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Santa Rosa advertises for military liaison job

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The job responsible for nurturing the most important industry in Santa Rosa County is up for grabs.

The TEAM Santa Rosa Economic Development Council is seeking a contractor to be the military affairs consultant for Santa Rosa, a person responsible for everything from protecting local bases from government closure to keeping neighborhood development from impeding base missions.

The job announcement is posted prominently on the front page of TEAM's Web site, www.team.santarosa.com.

Criticism of the way the job — now held by Pete Gandy — initially was advertised led TEAM's board to revamp the job description and advertise it again, with Gandy welcome to reapply.

Ferdinand Salomon, who becomes chairman of TEAM Santa Rosa on Oct. 1, said he believes the best candidates for the job may be retired military officers or high-ranking enlisted personnel because the consultant needs to be familiar with military command structures.

"We need someone who is going to be comfortable picking up the phone and talking to the chief of staff in Jacksonville" and other military brass, said Salomon, a retired Navy captain and current broker at NAI Halford.

The announcement's prominently positioning on TEAM's Web site differs from the process that led to Gandy getting the job.

In that case, TEAM Santa Rosa Executive Director Cindy Anderson sent Gandy an e-mail suggesting the advertisement for the job be "buried" in the military section of the site to limit the number of applicants.

At the time, Gandy was chairman of TEAM's Military Affairs Committee.

Process criticized

As a board member at the time, Gandy helped develop the job description for the consultant and then interviewed one candidate before offering himself up for the job. He resigned as a board member and was chosen by his former fellow committee members.

Amid criticism of that process, the TEAM board voted earlier this year to keep Gandy but to revamp the job description and re-advertise it.

"I would hope than (Gandy) would re-apply because he certainly does meet the qualifications. ... In this area, there are quite a few candidates that would qualify," Salomon said.

Alan Isaacson, an individual member of TEAM, was chief among the critics of the process that lead Gandy to get the job. He said he's glad to see the position being advertised openly.

"As long as everybody has the same shot, I don't have a problem with it at all," he said. However, he thinks Gandy should be "doubly scrutinized" if he gets the job again.

"I never thought he wasn't qualified," Isaacson said. "My concern was with the process."

Gandy has not submitted an application as yet, Anderson said. So far, TEAM has one applicant.

Gandy could not be reached Wednesday for comment.

In addition to the Web site, the job opening is being advertised in several Northwest Florida newspapers, as well as with the family services departments at Whiting Field, Eglin and Hurlburt, Anderson said.

\$40,000 salary

"Depending on the number of applicants, the plan is for the Military Affairs Committee of TEAM to screen and make a recommendation to the TEAM board of directors," Anderson said.

The tentative start date for the consultant, according to the announcement, is Nov. 1.

The salary of \$40,000 is less than the \$45,000 Gandy made this year.

"We don't have as much money," he said. "That's what we can afford."

Additional Facts

Military liaison

Minimum qualifications:

- Background working with the Department of Defense or Congress preferred.
- Prior military experience. (Military aviation experience preferred)
- Bachelor's degree.
- Strong skills in teamwork, information technology and ability to work independently.
- Valid driver's license.

Highly preferred skills:

- Working knowledge of Santa Rosa County geography, leadership, and assets that allow for more efficient dealing with the Navy, like GIS, military databanks, etc.
- Knowledge of and personal contacts within the senior levels of the Navy and Department of Defense command structure with emphasis on naval installations command organization.

Also:

- Salary: \$40,000/year.

-- How to apply: E-mail proposal to canderson@team
santarosa.com.

-- Deadline: Sept. 30.
