

Community Comment  
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Sam Pennisi

### A New City Manager

One of my pet peeves has to do with the people we hire for the top management positions in both public and private organizations. We seem to have this belief that the best person for the top job must be someone from outside the fold. I've seen enough of these hireings that I think it's true.

I've seen faculty at HSU passed over for promotion or permanent positions that were perfect for the job. But they were passed over for the touch of the exotic. That is, someone who brings a different set of experiences to the positions. There is no doubt that there is a time and a place for a fresh perspective and different experiences. But often, the best person for the job ~~may~~ just be the obvious local choice.

I've seen our local schools bring in an outsider when the position screamed for continuity; and great candidates were available. This is especially true with regard to principals and superintendents; as well as teachers.

I've seen local businesses bring in outside management thinking they must offer more than any local candidate can possibly offer. They sometimes work out but they often end up leaving abruptly to take a better position. They may have great management credentials but lack any commitment to the company or the area.

And we have had too many examples of top managers hired for our local cities that have stayed until the next better job opened up or until retirement was possible. These make for good personal choices but are very disruptive to a working and involved community.

With this in mind, I'd like to congratulate the City of Arcata for hiring one of our own. And, I'd like to congratulate Karen Diemer for being selected as our next City Manager.

I've know Karen a little over a long period of time. When I was on the council, the internal management of the city corporation was a primary interest of mine. The manager plays a key role in the selection and implementation of the goals of the city and the control of the budget across all the various departments. It is a formidable task. While not a policy maker like the council, the manager has to translate the goals of the council into something that can be implemented. Working with five separately elected councilmembers is challenging. Each will have their own ideas and personality and will try to influence the outcome of policies that will steer the direction of the city. Between working for the councilmembers and managing the department heads and the budget, the city manager walks an interesting and difficult line.

Of course, time will tell but I think the council made a wise choice with the selection of Ms. Diemer. I'm sorry her husband has to retire as a result of this choice. He has been a credit to the city as well and will be missed.

Good luck to Karen Diemer, City Manager, City of Arcata. You have an amazing opportunity to manage a great city and community. I wish you well.

This has been Sam Pennisi for community comment.