

Town planning director to leave

By Matthew van Buren

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The town of Taos will be losing another department head in the coming months, as Bill Morris has announced he will be resigning as planning director early next year.

Morris is the fourth department to announce his intention to resign in recent months. Former public affairs and tourism director Cathy Connelly, former facilities director Ron Yachinich and former utilities director Amos Torres all left their jobs with the town since August.

Morris said personal considerations led to his decision, and that he has no problems with the town's management under Oscar Rodriguez, who started in May.

"That's not the issue at all," he said.

Morris said he was recently married, and his wife has familial and employment obligations that require her to stay in Roswell.

"I can't live in two worlds," Morris said. "This is something that I need to do."

He said he intends to leave his job in Taos "no later than April," which gives him time to wrap up some projects he is working on.

Morris was hired April 2011 at a starting salary of \$58,274. Prior to his employment with the town, Morris served as the deputy manager for the village of Ruidoso.

While he has been with the town, Morris has been involved in a variety of issues, from annexations and affordable housing to demolishing blighted buildings. He has helped to craft a number of ordinances, as well, including the town's sign code, animal control ordinance and an ordinance allowing the town to restrict water usage in times of drought.

Town human resources director Loretta Trujillo said she has not been advised of when the search for a new planning director will begin.

Mayor Darren Córdova said he does not think it will be too difficult to fill the position, particularly considering the current economic environment and corresponding lack of jobs. "We had quite a few applicants the last time," he said.

Rodriguez said his "top priority" is finding efficiencies within the Planning Department. He said he is interested in "streamlining processes" and making them easier for members of the public to understand, and he hopes to establish more of an online presence for the department.

“Bill is helping with that,” he said. “That’s a tough project.”

Rodriguez said the work that takes place on that front in the coming months will help determine the type of director the town seeks in the spring.

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