

# City Manager

## New Smyrna Beach, FL

(Population 23,000)

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Located on Florida's Atlantic Coast, New Smyrna Beach (NSB) is one of the oldest European settlements in Florida and has a rich history. Ponce de Leon landed here in 1513 searching for the Fountain of Youth. Scottish Dr. Andrew Turnbull established the first British colony in 1768 and only St. Augustine and Pensacola are recognized as older. Interestingly, some feel that the ruins in Old Fort Park may be evidence of an early Spanish habitation which could make it older than St. Augustine. In 1867, the population was only 150. The advent of Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway in 1892 provided some impetus for growth. At the time, the economy was based on citrus, commercial fishing and tourism. In the 1920s, NSB's river islands and mangroves were a popular hideout for rumrunners from the Bahamas.

Today NSB is a bustling tourist town covering 38 square miles and with approximately 23,000 permanent residents. 55 miles northeast of Orlando and 14 miles south of Daytona Beach, NSB was, until the mid 1990's one of Florida's undiscovered treasures. Now it is well known but has retained its character, charm and small town atmosphere. Its residents are friendly, and I do want to emphasize friendly. They go out of their way to help you. While about a third of the population is over 65, the community does maintain a good demographic balance between the young and the mature. NSB is a great place to raise children. In fact, it is the kind of place that the children grow up in, go off to school and yearn to come back to. One of the challenges for the new city manager is to enhance the business and commercial sector that so it will provide a larger base of well paying jobs.

The City is a haven for sports and cultural events. With 13 miles of white sand, New Smyrna Beach, is consistently voted one of the "Best Beaches". It also has excellent backwater and offshore fishing and golf. Just south of New Smyrna lies the Canaveral National Seashore, offering excellent swimming, bird watching, hiking and more. Surfing is also a popular sport. Those that fish at Mosquito Lagoon have set international records with giant redfish catches. Deep-sea charters leave New Smyrna Beach daily, giving offshore fishers an easy way to wet a line in the Atlantic Ocean. Named one of "America's Top Small Cities for The Arts," New Smyrna is home to the Atlantic Center for the Arts, an artists-in-residence community and educational facility, the Harris House, the Little Theatre, Artist Workshop and Arts on Douglas. Frequent arts shows featuring visual and performing arts take place throughout the year. Many historical and cultural sites also make New Smyrna Beach noteworthy. The Smyrnea Settlement at Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve and New Smyrna Sugar Mill Ruins, the Eldora House at Canaveral National Seashore and the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse are just some examples. And the New Smyrna Beach Museum of History is a "don't miss" attraction.

If you like to travel, Orlando International Airport is a little over an hour away to the southeast and Jacksonville International is two hours to the north. Daytona Beach International Airport is approximately 20 minutes away. Up and coming Orlando Sanford International is 45 minutes

away as well. You can get to Disney World, Universal Studios and the other Central Florida attractions in about 90 minutes.

The schools are good in NSB and the residents are proud of them. The high school is unusual in that it serves primarily NSB and is, in some ways, a community center. Long time residents refer to themselves as barracudas (the school mascot). It should also be noted that the County has five colleges within its boundaries: University of Central Florida, Daytona State College, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, Bethune Cookman University, and Stetson University.

Three newspapers cover NSB and the City recently unveiled its new website, [www.cityofnsb.com](http://www.cityofnsb.com).

## **Government**

Incorporated in 1887, the City follows the Commission-Manager form of government. The Mayor serves a two-year term and the four Commissioners serve staggered four-year terms. The Commissioners run citywide but must reside in a specific district. All are genuinely interested in what is best for their community. The Commission has diverse opinions and goals and often the votes are 3 to 2. One of the new manager's responsibilities will be assist the Commission in operating as a more cohesive body and being prepared on any and all issues before them. The Commission is supportive of staff and recognizes the staff members as competent and capable.

NSB is a full service city and then some. It provides all the normal services (police, fire, planning, zoning, building, parks, recreation and public works), but also has a small marina (72 slips) which makes a little money, a general aviation airport that breaks even and a golf course that loses money. It also provides electric, water and sewer although it does so through a separate entity that reports to a board appointed by the Commission. By the standards of most cities, New Smyrna Beach is a lean government with only 260 employees to cover the preceding functions. The City has three unions: the International Association of Fire Fighters, the Teamsters representing police and the Laborer's International Union of North America representing public works, golf course and parks and recreation employees.

The City's total budget is approximately \$50 million and its general fund is \$25 million. It is financially strong with about \$11 million in reserves. The City's present millage is 3.1 for the general fund and 0.3 for debt service, one of the lowest for Volusia County.

## **The Issues**

The principal concern of New Smyrna Beach's residents is protecting the charm and character of the community. That is why many of them moved there and why many came back. They recognize the City must grow and that it needs jobs but they want it done in an intelligent manner that protects what it is. For example, it does not want to replicate its neighbors with wall-to-wall condominium and hotel towers along the beach. Nor does it want to become typical suburbia. Those developments have their place, preferable elsewhere. Having said that, west

NSB, and in particular, Venetian Bay (adjacent to I-95), can be characterized as a traditional Florida style development of new homes. Of some concern is the fact that NSB is sandwiched between Port Orange and Edgewater and thus not entirely in control of its destiny.

The second concern is bringing some office / commercial / light industrial to the area so that the City's young people will not have to move to other areas to find work. Ideally that base will also be built near I-95.

Thirdly, while NSB is financially sound and has a relatively high assessed value, the Florida legislature seems to be going out of its way to reduce the ability of the state's cities (such as NSB) to raise revenues.

The airport is also an issue for some resident, specifically those who live nearby. Local flight schools make extensive use of it with 180,000 take-offs and landings a year. The businesses at the airport, however, also make it the city's fifth largest employer. It has operated in the black for many years, and it continues to be a vital part of the local economy.

Finally, growth will return in the not too distant future and the City needs to be prepared.

### **The Ideal Candidate**

The City is looking for someone who communicates well, is friendly and outgoing and can see the big picture. The individual will be out in the community and active. He/she will, however, not be a "Yes Person." The City wants someone with strength, someone who will voice his/her opinion and provide the rationale for it. The selected individual will understand accountability and set high expectations for the staff. The elected officials recognize that running a government, not only in these economic times but in the future, will take creativity and strong management skills. The selected individual will understand the role of analysis in decision making and offer a well reasoned rationale for the best option but also actively support whatever decision the Commission makes. He/She will be ethical, honest, talented and creative. The new manager will understand the importance of customer service, have strong financial skills and keep everyone – the elected officials, staff and the public – informed. Excellent people skills are a must and the individual should be comfortable and capable of relating to people in all walks of life. A demonstrated track record in business development and bringing new businesses to your community is important. Experience in developing municipal assets (e.g., municipal airports, city marinas, and industrial parks) and working governmental agencies such as the FAA, the Coast Guard, other Federal and state agencies is also important. The ideal candidate will have at least five years experience as a manager or an assistant and ideally have worked in a small, coastal community. Florida experience is preferred but not necessary. A bachelor's degree in management, engineering or related field is required. A masters degree and/or ICMA credentialing are preferred. Residency is a requirement.

### **Compensation**

The starting salary will be between \$100,000 and \$140,000. The Commission would like to pay less than the middle of the range but understands that good managers cost money.

### **How to Apply**

E-mail your resume to [RecruitNine@cb-asso.com](mailto:RecruitNine@cb-asso.com) by May 15, 2009. Please also address in your cover letter what your preferred management style is, what your vision for NSB is and how you might be able to bring good jobs to the community. Your response need not be lengthy but it needs to be on point. Faxed and mailed resumes will not be considered. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger & Associates at (561) 707-3537.

### **The Process**

Applicants will be screened between May 16th and June 18th. It is anticipated that finalist interviews will be held on June 26th and 27th with a selection made on June 29th.

### **Other Important Information**

New Smyrna Beach is an Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages minorities to apply. Under the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to disclosure upon receipt. Veteran's preference will be awarded under applicable Florida law.