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City of Palm Coast, FL
Mayor Norris & Town Council
160 Lake Avenue
Palm Coast, FL 33408

Dear Mayor Norris & Town Council,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of City Manager of Palm Coast, Florida. As the current City Manager of Page, Arizona, I am responsible for overseeing all day-to-day city operations which include managing thirteen different departments: IT, Finance, Parks & Trails, Planning & Zoning, Recreation, Community Marketing, Economic Development, Public Works, Police, Fire and Rescue, Lake Powell National Golf Course, Horseshoe Bend, and Special Events. Additionally, I oversee smaller departments like the Library, Community Center, and Digital Information. In total, these departments employ over 200 dedicated staff members and operate with an annual budget of nearly \$90 million. Page is a full-service community of 7,500 residents but swells to 40,000 during the day. Page has 2500 hotel rooms, over 400 short-term rental accommodations and 50 restaurants. The operation of these facilities brings workers from all around the area for employment.

My successful business ownership and management demonstrated my proven track record of leadership, strategic planning, and community engagement. By transitioning from the private sector to public service, I now have a unique perspective on city management, which enables me to effectively bridge the gap between local businesses and government initiatives. I use my extensive skills from my business in financial management, operational efficiency, and team development to improve city operations and drive economic growth. Over the course of my career, I have built strong relationships with community stakeholders, promoting collaboration and listening during decision-making processes. My business background enables me to handle complex challenges by using data-driven approaches to create sustainable solutions that address both immediate concerns and long-term goals. Not being a long-time bureaucrat, I emphasize advocating for community well-being, I prioritize transparency and communication, ensuring that residents are informed and engaged in their local government. My leadership style emphasizes empowerment and accountability creating a culture of excellence within city departments. I am dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all residents through cost effective governing, strategic initiatives, and a focus on sustainable practices that promote economic resilience and diversity.

I possess the FEMA 101 Certificate. Emergency management is covered in this class, which includes the foundations of emergency management, emergency operation plans, and preparation

for federal disaster operations. This course covers the history, principles, and doctrine of emergency management in the United States. Included in the discussion are the role of emergency managers, legal issues, and the intergovernmental context of emergency management. In addition, it explains how to acquire FEMA Funds and other Federal Funding that is available after a disaster. I have personally dealt with FEMA and the overwhelming paperwork required for reimbursement. I have extensive experience with wildfires and mass evacuations. I have personally manned a Disaster Recovery Center where all new information was released to the public. I have been a public speaker at a town hall meeting during and after the disaster, discussing how those affected began to recover from the life-changing disaster.

Under the direction of the City Council, I implement approved policies, procedures, resolutions, ordinances, and directives. My duties include appointing, conducting annual reviews, discussing disciplinary actions, and, when necessary, removing City employees. I develop and implement Page's Capital Improvement Program and oversee large capital projects from inception to completion. I also coordinate and approve agendas for City Council meetings and have established strong working relationships with local and state legislators. My knowledge of state politics and the legislative process has been instrumental in my success. To enhance employee working conditions, I have initiated and participated in several developmental committees.

Creating and managing the annual budget is a significant aspect of my role. During the fiscal years 2020 and 2021, I creatively reduced the budget amid the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing incentives, a hiring freeze, and consolidating positions. Despite the financial challenges, I increased the Reserves and General Fund from \$23 million in July 2019 to \$51 million by February 2024, achieving a fully funded reserve fund of over \$12 million. As of July, last year, the City of Page is debt-free, including the emergency services retirement fund (PSPRS) and the Arizona State Retirement Fund. My extensive experience in local government budgeting includes working with Mill Levy Valuations and State Sales Tax Distributions, as well as negotiating health insurance contracts, union agreements, and rental agreements.

My human resources experience includes mentoring staff, setting goals, promoting professional development, encouraging initiative, and ensuring effective working relationships. I am well-versed in the legal requirements for disciplining or removing staff and have experience in both Right to Work and At Will states. My management philosophy is based on inclusion and tolerance, leading by example, and fostering a supportive environment. This approach has resulted in a stable management team, with only one Director leaving for a different career opportunity during my tenure. I am personable, understanding, and a good listener, which has helped me establish positive relationships with regional and local news media outlets.

During my time with the City of Page, I have made significant changes to personnel duties and responsibilities. I brought website design in-house, created a new Special Events department, and successfully promoted our City, resulting in over five million annual visitors, Which is more than the Grand Canyon. Our marketing strategy now targets extended stays and includes broader markets like Canada, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Texas, Utah, and neighboring states. These efforts have consistently increased sales tax revenue for the past 53 months and accounted for 5.2 million visitors in 2023.

I am confident that my leadership skills, private industry background, government experience that is both City and County, strong financial abilities, communication skills, human resources knowledge, and management style make me an excellent fit for Palm Coast. I would be honored to contribute to and help lead the staff of Palm Coast.

Thank you for considering my application. My family and I are excited about the possibility of relocating to the area, one of the best cities to live in Florida. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at (406) 291-9909.

Sincerely

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City Manager

Education

University of Montana, Missoula, MT

Bachelor of Arts, Interpersonal Communications-Organizational Emphasis

A dedicated and goal-focused City/County Manager with a deep-rooted compassion for community engagement and extensive administrative management expertise. I am Darren Coldwell, a tested City/County Manager with a proven track record in navigating complex union contract negotiations, facilitating critical health insurance agreements, and structuring solid lease agreements. My ability to collaborate and communicate internally and externally provides me with the strengths in personnel management, decision-making, and public relations is complemented by a comprehensive understanding of budgeting, government administration, human resources, and municipal law. Trusted as an advisor and liaison, I am committed to making significant contributions that propel personnel towards achieving their long-term objectives. Open-minded and proactive, I prioritize listening and collaboration to foster success.

Work History

City Manager

City of Page, Arizona

Page, Arizona 86040

11/2019 to Present

County Administrator

Lincoln County, Montana

Libby, Montana 59923

02/2017 to 11/2019

Mayor

City of Troy, Montana

Troy, Montana 59935

11/2013 to 11/2017

Business Owner

Booze n Bait

Troy, Montana 59935

07/1992 to 06/2017

Skills:

Administrative Management Expertise:

- Oversee daily operations of all departments, providing strategic direction to Directors, Managers, and City Council/County Commission. This includes conducting personnel reviews, setting performance goals, fostering motivation, and implementing disciplinary measures when necessary. Extensive experience in oversight of Human Resources and decision making of Human Resources challenges.
- Created forward-thinking incentives to recruit personnel as well as maintain staffing levels. Incentives include potential signing bonuses, help with moving expenses, help with first and last rent and hook-up fees of new rentals, a mix of available work schedules including a four-day work week for all administrative staff. These changes of decreased turn-over of staff drastically, including Fire Department currently at full employment and the PD is only two recruits short of their staffing goals.
- Review and evaluate departmental structures to ensure optimal cross-functional training, streamline workflows, and enhance operational agility. Implement measures to strengthen the organizational framework and promote fiscal stability.
- Act as the primary coordinator of municipal activities, providing insights to the Mayor and City Council/County Commission on administration, financial management, and data automation. Develop and maintain comprehensive documentation essential for smooth administrative processes.
- A forward-thinking City/County Manager that motivates staff to participate in the vision that the City Council/County Commission has conveyed to residents. Ensures that a positive and cohesive environment is provided for all staff and encourages them to challenge the status quo.
- Engage with various stakeholders, prepare written communications for the Mayor and City Council/County Commission, and interact with the media to articulate the City/County's positions on key issues. Plan agendas, provide essential background information, and collaborate with the City Attorney on legal matters.
- Guide union contract negotiations, implement city policies, and foster strong relationships with state personnel. Oversee acquisition contracts for power distribution and solicit contracts for the City Council/County Commission, continuously striving to uphold governance and operational excellence.
- Pride myself in leading staff in going beyond expected delivery of exemplary service to the residents and constituents in the community.

Budget and Finance Management:

- Develop and oversee the City/County budget with a focus on transparency, accountability, and strategic financial planning. Manage and implement the annual budget, ensuring sound financial governance and operational effectiveness.

- Have exceeded in increasing the cash flow for the General Fund and was able to meet the goal for the Rainy-Day Fund by still meeting the expectations of the Strategic Plan, Growth Plan and the Transportation and Maintenance Plan.
- Provide intuitive financial reports to empower the City Council/County Commission with necessary insights for fiscal oversight. Develop and implement policies and procedures in alignment with City Council/County Commission directives, promoting financial stability through constant oversight of fiscal performance.
- Offer leadership and expertise on decision-making issues impacting the City/County's financial landscape, guiding the City Council/County Commission in making informed choices. Develop preliminary budget documents projecting cash flows, reserves, revenues, and expenditure requirements across all departments.
- Emphasize the development and maintenance of cost measurement procedures, BARS accounting allocations, and purchasing practices. Monitor budget execution, implement internal audit controls, and evaluate budget implementation for efficiency opportunities.

Community Development and Relations:

- Foster collaboration with City/County volunteers, representing the City Council/County Commission at meetings, hearings, and public events. Engage with the community to ensure their voice is heard and valued.
- Cultivate and nurture robust community relations while leading development initiatives that enrich the City/County. Participate in meetings and public engagements to address residents' needs effectively.
- Extensive experience working with the marketing of communities and expanding their outreach to improve market share. Innovative City/County Manager with success in public space placemaking and transforming the ideas of the City Council/County Commission into powerful platforms for success.
- Guide and mentor Board members, empowering them to contribute to community governance and progress. Foster synergy and cooperation with volunteer organizations, ensuring successful board performance.
- Advocate for sustainable land-use practices, conservation efforts, and natural resource preservation. Participate in volunteer board meetings to collaborate with community members for the City/County's betterment.
- Attract potential businesses to the community, fostering economic growth and creating opportunities for prosperity. Cultivate relationships with decision-makers and stakeholders for strategic partnerships driving economic development.
- Support the local business community by researching, initiating contact, and engaging with industry leaders and entrepreneurs. Enhance the economic landscape, promote business growth, and create an inclusive environment nurturing entrepreneurship and independence.

- **Volunteer Board Affiliations**

- Kootenai Valley Rotary, Former President
- Troy Fourth of July Committee, Board Chair
- Troy Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director
 - United For Youth, Board Member
- Kootenai River Development, Former Board Member
- Lincoln County Port Authority, Former Board Member
 - Troy School Board, Former Board Member
- Troy Volunteer Fire Department, Former Fire Marshall

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- **Professional Associations**

- American Society of Public Administration
- Government Finance Officers Association
- International City/County Managers Association
- Board of Directors Arizona City/County Managers Association

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