

March 1, 2021

Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
1300 NW Wall Street
Bend, OR 97303

Dear Chair DeBone and Commissioners:

I am pleased to submit my application for the position of County Administrator. I believe my skills, qualifications, relationships, and institutional knowledge have prepared me well to successfully serve as our County's new leader from day one.

Our organization has been at the forefront of statewide and national issues for decades while also earning a reputation for providing outstanding public services and enjoying strong community partnerships to achieve shared goals. These are rare qualities for smaller and relatively isolated local governments. Our next County Administrator will provide leadership to sustain and improve these qualities as our region rapidly changes. This means our new leader will strategically and thoughtfully act to position our organization to serve a growing and more diverse population with complex needs in a society transforming from new technologies, housing and workplace preferences, and more.

For example, on February 21, 2021, Bend Chamber CEO Katy Brooks wrote in *The Bulletin (Pandemic, remote work bring permanent changes to the office)*:

"COVID-19 accelerated changes in the traditional office, but many of them were already in the works. A growing remote workforce that began years ago has accelerated, making us rethink the office, how we communicate with co-workers and redefined how we see ourselves as employees. As we ponder what the office will be like post-pandemic, there will be changes in how we choose to live, how we work with one another and to the very space in which we work... The remote workforce will require Central Oregon to be ready with housing, commercial and smart city facilities that are wired and ready for people to work from anywhere... The world and the workforce have moved on, and we need to accept that this trend has already become the norm."

I am prepared to lead our organization as we anticipate and respond to these and other changes. My career and education in public administration and community and regional planning, lifelong connection to Central Oregon, and experiences with and dedication to Deschutes County have uniquely positioned and inspired me to serve as our new County Administrator.

My background in public policy spans the public, private and non-profit sectors; federal, state and local governments; urban, rural and resort communities; from coast-to-coast; and from high altitudes to sea level. In addition, my educational experiences at Oregon universities and work across the state and nation have enabled me to establish close relationships with people and organizations that I regularly connect with to share information and best practices. Together, we improve our organizations and communities while growing professionally as we learn from each other. I also regularly attend and speak at conferences to remain informed of new and innovative land use planning practices and issues. If hired for this position, I would endeavor to continue my efforts to stay at the forefront of city/county management and applicable policies while also contributing to my colleagues and profession with the International City/County Management Association and similar organization(s), to the extent possible.

My lifelong connection to Central Oregon began with growing up in the Willamette Valley. Our family frequently visited, staying in campgrounds and at resorts, ranches, and Third Street motels in Bend. We thoroughly enjoyed every trip. Following college graduation, I lived and worked across the country and continued to visit as much as possible. I always hoped to make Deschutes County home. Finally, in late 2005, we moved our family here. My personal connection has provided me with a deep appreciation and understanding of our region's past. This connection, combined with staffing our Historic Landmarks Commission, provides important insights into how we include all generations and traditional characteristics of our region into our approaches to addressing present and future County issues.

I have enjoyed serving as our County's Planning Director and Community Development Department (CDD) Director since early 2009 and late 2012, respectively. I have taken great pride in leading and participating on teams with our talented staff to collaboratively develop and implement innovative, high profile, complex projects with competing interests; improve operational efficiencies and customer services; sustain a positive work environment and departmental culture; and build and maintain strong relationships within and beyond our organization. I have aimed to serve our County at every opportunity, including serving on state, city and regional committees, and County committees – from small/informal work groups (branding) to staff committees (classification and compensation, contract negotiations) to the larger BOCC-appointed Audit Committee. Serving on these committees is rewarding both in terms of contributing to our organization as well as to fulfilling my desire to continuously learn.

One of my greatest professional achievements is serving on the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). In this capacity, I contribute to our evolving statewide land use planning program. I also develop new skills and approaches to managing diverse advisory and political bodies, and learn about various state organizations, laws, programs, and employment practices.

In sum, I believe my qualifications match those identified in the recruitment brochure for this position. I genuinely appreciate your consideration of my application for this important position, including the time and input from staff and everyone involved in this selection process.

Please know that if I am not selected for this position I will genuinely be pleased to continue serving as CDD Director, a position that I am truly honored to hold, and look forward to supporting our next County Administrator to the very best of my abilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Lelack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Nick Lelack, AICP