



# South Sound 911

If you are looking for an incredible opportunity to mold and shape a world-class organization from the ground up, this is the job for you. You will be building South Sound 911 from its inception leading a dynamic team to create a public safety communications agency that will serve Washington State's second largest county. This job is not for the faint of heart but for an accomplishment-driven, proactive, experienced and professional leader who will go all out to make this agency world-class. You must hit the ground running, you must have the courage to put it all out there and the credentials to back it up!

Located in the Pacific Northwest at the south end of Puget Sound and halfway between Seattle and Olympia, Pierce County is an unpretentious place. It reflects its heritage as the western terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad and as a deep-water port. It retains its hometown feel and the people are friendly,

progressive and down to earth. They take pride in their community and want the best for it. Newcomers are readily accepted and can have an impact even though they are not "from here." It is big enough to have many of the amenities of a large metropolitan area yet small enough to retain a neighborly, small town atmosphere.

If you like the outdoors, Pierce County is a paradise – hiking, cycling, fishing, hunting, boating, diving, skiing and many other outdoor activities are within easy reach. Start with Tacoma's Point Defiance Park (with 702 acres, it is the second largest urban park in the United States) and use its walking trails. Or go east to Mount Rainier for some serious outdoor recreation. Only 80 miles in the other direction, is the Pacific Ocean. For sport enthusiasts, Pierce County has a number of professional sports teams such as the Tacoma Rainiers (the Triple A affiliate of the Seattle Mariners). The Seattle teams are just to the north.

The area also has an active creative arts community where cultural opportunities abound. There is the Museum of Glass, the Tacoma Art Museum, the Washington State History Museum and the new LeMay-America's Car Museum (one of the world's largest automobile museums). Performing arts venues and groups include, among others, the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts (home to the Pantages, the Rialto and the Theater on the Square), Dance Theater Northwest, Lakewood Playhouse, Tacoma Opera, Tacoma Symphony Orchestra, Northwest Sinfionetta, Tacoma City Ballet, Tacoma Concert Band, Tacoma Philharmonic, Tacoma Youth Symphony, Theatre Northwest, and Puget Sound Revels.

In addition to its wonderful people, the County's quality of life is what makes it special. The area is naturally beautiful, traffic is minimal and virtually everything you want and/or need is readily accessible. Housing is priced quite reasonable, particularly when compared to Seattle and other cities to the north. With outstanding public schools throughout the County, a child can get an excellent education. Or, if you prefer, the County is home to a number of outstanding private schools. The area also hosts several junior colleges, colleges and universities. The most notable are the University of Puget Sound and the University of Washington at Tacoma (UW-T). It should be noted that the prospects for UW-T are significant as the University's principal campus in Seattle has no room for expansion. Finally, the medical facilities are outstanding. For travelers, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is just up the road.

In other words, Pierce County is a major player in its own right and a great place to live, work and play. And for a quick get-away, Portland, OR, is two hours south and the Canadian cities of Vancouver and Victoria are about three hours north.

## History

The known history of the region begins with the Puyallup Indian Tribe. In their aboriginal language the Tribe was known as the S'Puyalupubsh, meaning "generous and welcoming behavior to all people (friends and strangers) who enter our lands." Tribal members lived off the land for thousands of years and it provided for all their needs.





In 1792, as part of an expedition led by Captain George Vancouver, Lt. Peter Puget explored the area and named many of the local sites. The Hudson Bay Company established a trading post in the area in the early 1830s. At the time, approximately 2,000 members of the Puyallup Tribe lived in the area and welcomed new settlers until they realized they were being crowded out. In 1854, the Medicine Creek Treaty was signed. The Tribe ceded most of its territory but reserved certain lands and rights — including fishing rights. Over the next 32 years the boundaries of the reservation were renegotiated and eventually it included 28.5 square miles.

Pierce County was formed in 1852 and the Northern Pacific Railroad (NP) was awarded a land grant to construct a rail line from Lake Superior to Puget Sound. In 1873 NP announced its terminus would be on Commencement Bay and named its city “Tacoma”, after the Puyallups’ mountain Tacobet. The transcontinental rail link was completed in 1887. With it, the area became a thriving commercial center. The population grew from 1,098 in 1880 to 36,006 in 1890.

The discovery of gold in the Klondike in 1898 led to Seattle eclipsing Pierce County. As time passed, the County developed around its port and the timber industry. It became the home to the Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the largest pulp and paper companies in the world.

The area (and Tacoma in particular) experienced a decline through much of the 20th century. This picture began to change around 1990 when Tacoma began its renaissance. (See Table 1 for historic population growth.)

### Commerce

The County is the home of several international companies including staffing company TrueBlue Inc. (formerly Labor Ready), Simpson Tacoma Kraft (a lumber and pulp firm) and the food companies Roman Meal and Brown and Haley. The County is also known as a business incubator in the sense that Weyerhaeuser, Baskin and Robbins, Hill Haven, Nalley Food and Russell Investments all began business there before moving their headquarters to other locations.

Table I: Historic Populations

Year	Population	Change
1860	1,115	—
1870	1,409	26%
1880	3,319	136%
1890	50,940	136%
1900	55,515	9%
1910	120,812	118%
1920	144,127	19%
1930	163,842	14%
1940	182,081	11%
1950	275,876	52%
1960	321,590	17%
1970	411,027	28%
1980	485,643	18%
1990	586,203	21%
2000	700,0820	20%
2010	795,225	14%

Source: U.S. Census

As can be seen from the Table 2 on page 4, the County also has a significant federal and healthcare presence.

### Geography

Pierce County covers a little over 1,800 square miles and is located 30 miles south of Seattle and 30 miles north of Olympia. The most densely populated areas are near the Puget Sound and are located on a low, flat area adjacent to the Sound. Mount Rainer is located in the eastern portion of the County and at 14,410 feet is highest point in the state.

### Climate

The County has four distinct seasons and the climate is relatively mild in its western area where the vast

Table II: Principal Pierce County Employers

Rank	Employer	Staff
1	Federal Government	56,899
2	Local Government	33,774
3	Multicare Health System	6,756
4	Franciscan Health System	5,507
5	Emerald Queen Casino	2,230
6	Boeing	1,450
7	Wal-Mart	1,447
8	Fred Meyer Stores	1,301
9	Safeway Stores, Inc.	1,123
10	Costco	1,115

Source: Pierce County 2011

majority of the population resides. In that area, the average summer temperatures range from 52° to 77° Fahrenheit and in the winter range from 35° to 47° Fahrenheit, as seen in Table 3.

On average the western County experiences 201 cloudy days a year and partly cloudy another 93 days. The area's reputation for rainy days comes from the frequency and not the total accumulated rainfall. In fact, its annual average rainfall is approximately 37 inches, less rain than what is received in New York, Atlanta, or Houston. Snow is relatively infrequent.

## Demographics

Pierce County is the second largest county in Washington State in terms of population and the 70th largest in the United States. Overall, the age distribution (see Table IV) is similar to that of

the United States as a whole. For example, the median age in Pierce County is 35.6 versus 35.3 for the United States as a whole. See Table 4 on page 5.

In terms of racial composition, the County is 77% White, 7% African American, 5% Asian and 1% American Indian. The remaining 10% are some other race or two or more races. Hispanics (of all races) make up 9% of the population. The per capita income was estimated to be \$24,400 and the median household income was \$57,900. Almost 12% of the population lives below the poverty level. Of those over 25 years of age, almost 90% of the County's population graduated from high school and 23% had a Bachelor's degree or higher.

## The Agency

South Sound 911 (SS911) was created by an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) to provide public safety communications services to the County. The founding members are: Pierce County, the City of Tacoma, the City of Lakewood and Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 3 (West Pierce Fire & Rescue). The City of Fife subsequently joined as a member agency. Once it is fully up and running, it will serve as the communications center for 99% of the fire/rescue service calls in Pierce County, WA, and over 90% of the local law enforcement calls. It is anticipated that it will take three years to complete the transition and integration of the agency's components.

Table II: Climate Data for Western Pierce County

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average High °F	47	50	55	60	66	71	76	77	71	61	52	47	61
Average Low °F	35	36	39	42	47	52	55	55	51	45	40	35	44
Precipitation in Inches	5.38	4.44	4.18	2.87	2.01	1.58	0.86	0.83	1.42	3.39	6.10	5.89	38.95

Source: Weather.com

Table IV: Population by Age Group

Age Group	Percent
Under 5	6.9%
5 to 15	13.8%
15 to 25	14.6%
25 to 35	13.8%
35 to 45	14.3%
45 to 55	15.0%
55 to 65	10.9%
65 to 75	5.8%
75 to 85	3.5%
85 +	1.4%

  

Median Age	35.6
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Source: U.S. 2010 Census

Policy direction is provided by a Policy Board (composed of elected officials from the member agencies) and operational direction is provided by the Combined Operations Board or COB (comprised of representatives from law enforcement and fire service agencies). The latter is broken into two committees: the Law Enforcement Committee (made up of Pierce County Sheriff's designee, Tacoma Police Chief, Lakewood Police Chief, Fife Police Chief and one law enforcement representative for each jurisdiction that joins) and the Fire Services Committee (comprised of the designees of the Tacoma Fire Chief and the West Pierce Fire & Rescue Chief). Each committee has one vote in the decision making process and if the COB cannot reach consensus, the deciding vote will be cast by the Policy Board. The chair of the COB rotates between the two committees. During the

even years the COB Chair is from the Fire Services Committee and on the odd years it is from the Law Enforcement Committee.

The COB operates under the authority of the Policy Board. The SS911 Executive Director will report directly to the Combined Operations Board through its Chair. The COB recommends appointment of the Executive Director subject to confirmation by the Policy Board. Once confirmed, the Executive Director's work and annual performance appraisal is supervised by the COB Chair.

The SS911 Executive Director will direct the agency's day to day operations. That will consist of the law enforcement and fire services Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) and communications center functions. He/she will be responsible for administration of the agency, preparation and presentation of an annual budget, handling agency personnel, dispatching, records, communications security and other communications center functions in conformance with the policies adopted by the COB. The Executive Director will work with the COB in development of budget programs and objectives, proposed fees and assessments and the required financial participation of member and non-member agencies.

Funding will be provided through a voter approved 1/10th of 1 percent sales and use tax and a 20 cent per-line 9-1-1 fee. The SS911 budget will be submitted to the Policy Board for approval. The agency does an annual budget and it is expected to be approximately \$34 million for 2013. Overall, the agency will have approximately 210 employees when the transition is complete.

## Challenges and Issues

The first and foremost challenge will be to put a face on the agency and to establish personal credibility. That means getting to know every Mayor, City Council, Fire Chief, Police Chief and agency executive in the County almost immediately. The point is to foster collaborative relationships among all the participating agencies at multiple levels. You must have the skill set to pull it off and the track record in your career of doing just that. At the same time, the new Executive Director will need to begin integrating all the existing pieces and creating a smooth functioning, highly efficient communications agency. The vision and mission will need to be developed/refined. Existing policies and procedures will need to be reviewed and updated (or in some cases, written) to fit the newly formed agency.

The Executive Director will work with an inspiring and motivated group of elected officials and committed police and fire professionals



seeking to improve the delivery of public safety services in Pierce County. The selected candidate will grow and shape the organization from the ground up and will set the stage for public safety communications for years to come. The effort will also involve building a cohesive and effective operational team. Multiple bargaining units will need to be brought together in one agency. Labor relations and building a strong base with unions will be a key.

It is also important to remember that the agency is funded by a voter approved tax and it will be important that the agency project a positive and effective image immediately. Beyond substance, branding and public relations will be other keys. The agency needs to do significant outreach to reaffirm to the public that it made the right decision.

Other issues include interoperability (in radio communications, dispatch and record keeping) that presently impedes the seamless delivery of public safety services between the 29 different South Sound 911 law enforcement and fire services agencies operating in the County. During emergency situations, communications among and between these agencies requires more time than it should. Antiquated communications and radio systems need updating. FCC banding deadlines were also a motivating factor in the forming of the agency. It should be noted that the contract for upgrading the communications system has already been awarded and the system it expected to be completed in late 2014. Presently, six PSAPs exist and these facilities are largely subpar. A consultant has been selected to determine the best approach to replacing those PSAPs. Redundancy in emergency communications gear is important. Two separate facilities (one for law enforcement and one for fire) are one possibility. Another would be co-located in the same building. Finally, in the future radio interoperability between adjacent King and Snohomish Counties is also an issue to be addressed.



## The Ideal Candidate

This position is an incredible opportunity for the right individual—an energetic and seasoned leader and manager, someone who might view this as the capstone of a public administration career. Ten months ago, SS911 was just an idea. Now it is a reality, but one that is by no means fully fleshed out. We need someone with great vision and creativity to seize the moment, capture the opportunities, and be the leader who will build South Sound into a world class organization.

The ideal candidate will build consensus and teams while thinking collaboratively. At the same time the individual will be a change agent and someone one who can visualize and show others the future possibilities. He/she will understand both policy and operations as well as his/her role in each.

The selected candidate will be a manager who will delegate specialized details to technical colleagues, then hold them accountable for results. He/she will not be just a great communicator, (someone who will relate well to elected officials, city managers, agency personnel, partners, non-SS911 cities and towns in Pierce County, civic leaders, the media, and the public), but a great listener and someone people feel instantly comfortable around. As such, the individual will enjoy interacting and working in a public safety environment as well as with people from all walks of life and economic stratum. He/she will be an outstanding judge of talent in addition to being a great teacher and mentor. The individual will also recognize the importance of strong, positive relationships with union leaders and members and will work diligently to build and maintain them. Knowledge and experience in negotiating labor contracts under Washington labor law is an important plus.

As intergovernmental relations will be critical, the ideal candidate will have a proven track record of fostering strong relationships with multiple and varying constituencies, such as elected officials, city managers, police and fire administrators, and members of the community, while also being

someone who is comfortable serving as the face of the agency.

The position requires graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major course work in public administration, business administration or related field and five years of progressively responsible experience in a senior management or an administrative capacity.

Ability to successfully complete a background investigation; which may include psychological assessment, polygraph testing and applicable Federal, State and local investigation standards required of the position.

## Compensation

The starting salary range is \$175,000 to \$205,000. Benefits are excellent.

## Residency

Residency in the County is not required but is expected.

## Confidentiality

Candidate names will not be released without the candidates' permission. However, it is expected that, when South Sound 911 selects finalists, their names will be released to the public.

## How to Apply

E-mail your resume to [RecruitTwo@cb-asso.com](mailto:RecruitTwo@cb-asso.com) by November 2, 2012. Faxed or hard copy applications will not be considered. Please direct all of your questions to John Darrington at (509) 619-0880 or (509) 823-5138 or Colin Baenziger at (561) 707-3537.

## The Process

Applicants will be screened between November 2nd and December 10th. Finalists will be interviewed on December 13th and 14th with a selection shortly thereafter.



## Other Important Information

South Sound 911 is an Equal Opportunity Employer and values diversity at all levels of its workforce. It encourages minorities and women to apply.

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES  
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Executive Director