

Position posting for The Pecan Street Project

Position title: Executive Director

Location: Austin, TX

Posting date: 16 September 2009

Closing date: 14 October 2009

The organization

The Pecan Street Project (PSP) is a newly launched not-for-profit Texas corporation formed as a partnership between the City of Austin, Austin Energy, The University of Texas at Austin, and the Austin business community represented by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. Its goal is to ensure Austin's leadership in the creation of the next generation electrical system, including utility and community infrastructure, consumer systems, State and local policy and regulation, economic development opportunities, new venture creation, and community engagement.

The Pecan Street Project's role is to catalyze and coordinate efforts designed to further this goal. This includes, where appropriate:

- Coordinating pilot projects and other key efforts;
- Taking a lead role in relevant Federal or other grant applications;
- Creating a framework for the involvement of private sector partners, including real estate developers, technology companies, and others;
- Actively marketing PSP nationally and internationally to enhance Austin's reputation as a leader in the creation of the next generation electricity system;
- Identifying and driving necessary reforms in policy and/or law;
- Enhancing the economic development infrastructure around PSP, including start-up and relocation support;
- Acting as a key point of contact for the Austin community and others.

The need

The Pecan Street Project incorporated in August. The Board now needs rapidly to hire an outstanding individual to take on the role of Executive Director and maintain the Project's considerable momentum. At the time of his/her hiring, the Executive Director will be the sole employee of PSP and will report directly to the Board.

The role

The Executive Director, working closely with the Board, will serve as the visionary leader for the present and future direction of PSP. He/she will serve as the face of the organization to the community at large, both locally and outside of Austin. The Executive Director will be responsible for the overall growth and impact of PSP and for protecting and enhancing the PSP brand, as well as managing day-to-day operations for the organization and ensuring PSP's economic and organizational sustainability.

Essential job elements include:

- Attracting funding for the operations of the organization, probably including grant funding and sponsorships;
- Identifying key projects (such as pilots/demonstrations, media campaigns, etc.) coordinating among project participants, and raising funding to execute the projects. It is expected that some of these projects will require tens of millions of dollars to successfully complete;
- Defining and executing an awareness building campaign around PSP in particular and Austin's next generation electricity system leadership in general;
- Ensuring that smart grid, distributed generation, and other PSP-related activities in Austin have maximum economic development impact (especially through the creation and/or relocation of technology companies;)
- Creating a robust and inclusive process for community involvement with PSP, and actively managing that involvement to ensure ongoing community engagement with PSP and its initiatives. This will include developing collaborative and mutually advantageous relationships among the various clean energy participants and stakeholders in the Austin community;
- Seeking private corporate participation in the development and demonstration of next generation electric system technologies;
- Overseeing the operations of PSP, including finances, vendor relationships, IT, etc.;
- Building the PSP organization, including both people and processes.

Experience and qualifications

The Executive Director will be provided the opportunity to excel in a highly visible role that interacts with thought leaders, corporate leaders, political leaders, and community leaders in the public, private, academic, and not-for-profit sectors. Candidates will need intelligence, interpersonal skills, energy, organizational proficiency, and utility-sector knowledge to effectively represent and run the organization.

Ideal professional experience and personal attributes include:

- Natural aptitude, executive presence, and verbal and written communications skills to allow the Executive Director to effectively evangelize PSP;

- Demonstrated strategic capability in general and a clear vision for the evolution of the electrical power system in particular;
- Proven ability to raise funds for a not-for-profit or public entity, including experience securing at least an incremental \$250,000 in a fiscal year;
- Proven track record of successfully working with PSP's key stakeholder groups (the City of Austin, Austin Energy, The University of Texas at Austin, the Austin business community, potential corporate partners, and the community groups representing engaged Austin citizens);
- Proven ability to build coalitions across diverse groups, including both for-profit and not-for-profit stakeholders;
- Understanding of the history, purpose, and goals of The Pecan Street Project;
- Understanding of technology-based economic development and job creation. Direct experience with such initiatives would be a plus;
- Understanding of the issues and challenges facing utilities as they transition to an environment with increased smart grid and distributed generation capabilities. Executive experience, governance experience, and/or significant consulting experience with a utility would be a plus;
- Grant writing experience would be a plus.

Compensation

Compensation is competitive with that earned by other heads of high-profile, technology-focused not-for-profits in Central Texas.

Sources of funding

The Pecan Street Project is not a publically funded entity and has no pre-existing or ongoing source of income or capital. It will raise money from public and private sources in order to fund both its base operations and any special projects that it undertakes.

To date, PSP has received a founding pledge of \$50,000 from the School of Engineering at The University of Texas at Austin. It is expected that the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce may also make a founding contribution, although this has not yet been confirmed. The Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) has secured roughly \$300,000 over two years from the Department of Commerce to support PSP programs.

As the first employee of a newly founded organization, the Executive Director will be responsible for raising the money to pay his/her own salary and benefits, as well as any other operational expenses.

For more information

This search is being directed by Scott Uhrig of Whiterock Partners, a technology-focused executive recruitment firm. For more information, please email a detailed CV to:

Scott.Uhrig@whiterockpartners.com