

CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA

LAKELAND CENTER DIRECTOR

THE COMMUNITY

Lakeland is a premiere city, located in Polk County very near the exact geographic center of Florida. It is approximately 30 miles east of Tampa and 40 miles west of Orlando. Founded in 1885, Lakeland has a population of 87,000 and covers 68 square miles.

Recognized nationally by *Money Magazine* in 1998 as the “10th Best Place to Live in America” for medium-sized cities in the South, Lakeland offers its residents an exceptional quality of life. Beginning with Lakeland’s downtown district, which has been under a continuing program of redevelopment for several years, the City exudes beauty, charm, vitality, and a palpable sense of continual progress.

The beauty of historic Munn Park in the heart of downtown is complemented by a charming commercial district with numerous specialty shops, restaurants, and night-time entertainment opportunities. The Lake Mirror Promenade features magnificent columns and a seawall with classical ornamentation. Nearby Hollis Garden boasts a European design with more than 10,000 flowers and shrubs. The list of “beauty marks” could go on and on. The parks, lakes, streetscapes, and beautifully renovated businesses and government buildings make for a captivatingly beautiful downtown.

Culture and history abound throughout the city. Lakeland’s Florida Southern College features the world’s largest one-site collection of buildings designed by the legendary architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The Imperial Symphony Orchestra provides the finest in instrumental music and concerts. The Lakeland Center is a top-rated entertainment, sporting, and convention complex. The historic Polk Theatre, a grand fully-restored 1927 theatre, provides a venue for community-sponsored films and special events.

Lakeland’s special events are too numerous to mention, but they include the annual Orange Cup Regatta, a nationally acclaimed, limited hydroplane boat race; auto racing at the USA International Speedway; and the Experimental Aircraft Association’s annual Sun ‘n Fun Fly-in, an aerial extravaganza that has become America’s second largest aviation event of its type. Spring home to the Detroit Tigers, Lakeland also boasts the Lakeland Tigers baseball team, Mayfaire-by-the-Lake Art festival, The Polk Museum of Art, Explorations V Children’s Museum, the Pied Piper Players, Arts on the Park, the annual Florida Southern College Festival of Fine Arts, and the Florida Dance Theatre.

Lakeland’s municipal golf course and 32 public tennis courts are complemented by numerous public and private golf courses and tennis courts. Forty-nine well maintained municipal parks dot the City and, together with the City’s 38 named lakes, provide a multitude of opportunities for active and passive recreation. These include two pools, two top-quality weight rooms, eight racquetball courts, bike trails, and many water activities.

Lakeland abounds with educational opportunities. In addition to Florida Southern College, Lakeland is home to several other colleges, including Southeastern College and branch campuses of Polk Community College and the University of South Florida. Lakeland takes pride in the superior performance of its public school students. It also has several excellent private k-12 educational institutions.

Anchored by facilities such as Watson Clinic, The Center for Cancer Care and Research, Lakeland Regional Medical Center, and Lakeland Regional Cancer Center, Lakeland is positioning itself to be a “Mecca” of healthcare.

Shopping opportunities are abundant, from numerous small specialty shops to the one-million plus square foot Lakeland Square Mall. Under construction is Lakeside Village, a 650,000 square foot up-scale mixed-use development consisting of office, retail, and residential. Dining opportunities abound in downtown and throughout the City.

Interstate 4 passes through the northern part of the City and the Polk Parkway traverses the southern half of Lakeland. Together with Linder Regional Airport, its high quality of life, its proximity to Tampa and Orlando, and its business-friendly recruitment policies, Lakeland has enjoyed considerable success with business development, and that success is on-going. Major companies with corporate headquarters in Lakeland include Publix Supermarkets, Watkins Motor Lines, and Saddle Creek Corporation.

CITY GOVERNMENT

Under its charter, the City is managed with a Commission-Manager form of government that has been in place since the mid 1920s. The legislative body consists of a Mayor and six Commission Members. Each is elected at-large for four-year staggered terms. The Commission and City Manager positions have both been very stable. There have only been three City Managers in Lakeland since 1960, with the incumbent serving since 2003.

With a staff of 2,100 full-time and 525 part-time employees, the City of Lakeland is a full-service city. The City has its own electric utility which supplies an area of 258 square miles. By customer count, Lakeland Electric is the 3rd largest municipal electric utility in Florida and the 23rd largest in the U.S. The City also owns and operates the Linder Regional Airport, the Lakeland Center, and Cleveland Heights Golf Course.

LAKELAND CENTER DIRECTOR

The 190,000 square foot Lakeland Center is a premier entertainment, sports, and convention complex. Long considered one of Lakeland's most recognizable landmarks, the multi-faceted facility houses a number of venues, including the 10,000-seat Jenkins Arena, 2,296-seat Youkey Theatre, Sikes Conference Hall, Exhibit Hall, Lake Hollingsworth Ballroom, and Lake Hunter Room. The two exhibit halls have a total of 75,000 square feet of meeting and exhibit space. The facility, which features an in-house caterer, professional event planning, and marketing and technical services, hosts nearly 1,000 events per year with over 500,000 in attendance.

The Lakeland Center is home to superlative performances by world-renowned artists in touring Broadway productions, family shows, jazz, opera, and symphonic and popular music. As hosts to the Florida High School Athletic Association's Volleyball, Wrestling, Girls Basketball and Boys Basketball championships, The Center is considered the amateur sports capital of Florida.

The complex maintains an active convention and meeting schedule that benefits from having a 128-suite on-site hotel, with an additional 2,500 hotel rooms within a five-mile radius. The complex easily and conveniently serves more than seven million people within a 100-mile radius that includes the Lakeland, Tampa, and Orlando markets.

The City is interested in expanding its market share in the arena, convention facilities, and entertainment area. Toward this end, it is currently considering the possible expansion of the facility.

The Lakeland Center Director is responsible for an annual budget in excess of \$5 million. The director manages a staff of 34 fulltime and 400 part time employees. The Lakeland Center Director reports to the Assistant to the City Manager and is a member of the City Manager's top management team.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

Education ♦ Bachelor's Degree in Sports, Recreation, Business Public Administration or a related field is preferred.

Work Experience ♦ Ideally, the candidate will have at least five years in a responsible administrative/management capacity at an arena or multi-purpose facility.

Desired Attributes

- Broad, in-depth knowledge of principles and methods of entertainment and facilities management
- Advanced knowledge of financial analysis and application of accounting principles and procedures to fiscal administration
- Knowledge of marketing and promotions strategies and techniques
- Ability to plan and organize operations of multi-use facilities
- Ability to develop long-range plans and programs and to evaluate work accomplishments
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with: employees, City officials, citizen and professional groups, promoters, news media, and the general public.
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
- Ability to manage the operations of several entertainment/convention facilities.
- Ability to negotiate with promoters, entertainers, vendors, and representatives of various organizations.
- Ability to plan, market, promote, coordinate, and schedule major events.
- Thorough knowledge of ADA issues
- High level of energy and enthusiasm for accomplishing organizational goals
- High sense of accountability
- A strong focus on excellent customer service
- Thorough knowledge of personnel, finance, general office and business administration, and the ability to apply these disciplines
- Thorough knowledge of the principles of supervision, training, and performance evaluation
- Knowledge of how to develop, maintain, and motivate a good team
- Friendly, out-going, and approachable
- A strong focus on excellent customer service
- Possesses a high energy level and seeks challenges
- Possesses an entrepreneurial spirit
- Has experience in promoting and managing sporting events
- Demonstrated community involvement
- Ability to work effectively with stakeholder groups

COMPENSATION

The salary range for the position is \$69,576 to \$97,906, depending on qualifications. Fringe benefits are generous.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, and salary history for initial screening by October 22, 2004 to: **Tom D. Freijo, Ph.D., Senior Vice President, The Mercer Group, Inc., tdf_wh@hotmail.com P.O. Box 9328, Winter Haven, Florida 33883. TEL: (863) 299-3571 FAX: (863) 299-6737.** The City of Lakeland is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Applicants should be aware that applications in Florida become a matter of public record upon receipt.