and The Great Prosser Balloon Rally (*September*)
- Veterans Day Parade and Christmas Festival at Depot Square (*November*)
- Bill's Berry Farm – Christmas Trees on the Farm (*December*)

If you are in the mood for outdoor adventure, the area has much to offer and at least 300 days of sunshine to enjoy the activities! Enjoy a round of golf at one of the area's courses, put on your hiking shoes and explore miles of trails, go hunting for a variety of game, take your boat out on the

Yakima River for fishing or go camping along its shores. In the winter an occasional snow occurs, but it rarely stays and there are places to enjoy winter sports in the nearby mountains.

If and when you are ready to venture outside the Yakima Valley and experience the hustle and bustle of bigger cities that you have missed while being in this beautiful valley, the Tri-Cities are forty minutes away and it is about a 3 hour drive to Spokane, Seattle or Portland (OR).

Housing is very reasonably priced in Prosser. The mean home price is \$180,000 and a very nice, newish home with three bedrooms and two baths can be purchased for \$200,000 to \$250,000. Area schools are excellent with outstanding teachers and good facilities.

The high school football team is widely recognized for its excellence and is a source of community pride. It currently sports a 7-1 record. The City has excellent parks (including an aquatic center) and an outstanding, recently constructed Boys & Girls Club with a waiting list. The Club serves more than 80 youth each day during the school year and 150 during the summer.

All in all, Prosser is an outstanding community. It is a tranquil oasis of green with its peaceful river meandering through the quiet hills – a clean, attractive place characterized by tree-lined residential streets, old-fashioned light poles, cobbled sidewalks and friends lingering to talk for just a little longer. It is indeed a great place to visit or call home. If you are a high caliber individual and want to be its City Administrator for the next ten or so years, please update your resume and apply.

History

One of the area's early settlers was Colonel William F. Prosser, special agent for the Department of the Interior. He surveyed the area in 1879 and filed a land claim in 1882. Three years later, he filed the town plat and Prosser, WA, was born.



It appeared anything could grow in the rich volcanic soil as long as there was enough water. It started with dry land wheat but it became apparent over time that orchard crops were the most profitable. Several entities built irrigation systems and soon almost 20,000 acres had water. Numerous real estate offices, banks, and mercantile establishments opened to serve the growing number of farmers.

The late 1800s brought the Northern Pacific railway and in 1907 a power plant was built on the Yakima River that began delivering electricity. In that same year, the first hospital arrived. In 1910, the city received a new library, courtesy of Andrew Carnegie. At approximately the same time the City installed a water system and reservoir, and several downtown streets were paved. A cannery opened in 1912.

In 1917 Prosser was selected as the site of the then Washington State College's (now WSU) experimental agricultural station (now called the Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center). Its purpose was to focus on agriculture and irrigation.

In mid-1960s, farmers started pumping water from Columbia River more than 10 miles south to water the high plateau. Orchardists started growing new varieties of cherries developed at the Research Center: the Chinook and the Rainier.

Today Prosser's economy still revolves mainly around agriculture. Grapes, cherries, and wines get most of the attention, but dry land wheat is still produced in large quantities.

Demographics

See Table 1 on page 4 for Prosser Demographics.



Table I: Prosser Demographics

2015 Estimated Population: 5,845			
Distribution by Race		Distribution by Age	
Caucasian	76%	0 to 20	34%
Asian	2%	20 to 40	25%
African American	1%	40 to 60	24%
Native American	1%	60 to 80	12%
Some Other Race	20%	Over 80	5%

Hispanics (of all races) compose 37% of the population, although the Census Bureau believes many of those claiming some other race are Hispanics.

Educational Achievement (over age 25)		Median Age	
Highschool or Higher	77.5%	Prosser	32.8
Bachelors Degree or Higher	16.2%	U.S.	37.2

Source: U.S. Census

Climate

Expect a lot of sunshine each year in Prosser – in fact, almost 300 days of golden rays! Pack sunglasses and skip the umbrella for this semi-arid climate, which closely resembles the climate and soil conditions of the vineyards in France. The highest temperatures tend to hit in July and August when it is not uncommon to have several consecutive days over 100 degrees, and the lowest average temperature is 25.1 degrees in January. The area does not receive a great deal of precipitation, even in the winter months when it snows it is usually a small dusting which usually melts quickly. See Table II for more details. All in all, the climate is ideal for outdoor recreation and activities during all of the four seasons.

Table II: Climate Data for Prosser, Washington

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average High °F	41	48	58	66	75	82	89	90	80	68	51	41
Average Low °F	25	29	34	39	45	51	55	54	47	38	32	26
Precipitation Inches	0.96	0.7	0.67	2.7	3.1	0.56	0.35	0.48	0.65	1.03	1.18	2.8

Source: NOAA (normals, 1971-2000)



Geography

Prosser is located in southeastern Washington State and is the Benton County seat. It is situated in the foothills on the eastern end of the Lower Yakima Valley and sits at 665 feet above sea level. The Yakima River runs through the quaint little town. While not very large - the total area of the city is 4.53 square miles - it is not a small sleepy town. Rather it is a very energetic town packed into a small area! The metropolitan cities of Seattle, Portland and Spokane are a short 3 hour drive, and the Tri-Cities are a 1 hour drive.

Commerce

Prosser’s economy is based on agriculture. As noted, in addition to the fruit orchards and fruit packing plants, Prosser is an important center of wine making and one of the Northwest’s premiere getaway spots. Over 50,000

Table III: Principal Area Employers

Employer	FieldE	Employees
Zirkle Fruit	Agricultural Products	380
Prosser School District	Education	316
Prosser Memorial Hospital	Healthcare	300
Columbia Crest Winery	Vinter	291
WSI / IAREC	Research	280
Benton County Government	Government	144
Tree Top Inc.	Agricultural Products	132
Milne Fruit	Agricultural Products	120
Benton Rural Electric	Utility	54
City of Prosser	Government	50

visitors annually experience the areas nearly 40 wineries, as well as take advantage of the area’s unique events.

While the area’s focus is on agriculture, the region offers a wide variety of employment opportunities. See Table III for the area’s principal employers.

What makes Prosser the perfect place to choose to start, expand or relocate a business? It has a strong labor force. Additionally, a number of interstate highways pass through or near the City. Its utility rates fall well below the national average and affordable land is available for business use.

Government

The City of Prosser is about "Providing dependable service to a safe, sustainable community of businesses, families, and neighbors with integrity, accountability and stewardship." It wants to be recognized as an organization that strives, "to be a team of responsible employees serving our diverse community with a professional and compassionate approach."

The City operates under a strong Mayor form of government with a Mayor and seven elected Council

Members. They serve staggered four year terms with elections in November of odd numbered years and Council Members are generally long tenured. This November two incumbents are unopposed. The current Mayor’s term ends December 31st and he is retiring. His replacement will be a current Council Member/Mayor Pro Tem. As a result, the Council will have three new faces. The members have the best interests of the City at heart, are knowledgeable and work well together. Discussions can be lively but rarely are the votes 4 to 3 or even 5 to 2. The City Administrator has been key in developing consensus. While members take their votes seriously, once the vote is over they move on. It is anticipated that this dynamic will not change after January 1st when the new

Council takes office. The Council Members all have a great deal of respect for the City staff. At the same time, there is a great camaraderie among the staff.

Prosser provides most of the typical city services including: Animal Control, Building, Planning, Police, Public Works (including garbage services, irrigation, parks and facilities maintenance, streets, domestic water supply, and wastewater system) and Recreation. The City’s 2015 General Fund Budget is \$4.8 million and its total budget with proprietary funds is almost \$20 million. The City has approximately 42 full time employee equivalents and 8 part time equivalents. 29% of the employees are in the Police Department, 28% in Water, Wastewater and Irrigation, and 10% at the City’s aquatic center. The remaining employees are distributed among the other departments with no other single department having more than 5% of the employees. Fire / Rescue Services are provided by an independent special district–West Benton Fire & Rescue.

The City has three unions. The Teamsters represent the Police and Public Works employees while the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) represents the clerical and wastewater staffs. The Police contract expires on December 31, 2015 and is currently

in negotiation. The Public Works contract expires on December 31, 2016 as does the contract with the OPEIU. Negotiations between the parties tend to be respectful.

The Challenges

Prosser is very sound financially. Still the City could use more resources to address its issues. The roads, in particular, have been neglected and need work. The City has a Transportation Benefit District that raises \$85,000 annually for roads which is not nearly enough money to rehabilitate the streets that are in disrepair. The City is considering a bond issue but no decisions have been made.

Another way to address the resource issue is economic development. Land is available and the opportunity exists. The City needs more housing (particularly in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range) and the Prosser Economic Development Association (PEDA) is working diligently to bring that to pass. Opportunities also exist on the commercial/industrial side. The Port of Benton (which plays a key role in economic development) has land and wants to make it available to businesses. Another possibility is the ConAgra potato processing plant that closed in 2011. Finding a buyer who would use the facility would add both jobs and property tax revenues.

Finally the City hopes to continue to improve its relations with both public and private partners. As noted above, PEDA and the Port are two agencies the City works with but it also wants to continue to improve its working relationship with the County, the School District, the hospital, and the Agricultural Research Station.

The Ideal Candidate

The City is looking for a highly motivated individual who is both a great manager and an outstanding leader, someone who works to build teams and strives to be part of the solution. The ideal candidate will understand he/she works directly for the Mayor but serves as an advisor to all the elected officials and, in a sense, a junior partner. The new City Administrator will be visionary but practical.

He/she will work hard to find and implement new ideas to move the City forward, while at the same time protecting the small town character of the community.

The ideal candidate will be an outstanding communicator who is comfortable speaking to individuals from all walks of life. He/she will be able to explain complex concepts in layman's terms. The next Administrator will lead by example and excellent customer service will be deeply engrained in the individual's management philosophy.

The elected officials want someone who is passionate about the job and will immerse him/herself in the community. The individual will participate not because it is part of the job, but because he/she truly wants to help make Prosser their home and a better community! He/she will build good relationships with other public entities and continue to work well with the City's community partners.

The person will be a mentor and motivator - leading staff instead of driving from behind - someone who will challenge everyone to excel. The individual will be accessible so that people will feel their ideas are being heard and taken seriously. He/she will encourage creativity and allow the staff to take reasonable risks.

The Administrator will have high expectations, give an assignment, help set the goal and provide the needed resources to accomplish the task. He/she will then get out of the way and let the staff make it happen. Accountability will be important - the individual will expect tasks to be completed and deadlines to be met. He/she will not be a micromanager but expect to be informed. The individual will be relatively laidback and able to diffuse potentially difficult situations. The ideal candidate will also be compassionate and have a sense of humor. Further, he/she will understand the importance of balancing one's personal and profession life.

Good moral and ethical values are a must, as well as a strong work ethic. The individual will show a high level of commitment to the city and job. The ideal candidate will be someone that exhibits good common sense and



thinks strategically. He/she will think and go outside the box to get things accomplished. The individual will be technologically savvy and very analytical. He/she will always seek ways to make city operations more efficient and effective.

The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated track record of achievement and success. He/she will be knowledgeable of municipal finance, grants, intergovernmental relations and public/private partnerships. The individual will have at least ten years of increasingly more responsible experience in local government and four years' experience as a city administrator or assistant. A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, with a major in administration, management or a related field, is highly desirable.

Finally, the next City Administrator will recognize Prosser for the jewel it is and plan to stay a minimum of five years. The City is willing to make a commitment to the right person and expects the individual to make a commitment to it.

Compensation

The salary range is \$90,000 to \$115,000. The City hopes to pay in the lower half of the range but salary will depend on qualifications and experience. Benefits are excellent. The City Administrator will be part of the Washington Public Employees Retirement System unless he/she chooses to opt out. The City is considering a performance based salary—that is, one partially based on meeting goals and a 360 degree evaluation.

Recent City Administrators

Recent full-time City Administrators have used Prosser as a stepping stone to the next job. The



City sincerely hopes to find someone who will treasure Prosser for the dynamic, energetic and vibrant community that it is and that the person will stay a minimum of five years and preferably ten.

Residency

The City Administrator is required to live within City limits.

How to Apply

E-mail your resume and cover letter to Recruit34@cb-asso.com by November 23rd. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to John Darrington at (509) 823-5138 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

The Screening Process

Applications will be screened between November 24th and December 23rd. Finalists will be interviewed on January 7th and 8th. A selection will be made shortly thereafter.

Additional Important Information

The City of Prosser is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages women, minorities and veterans to apply. Additional information about the City can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.prosserchamber.org/>

<http://cityofprosser.com/>

<http://www.tourprosser.com/>

<http://www.americaspromise.org/prosser-washington>

<http://www.onlyinyourstate.com/washington/historic-towns-wa/>

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

