BELOW THE RIM
The traditional western Town of Payson (pop. 16,351, elev. 5,003 ft., 19.36 sq. mi.) is one of the most desirable communities in Arizona. For decades, residents of Phoenix and the Valley of the Sun have been making the 90-minute drive up the Beeline Highway (SR 87) through the Mazatzal Mountains to Payson. Visitors escape the Valley’s scorching summer heat, traffic, and congestion, and seek the calm and tranquility of life at altitude. The Tonto National Forest surrounds Payson, so residents are literally five minutes away in every direction from the great outdoors. Temperatures here are about 20° cooler than those in the Valley and rarely break 100°.

Known as “Rim Country,” the area takes its name from the Mogollon Rim, a geographic feature that forms the southern edge of the Colorado Plateau that runs across northern Arizona. Payson sits about 2,000 feet “Below the Rim” and at the approximate geographic center of the state, hence its nickname, “the Heart of Arizona.” Although Globe is the county seat, Payson is the largest city and the commercial center of Gila County. The town is 35 miles north of Roosevelt Lake and the historic Roosevelt Dam along the Salt River.

Payson is proud of its legitimate small-town feel and honors its agricultural, timber, and ranching heritage. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, four distinct seasons (including winter snow), and every form of outdoor recreation year-round. Activities include hunting, hiking, fishing, cycling, boating, mountain biking, and kayaking.

Residents love Green Valley Park, Rumsey Park (basketball, softball, soccer, pickleball, dog park), and especially the impressive Payson Area Trails System. Payson’s three golf courses are open all year, and skiing is two hours away at Arizona Snowbowl (Flagstaff) or Sunrise Park Resort (Greer). The Tonto Apache Tribal Lands are to the south, and the Mazatzal Hotel and Casino offers limited stakes gaming.

The Payson Unified School District (two elementary, one middle, two high schools), a private school, and a branch of Gila Community College serve the town, as does the Payson Public Library. The Banner Payson Medical Center provides quality healthcare, and Phoenix’s Sky Harbor International Airport is 90 minutes away.

For more information about the Town of Payson, please visit https://www.paysonaz.gov.

THE ORGANIZATION
Payson is a general law city, operating under the council-manager form of government, and voters here have approved home rule since 1980. The seven-member town council includes the mayor and six council members, all elected at large on a nonpartisan basis, council members to four-year terms, the mayor to a two-year term. The town council appoints the town manager and the town attorney.

Payson is a full-service municipality and includes these departments: town manager, town attorney, town clerk, finance, human resources, information technology, police, fire, public works, water, community development, parks and recreation, the town library, and a municipal airport. The Town’s FY 2023-2024 budget (July 1 – June 30) of $77 million supports 202.5 FTE, including PTE and seasonal.

Payson enjoys a world-class water delivery system and arguably the most robust water portfolio in Arizona (dual delivery, 100-year supply), all but eliminating water as an issue for proposed commercial and residential development. Green Valley Water, a sanitary district, provides wastewater treatment services.

One important sign of organizational health is town council’s commitment to a facilitated retreat every January to set council priorities and produce the annual corporate strategic plan.

QUICK FACTS

Population ..................... 16,351
Size ........................... 19.36 sq mi
Elevation ...................... 5,003 ft
2023-24 Budget ............... $77M
FTE ............................. 202.5
2023-24 Department Budget .... $1.5M
2023-24 Dept. FTE (+ contracts) . 4.0
The council wants to redefine the town as a destination, instead of as a pass-through community to the rest of Rim Country. To this end, town council is exploring funding a number of infrastructure and capital improvement projects through the use of excise tax-backed bonds, or general obligation bonds. Projects include an indoor aquatics facility, an expanded public safety campus, buildout of the town’s IT infrastructure, and others. As do other communities, Payson faces a deferred capital maintenance backlog, a shortage of affordable and workforce housing, and the potential impact of recent legislative attempts to preempt local taxation, which would impair Payson’s revenues.

**IT DIRECTOR AND THE DEPARTMENT**

The Payson Town Council and Town Manager Troy Smith are investing heavily in Payson’s information technology systems and staffing. They have accepted the responsibility for, and are completely committed to, modernizing the town’s 19-year-old network infrastructure in order to move Payson to a modern cloud platform and services.

Reporting directly to the town manager, the information technology director (ITD) oversees a departmental budget of $1.5 million, supporting 4.0 FTE: the ITD, two systems analysts (public safety and GIS), and a user technician. An interim ITD currently serves the town, and two positions are vacant. Further, the town relies on managed service providers (MSPs) for day-to-day support and to manage the firewall and IT security. Additional providers are focused on other critical projects. The ITD, therefore, oversees a balance of full-time staff on-site, and various MSPs. Payson’s new ITD will be nimble enough to manage this hybrid workforce, recommending staffing adjustments as may be needed.

The information technology (IT) department is the strategic business partner of every other town department. The director must understand each of their unique business needs, and provide them guidance.

IT issues facing Payson include the major, multi-year project of building a new IT infrastructure for the town. The new director will develop and lead an IT Strategic Plan to address an outdated network topology and obsolete equipment. The next ITD must have the IT knowledge and experience, project-management expertise, business sense, strategic vision, grit, and emotional intelligence to achieve these objectives. Some of this work has started: of 58 IT projects in queue, 32 of them are underway. Fully developing cyber security requirements and protecting the town from cyber-attack are obvious priorities.

A bachelor’s degree in information systems, information technology, computer science, systems engineering, or a closely related field, and at least five to 10 years of experience in the field of information technology, including at least two years supervisory experience, are required. Knowledge in designing, installing, and maintaining a complex LAN/WAN environment, including mobile, web, AV, wireless communications, and other fiber optics is also required. The town strongly prefers candidates with experience working with local government IT systems, including public safety systems, and business

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN**

Absent unforeseen circumstances, the recruitment will follow the schedule below. Be mindful of the filing deadline and final interview dates, which are unlikely to change.

**SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filing Deadline:</th>
<th>Recommendation of Candidates:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 31, 2023</td>
<td>August 15, 2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preliminary Interviews: August 8-10, 2023

Finalist Interview Process: August 25, 2023
solutions. At its sole option, the town may consider any equivalent combination of education and experience that demonstrates the skills and abilities required in this position.

THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

The next information technology director (ITD) will be a proven, dynamic leader with impeccable integrity and the highest ethical standards, a person of character. The ideal candidate understands the nuances of municipal government and the specific needs of its various departments, including elections, law enforcement, and others. She or he is politically astute but apolitical, with strong situational awareness, confidence, common sense, and a positive attitude.

The next ITD is a visionary, with demonstrated change management, project management, and strategic planning skills. She or he is also a hands-on, working manager, who is proactive, self-directed, and able to work projects through to completion. The preferred candidate will use IT to help Payson become more of a data-driven organization, and to establish efficiencies, including enterprise budget management systems.

The ideal candidate has expert outward- and inward-facing communication and presentation skills and the ability to communicate to broad audiences, including presentations to the town council, briefings to the town manager, regular assistance to department heads, and conversations with any town employee. Most important, she or he can express complex IT concepts in plain English, so that anyone is able to understand them, regardless of the listener’s level of sophistication or experience.

The next ITD knows (or is able to learn quickly) FedRAMP, CJIS, and Arizona’s public procurement system, among other systems. The town is focusing on transparency, leveraging GIS data, and providing solutions to improve operational effectiveness.

The ideal candidate is a collaborative member of the town’s leadership team. She or he will be the true strategic business partner of every department head and director in the town. The preferred candidate has the courage to innovate and challenge the status quo, and is not afraid to fail. She or he has very strong interpersonal skills and a customer-service focus.

The next ITD is approachable and passionate about the IT function. She or he appreciates Payson’s character and the outdoors, and wants to come here to have an impact and leave a legacy.

APPLY

To be considered for this excellent professional opportunity, please email only your cover letter and resume to apply@columbialtd.com, naming your files Last.First.CL and Last.First.Resume. Receipt of your submittal will be acknowledged within two business days. All applicants will be updated on their status following the Recommendation of Candidates.

If you have any questions regarding the recruitment process, or this opportunity, please feel free to call Andrew Gorgey directly at (970) 987-1238. For more information, visit the Columbia ltd website: https://columbialtd.com.

TOTAL COMPENSATION

The annual salary range for this position is $100,000 to $147,000. Appointment will be made depending upon the qualifications of the selected candidate and fit with the community and organization. In addition, the town provides the following benefits: health, dental, vision, and life insurances – the town may pay up to 76% of premiums depending on selected coverage, and Section 125 cafeteria plan makes employee portion a pre-tax deduction – and multiple supplemental insurances, a prescription drug benefit, and a health savings account are available. Retirement benefits are through the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) – the FY24 mandatory deduction is 12.29%, with disability, which is matched 100% by the town, and a voluntary 457(b) deferred compensation plan is available. This position enjoys paid time off, 24 hours of personal time, and 10 paid holidays annually. Relocation assistance and possible additional incentives including a limited hybrid work schedule and others, are subject to negotiation.