

Town of Taos seeks assistant manager

Applicants step up

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Town Manager Rick Bellis is currently searching for an assistant to help in town planning business while to fill the vacant town planning director position.

By Friday (Nov. 16), 19 people had applied for the town of Taos' recently posted job opening for "assistant town manager."

As of Tuesday (Nov. 20), the position was still posted on the town's website.

Town manager Rick Bellis said he is seeking an assistant manager to help in major town improvement projects as well as to allow him to continue to restructure some of the other departments.

"This is a hands-on career position for a manager with proven technical experience in all aspects of project planning and management," Bellis said in an email. "We will not be hiring just to fill a position. If we don't get the right person to fill the need, we will go in a different direction, re-advertise or just wait."

The town had an assistant town manager until the position was eliminated four years ago. According to Bellis, the position was cut to create two new positions in the revenue and tourism departments. The previous assistant manager, Abigail Adame, held a salary of \$75,000.

The town's budget does have room for a planning director and an assistant manager, but town officials are hoping to merge the positions to have the applicant work a bit in both disciplines.

"The mayor and council felt that I was already spread too thin," Bellis said, "especially with the completion of the airport and the new air service beginning, and that having an assistant town manager that could help on some of these very heavily planning, economic and community development-related objectives for the foreseeable future was important."

Qualifications for the assistant manager's job include a bachelor's degree, with a master's degree preferred, and a minimum of five years of

experience in government or three years in a "supervisory capacity," according to the job description. The position was opened Oct. 23 and will remain open until filled.

Among the local candidates who have entered their name for the job are Marietta Fambro, who is the town's finance director; Barbara E. Arnold, court executive officer for the 8th Judicial District Court; Kathleen Branchal, procurement officer for the state Department of Corrections; and Peñasco teacher Francisco F. Romero.

"I do believe there is a need for this position to be filled," said councilor Pascualito Maestas. "Rick is stretched very thin, and a plan for seamless transition to another manager is a good step for the future."

The town has been without a planning director for some time, and Bellis has filled in. Adding an assistant manager would alleviate some of Bellis' planning and economic work and allow him to focus on the other departments, a task that he admits to not being able to thoroughly perform.

"There currently is not enough time left in the day to deal with daily constituent issues in a timely and thorough manner and manage and improve the general daily operations of the town, which is normally what a manager is hired to do," Bellis said.