



## The City of Storm Lake, Iowa Invites Qualified Candidates to Apply For **Finance Director**



**ABOUT STORM LAKE** – Storm Lake, a northwest Iowa county-seat city of 12,000 residents and six square miles has a strong, diversified economy that includes tourism, two colleges, a regional manufacturing and retail center, and agricultural processing. The City's service area population is estimated at 13,000 due to providing water, waste water, and fire protection services to residents outside the city limits.

Storm Lake is one of the most ethnically diverse rural communities in the country with 27 ethnic groups constituting nearly 50 percent of the population. Storm Lake's official census population of 10,600 may be an under count of those who actually reside in the community.

Storm Lake has long been known for its agricultural processing facilities, its exquisite Victorian homes and historic downtown, and its namesake—a 3,200-acre lake adjacent to the city's southern border. Storm Lake is Iowa's 4<sup>th</sup> largest natural lake and has more than five miles of public access to the lake shore.



Storm Lake has a relatively young population, and the school district enrollment is increasing. The community's median age is 30.8 years compared to the United States median of 37.2 years. In addition, the median value of owner-occupied, single-family houses is 38 percent less than the national average.

In 2008, Storm Lake was named as one of the nation's "100 Best Communities for Young People" according to America's Promise Alliance, a partnership of public and private sector groups founded by Colin Powell. The community received this recognition for making the well being of children and youth a top priority. Also, in February 2009, the Storm Lake Police Department was recognized by the Vera Institute of Justice as one of six police departments from among 200 studied that exemplify best practices for overcoming language barriers in policing.

Storm Lake has a recession-resistant economy due to its diversified employment base.

## HISTORY

Storm Lake was named by an early trapper who lived on the lake bank. The trapper named it for severe storms which occurred in the early days. Occasionally, even today, the lake still lives up to its name.

Storm Lake was incorporated in 1873, and Buena Vista College moved from Hawarden, Iowa, to Storm Lake in 1891. Storm Lake has experienced steady growth since its inception fueled most notably by the location of agricultural processing facilities more than 50 years ago. These pork and turkey processing facilities which have expanded greatly over the years are now owned by Tyson which employs 2500 non-unionized personnel in Storm Lake. The City and its community partners have worked hard to develop a diversified industrial base.



## TOURISM DESTINATION

Twelve years ago the community decided that one of its biggest assets, the lake, offered the potential to provide greater tourism and recreational value. Therefore, the City and other community leaders formed 23 committees consisting of 150 citizens to develop a new vision of becoming a Midwest tourism destination. This included a branding campaign that resulted in the new logo below.



The community decided it needed additional amenities on the north side of the lake to fulfill its vision of becoming a major tourism destination. As a result, the concept for Project AWAYSIS was created.

Project AWAYSIS is a \$39 million publically funded development. This development includes a 100-room resort hotel (King's Pointe), public beach, indoor/outdoor water park, family playground, redesigned municipal golf course, Great Lawn, expanded and modernized campground and family cottages, and lighthouse with a handicapped accessible observation deck. Related improvements not part of this \$39 million project include a recently completed \$3.1 million marina expansion project and wetlands discovery center. County-wide bike and drive trails and a state-of-the-art Interpretive Center are yet to come.



Additional information about Storm Lake is available at [www.stormlake.org](http://www.stormlake.org)



Project AWAYSIS is likely the most creatively financed local government project in Iowa's history. Financing sources consisted of:

- \$9 million Vision Iowa grant;
- \$3.5 million of general obligation bonds repaid by debt service property tax levy;
- \$7.5 million in bonds repaid by revenue from hotel;
- \$7.4 million in bonds repaid by local option sales tax;
- \$680,000 in local option sales tax accrued during construction;
- \$1.5 million from hotel/motel tax bonds;
- \$500,000 contribution from Buena Vista County;
- \$1.1 million from the sale of condominium lots;
- \$150,000 Federal appropriation;
- \$2 million of road use and utility funds;
- \$2.1 million in tax increment financing bonds;
- \$2.15 million in private fundraising;
- \$500,000 investment income; and
- \$900,000 grants and rebates.



The general obligation bond referendum received 74 percent voter approval and is the only portion of the project funded by property taxes.

The community has a public art program that includes both wood tree sculptures and bronze statues.



## DIVERSITY

Storm Lake is cited as an example of the demographic transition that is occurring in the United States. What once was practically an all-white community in 1990 has become a community where almost 50 percent of the residents are non-white ethnic groups. Many of these new residents have been recruited to the community by Tyson and by church-based refugee relocation programs. These residents represent the following cultures and languages.

CULTURE	LANGUAGE
Asian Pacific	Burmese
Laos	Lao
Viet Nam	Vietnamese
Hmong	Hmong (no written language)
Somalia	Somalian tribal dialects
Sudan	9 different tribal dialects (Arabic base language)
Mexico	Spanish*
Portugal	Portuguese & Spanish*
Guatemala	Spanish*
Brazil	Spanish*
El Salvador	Spanish*
Honduras	Spanish *

\*different dialects of Spanish

Approximately 80 percent of the K-12 students in Storm Lake Community Schools are non-white. Also, roughly 25 percent of Police field contacts are with people who do not speak English.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The community is known for developing creative partnerships for the betterment of Storm Lake. In addition to the previously discussed Project ALWAYSIS partnership, four other partnerships are described below.



- **Lake Dredging**—a partnership was formed 12 years ago to deal with the fact that the lake was becoming less useful for recreation purposes due to silting that was making the lake more shallow. A partnership among the City, Buena Vista County, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the City of Lakeside, and the Lake Preservation Association resulted in the formation of the Lake Improvement Commission. The County purchased a dredging machine and City supervises the dredging of the lake on an ongoing basis. Federal and state funds have



been used to support the dredging operation.

- **Fiber Optic Network**—the City partnered with Buena Vista County and Storm Lake Community Schools to construct a fiber broadband network paid for by all three entities. The City leases dark fiber to the County and School District and receives lease and maintenance fees for this service. This initiative has reduced costs for all three entities and improved communication.



- **CommUnity Education**—is a partnership between the School District and City to provide adult education and all age recreation for the community. The School District and City share expenses.

## EDUCATION

Storm Lake Community Schools consists of an early childhood center, a new elementary school, a middle school, and a newly renovated high school. This school system has an outstanding track-record of success. Scholastic test scores are 14.9 percent better than the US average. There is also a pre-kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> grade Catholic school system in Storm Lake.

Buena Vista University (BVU) is located on 60 acres along the lake shore. BVU offers undergraduate and graduate degrees with more than 1,000 full-time students on the Storm Lake campus and more than 2,500 students enrolled in BVU Professional & Online Studies at 15 locations throughout Iowa.

Iowa Central Community College is also located in Storm Lake with an enrollment of almost 900. This college and Storm Lake Community Schools have formed a charter school which allows students to obtain an Associate's Degree at no cost in one year by earning college credits while in high school.

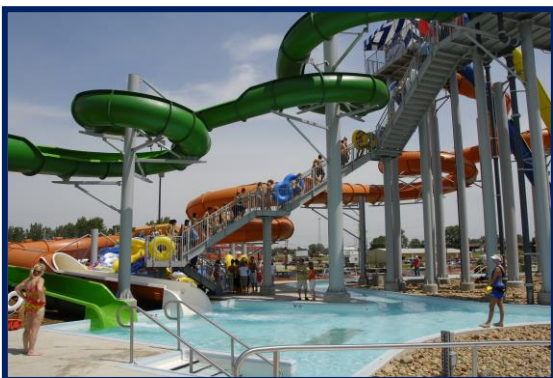


## RECREATION

There are more than 100 acres of land in Storm Lake's parks system which includes Sunrise Pointe Golf Course, Sunrise Campgrounds, a disc golf course, and King's Pointe Resort. King's Pointe Outdoor Waterpark is Iowa's newest waterpark and is part of Project AWAYSIS. This waterpark features Iowa's longest water slide, the Discovery Plunge which is a 420 foot long enclosed tube. The waterpark also hosts a unique water ride called the Fish Pipe which is the world's longest slide ride.



Also, the Heritage Tree Museum, located in Sunset Park, is a unique educational and recreational attraction which includes an eclectic collection of trees that have their heritage in the history of the United States and the world.



Other recreation opportunities in the Storm Lake area include outdoor sports such as hunting and fishing,



including some of the best walleye fishing in the country. Also, BVU offers exciting NCAA Division III spectator sports including football, basketball, and track as well as theatre, music, and guest lecturers.

**CITY GOVERNMENT** – The City of Storm Lake has operated under the council-manager form of government since 1978 and has had 5 City Administrators/Managers during those 38 years. The Mayor and five Council Members are the City’s policy makers, and each are elected at-large to four-year overlapping terms. The Mayor and Council appoint the City Manager, City Clerk, and City Attorney.

**VISION STATEMENT**

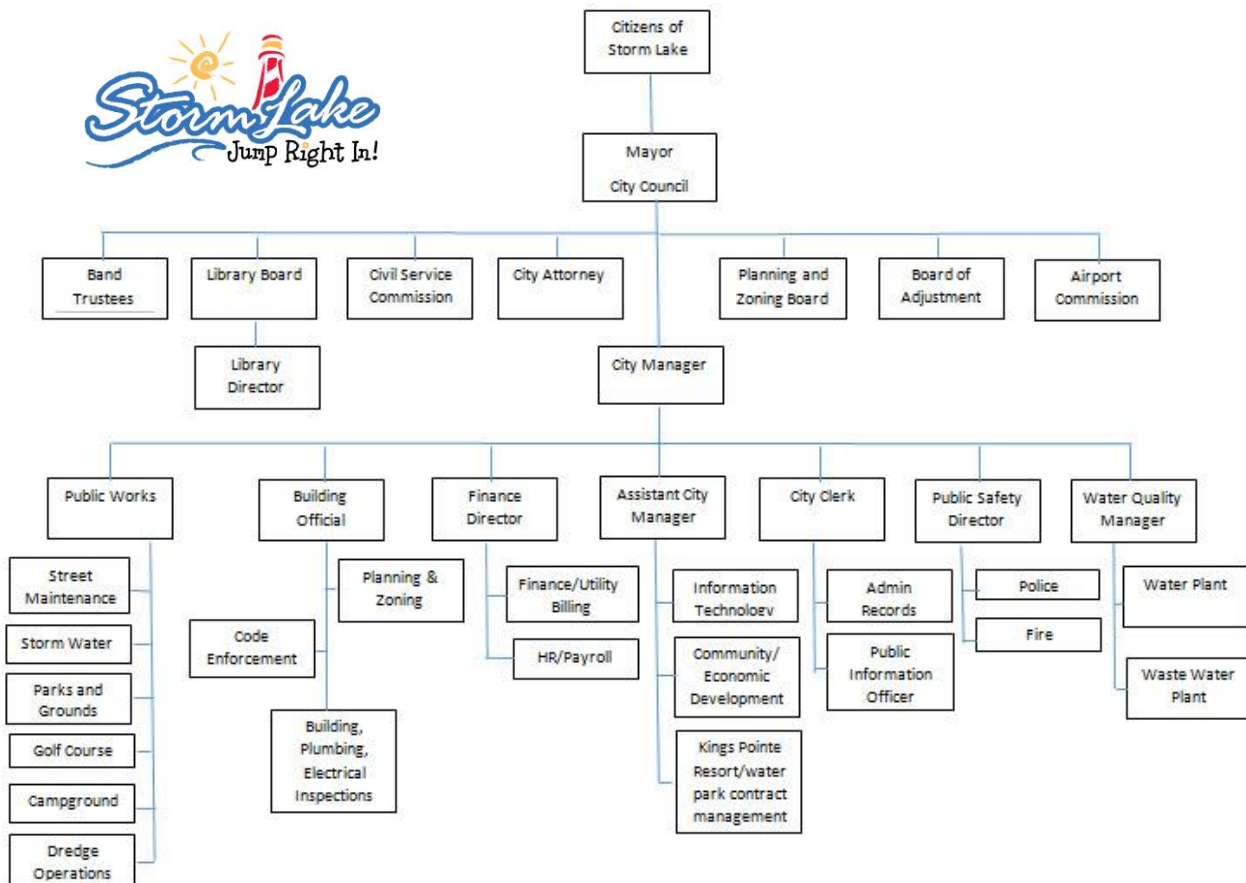
“Storm Lake to be a premier recreational and economically progressive community”

**MISSION STATEMENT**

“Through teamwork create a welcoming environment that encourages economic growth, celebrates our unique blend of cultures, treasures our natural resources, and promotes recreational opportunities”



The City has been well-managed financially and has above-average fund balances and an A2 bond rating. The City has an annual operating budget of \$31 million, a five-year Capital Improvement Program of \$19.9 million, and 84 FTE’s.



**FINANCE DEPARTMENT** - The Finance Department consists of a Finance Director and five additional full-time staff. The Department is responsible for (in conjunction with the City Manager's Office to varying degrees):



- ❖ Preparation and administration of annual budget and five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP);
- ❖ Long and short-range financial forecasting;
- ❖ Debt management;
- ❖ Risk management;
- ❖ Administration of health insurance and other employee benefit programs;
- ❖ Accounts receivable and payable and other accounting matters including utility billing and collection, preparing monthly financial reports, and conducting bank reconciliations;
- ❖ Payroll;
- ❖ Purchasing;
- ❖ Human resources;
- ❖ Investments;
- ❖ Support for outside auditors; and
- ❖ Year-end State and Federal reports including tax reports.

The former Finance Director was with the City for seven years and recently accepted a consulting position with a public sector consulting firm.

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES** – The following is a summary of the issues and opportunities to be managed by Storm Lake's next Finance Director.

Complex Financial Management Issues—as noted below the City of Storm Lake has a wider array of services and revenue sources than a typical community of 12,000:

- aforementioned King's Pointe (resort hotel, waterpark, public beach, campground, cottages, and Great Lawn) owned by City with contract management;
- City-owned housing subdivision;
- storm water utility;
- water and wastewater utilities which serve areas adjacent to Storm Lake as well as inside city limits;
- general aviation airport;
- marina;
- golf course;
- 93 square-mile fire district staffed largely by volunteers;
- lake dredging operation with three other entities;
- six urban renewal areas with many project-based tax increment financing (TIF) districts; and
- City has received more than \$30M of grants from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), State of Iowa, and others during last five years primarily for large CIP projects.

As a result of the aforementioned the Finance Director works in a fast-paced environment that requires knowledge of private and public accounting practices and the ability to track and document financial data to the satisfaction of grantors and others with a stake in the above services.

Staff Development—the Finance Department has a dedicated staff at various stages of their work career. The Finance Director is expected to contribute to a superior work culture by mentoring and coaching staff as necessary and through cross-training so employees gain new skills. It is also desired that employees be provided with professional development and outside training opportunities.

Diversity—as noted earlier in this profile, Storm Lake is extremely culturally and ethnically diverse. It is important the next Finance Director embrace diversity and consider the impact of City service matters on different cultures.

Financial Software Upgrade—the City has a Capital Improvement Project which will upgrade the City's financial software. The next Finance Director will significantly contribute to the selection and purchase of this software.



Process Improvements—there is a desire to examine processes administered by the Finance Department such as budgeting and purchasing to determine if they can be streamlined.

**JOB REQUIREMENTS** – The minimum job requirements are: 1) Bachelor's degree business or public administration, finance, accounting, or related field strongly desired; 2) six years of progressively responsible experience in municipal finance management or closely related field with financial management experience in municipal organization of comparable complexity to Storm Lake preferred; and 3) two years of supervisory experience; or any equivalent combination of education and experience.

*Desired Professional and Personal Attributes*

Following are the desired professional and personal attributes of Storm Lake's next Finance Director:



- Personable with relationship-building skills and high Emotional Quotient (EQ);
- Accessible to Finance Department staff without being micromanager;
- Team player who works well with cohesive City executive team;
- Strong customer service ethic who enjoys working with public and City employees, provides responsive and courteous service, and instills same ethic in staff;
- Considerable knowledge of budgetary, accounting, and financial reporting systems;
- Working knowledge of public finance, human resources, payroll, and accounts payable functions;
- Ability to identify and analyze financial alternatives with goal of increasing and diversifying revenue stream;
- Track record of accurate long and short-range financial projections;
- Highest levels of personal and professional integrity;
- Ensures City compliance with federal, state, and local regulatory requirements;
- Possesses strong presentation skills with ability to present financial information in comprehensive, understandable, and effective manner;
- Have self-confidence to firmly and diplomatically present professional views and concerns about proposed policy actions under consideration while being committed to implementing final decisions in timely, professional, and impartial manner;
- Fair and consistent in delivering services to other City departments while offering departments sufficient lead time to provide information needed by Finance Department;
- Ability to assist in operation and maintenance of City's financial software;
- Assures highest standards of risk management, employee safety, and risk avoidance; and
- Experience working with labor unions a plus.

**COMPENSATION** – The salary range for the Finance Director position is \$70-82K with the starting salary dependent on the selected individual's qualifications and match with the desired attributes being sought by the City. The City provides good fringe benefits including current family medical insurance premium of only \$120/month. The City will pay reasonable and customary moving expenses for the next Finance Director who is required to live in the city limits.

**To Apply:**

The position will remain open until filled. The first review of resumes will occur on **June 5, 2016**. In order to be considered for this position, please send your resume and cover letter in Word with current salary to [pwconsulting@cox.net](mailto:pwconsulting@cox.net). For additional information about this job, please contact:

Paul Wenbert, ICMA-CM  
Western Regional Manager  
Slavin Management Consultants  
Mesa, Arizona  
480-664-2676  
[pwconsulting@cox.net](mailto:pwconsulting@cox.net)

**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY RECRUITER/EMPLOYER**

