



BENSON

MINNESOTA

pop. 3,480



CITY MANAGER POSITION

SALARY RANGE: \$105,000 TO \$130,000

WELCOME TO BENSON, MINNESOTA!



The City of Benson, county seat for Swift County, is located in West-Central Minnesota with a population of 3,480. Benson is approximately 130 miles west of the Minneapolis/St Paul metropolitan area, 30 miles west of Willmar, and 22 miles east of Morris. Three major roadways intersect in Benson and see thousands of cars due to daily traffic patterns. As the City is located just 24 miles from the University of Minnesota-Morris, additional unique opportunities are brought to the community.

Benson is a uniquely complex city with many amenities and a variety of housing due, in part, to its receipt of multiple Small Cities Development Grants. A community initiative called "Beautify Benson" uses various fundraising efforts to make Benson an attractive community for its residents and visitors. Benson is a volunteer-oriented community. The Beautify Benson initiative has funded flowerpots, gained support for the removal of dilapidated buildings, and fostered increased efforts to remove trash and enforce of city ordinances to remove blight. Another recent movement to create a chaplaincy group has formed with the purpose of enriching lives within the community and to help bring people together who are seeking more from life and have a desire to build connections throughout the community.



Benson is a forward-looking community that values public safety, quality of life, and treats people with dignity and respect.

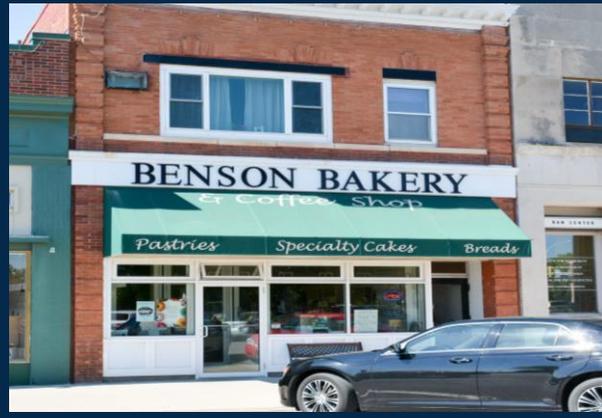
ECONOMIC VITALITY

The City has an active Economic Development Authority (EDA) led by a contracted full-time Community and Business Development Specialist staff person. The EDA issues loans from the Revolving Loan Fund to promote the general welfare of the people of Benson. The City is also fortunate to collaborate with the Benson Industrial Development Corporation, and the Swift County RDA, which supports private/public economic and community development projects throughout the community. The City of Benson invests revolving loan funds to enhance economic growth in the area, create and/or retain high quality jobs for the residents of the City and the surrounding region, and build the taxbase.

Benson is one of the most progressive manufacturing cities of its size in all of Minnesota. Several industries in the City are on the cutting edge of 21st Century manufacturing. Chippewa Valley Ethanol Co (Industrial Alcohol & E85), Willmar Fabrication, Custom Roto Mold, Inc., Enviro-Dyne Industrial Services, Ag-Vise Laboratories, Lorenz Manufacturing, and an agricultural division of Case IH all claim Benson as their home. Deeply vested in a wide variety of agri-business technologies, Benson is a leader in today's renewable marketplace. Residents and visitors enjoy the quality of life a small town provides with modern technology available at their fingertips. It is a fabulous place to start or expand a business and raise a family.

The community offers a large variety of retail and services to its residents including two grocery stores, a local coffee shop that roasts their own beans, a bakery, restaurants, a dental office, and fitness options. Residents also enjoy access to a municipal hospital and clinic with memory care and assisted living, an outdoor community pool, a multi-generational owned community newspaper, and long-term service providers: plumbing (70 years), electrical (85 years), and hardware (40 years).

Photo Credit: Reed Anfinson, Publisher/Owner of Swift County Monitor-News, Benson, MN



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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Benson Public Schools blends a challenging academic environment with a wide array of athletic, artistic, technical, vocational, exploratory and college level course offerings. K-12 enrollment averages about 820 students per year. The District operates one elementary school (PK-5), and a high school (6- 12). In addition to the K-12 education program, the District provides Community Education, an Alternative Area Learning Center, Heartland Girls Ranch, Summer School, Challenge Course opportunities, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options, Early Childhood Special Education Programs, Pre-School Early Childhood Family Education, and Infant, Toddler, Preschool & School-Aged high quality Child Care.

The Benson School District is a highly valued commodity of the community. In 2018, the community supported a \$25 million referendum which provided improvements to the elementary and high school in addition to the construction of a new performing arts theatre. The Community Services Director is bringing a variety of music and the arts to perform at the theatre. The school also received a \$6 million grant to provide a school-run daycare center.



HEALTHCARE

Swift County-Benson Health Services (SCBHS) has been in operation since 1912 and is staffed with a group of family practice physicians, nurse practitioners, and outreach specialists that provide a wide range of medical services for the community. These services include cardiology, emergency services, family practice, internal medicine, laboratory and radiology services, surgery and same day procedures, and much more. The City of Benson maintains a helipad for the hospital.

The Swift County-Benson Health Services rural clinic is a collaboration between SCBHS and Carris Health. The facility offers scheduled appointment hours and a walk-in clinic.



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RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Benson provides an opportunity to plan the ultimate staycation with various park and recreational activities, camping, golfing, kayaking on the river, hunting, fishing, Farmer's Market, archery club, parades throughout the year, a local airport, swimming at the community pool, ballpark and hockey arena, and an expanding trail system.

Sitting on the banks of the Chippewa River and nestled amid many oak trees, the Benson Golf Club offers eighteen challenging holes of golf. This municipal golf course will celebrate its 100th year in 2023. It is managed by a non-profit management organization. The Club proudly hosts a full tee-sheet on men's and women's league nights, Friday night couples' events, and its annual RibFest in the fall.

A member of the Pioneerland library network, the Benson Public Library is a very large and well-stocked library for a town this size. In addition to a wide variety of books and periodicals, the library has a computer room for accessing the Internet and working on projects, a meeting room serving community business and social needs, and a study room for students and others needing a quiet place to learn.

The Benson City Aquatic Center is a deluxe water park featuring four pool areas, a playground, and a wading pool with several waterfall mushrooms for the children to splash in. Older patrons will enjoy the lap pool, diving boards, and the massive 30ft high, 168ft long waterslide. Concessions are provided on site, and the water park is within easy walking distance of Ambush Park, the Benson Golf Club, and Dairy Queen.

Ambush Park is highly valued for family friendly camping, hiking, and picnic activities. The Park is home to an old schoolhouse which is used annually to host second graders for one week to immerse themselves in pioneer history.

The only operating cinema in Swift County, the Demare Theatre, is an example of the charming, small-town theatres which are becoming very rare in the U.S. Enjoy the best popcorn in town while watching a movie on the big screen.

The Benson Civic Center, home of Morris Benson Area Storm Hockey, hosts indoor hockey and open skating. It is known for fast, hard ice and heated seating.

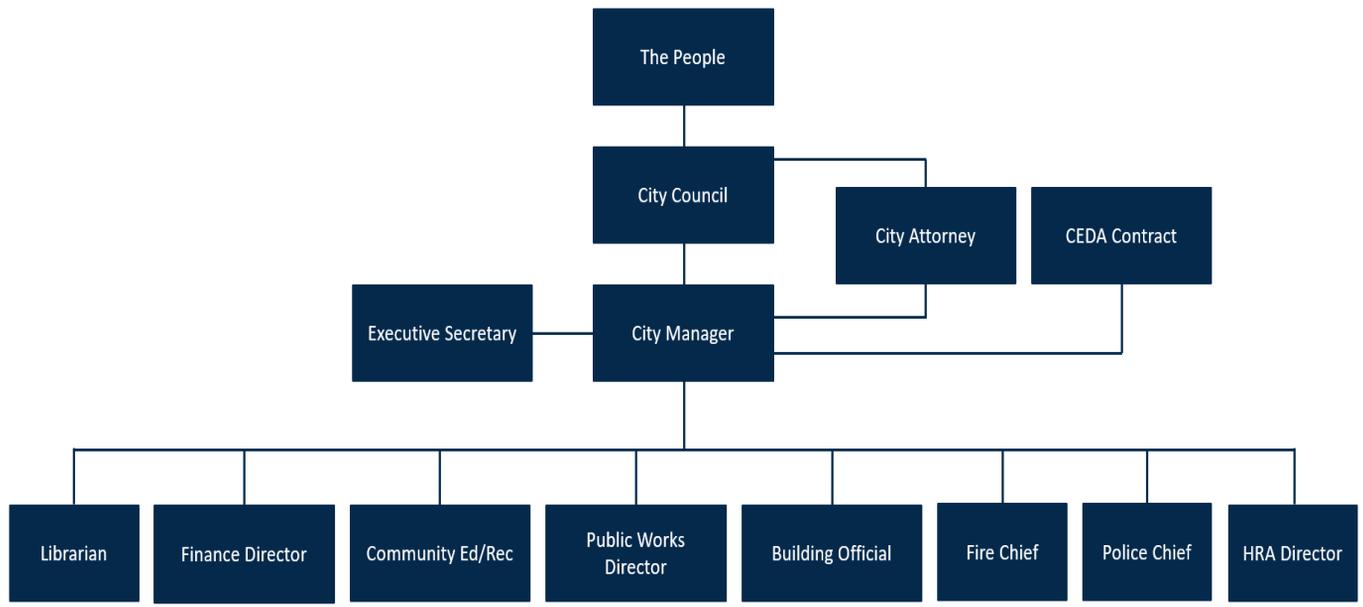
For fun on the water, the Chippewa River offers a convenient access and canoe landing for fishing and other water sports.

Popular events in Benson include the Kid Day Celebration, Pioneerland Band Festival held annually on Flag Day, the Fall Craft Fair, and much more.



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THE ORGANIZATION



The City of Benson operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Council consists of a Mayor and four Council members who serve at large. The Mayor serves a two-year term, and each Council member serves a four-year term.

The Council agreed that the City has great utilities and public works staff. The City also has its own contracted economic development staff person, Finance Director, and incredible administrative staff who are easy to work with. City staff work well together and share a team mentality across all departments. The City Manager encourages communication between the various departments via regular staff meetings and informal gatherings. City staff and the City Manager work hard to complement each other.

The community supports its Fire and Police. The Fire Department has 30 volunteer fire members and is respected by the City Council. The Police Department, formerly located within City Hall, now has a new building complete with interview rooms and is located within the City's industrial park. The Police Chief is well respected and oversees seven sworn officers, one SRO, and one full-time administrative staff.

The City of Benson manages its electric utility. The Utility has 10 MW of self-generated standby power which is contracted out for demand. The City can generate 150% of its peak needs. The City Substation is 12 years old and will soon add a second transmission line. Benson is a member of Missouri River Energy Services which provides supplemental power and contracts lineworker staff to the City. The City provides direction to the lineworkers and enjoys a tremendous level of trust and longevity amongst the contracted staff. The City recently reached its goal of placing 45% of its electric lines underground. This momentum continues until all lines are underground.

The Street Department recently received a 10,000 sq. ft. addition to its building and has well maintained equipment. Located adjacent to the department is a wood shop which allows staff to create City signs. It is also the site of a 24-hour compost pile.



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THE ORGANIZATION – CONT'D

The Benson Wastewater Treatment Facility is a Mechanical Class A plant which will receive a \$2.5 million upgrade this year. The seven-year-old City Water Plant will receive a Council approved 300,000-gallon underground water storage tank which will improve water quality.

The City's HRA owns and operates 100 apartment units including a 60-unit high rise. In addition, Swift County owns and operates a 30-unit townhome complex. A 26-unit for-profit townhome project is scheduled to begin construction in 2022 within a Tax Increment Financing District. The City works with the County HRA and Upper MN Valley RDA to acquire grant dollars for home improvement projects to bring housing up to better standards.

The municipal airport (located outside City limits) recently completed construction of a grant funded arrivals/departures terminal building.

The City owned Armory was recently saved from destruction through receipt of a \$678,000 grant for an extensive remodel project.

The City has annexed land over the years from neighboring townships due to its good relationships.

The City's finance position is strong. The new City Manager will inherit very little debt and a very healthy \$14 million Economic Development Grant Fund for future economic development opportunities. In 2022, the City made its last payment on the municipal pool. The City has enjoyed no grievances with the union for over 25 years. The utilities are well managed and the municipal on-sale/off sale liquor store provides the City with a \$80,000 transfer into the General Fund.

The City owned Cemetery has been expanded for future growth (1,100 additional grave sites and a columbarium), and all sites have been inventoried. The cemetery is proud to call itself the home of 16 Civil War Veterans.

The City Council has pushed for innovation and historically has not been afraid to try new things. The City has pursued economic development efforts that have been recognized statewide.

The City takes an active role in strategic planning.

The City of Benson employs 24 full-time staff, 50 part-time staff, and 38 seasonal staff.



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BUDGET SUMMARY

	2021 Adopted	2022 Adopted
General Fund		
General Government	425,288	490,218
Police Department	1,061,875	1,079,093
Fire Department	172,500	164,750
Streets and Roads	623,135	692,175
Swimming Pool	127,300	128,200
Parks Department	360,410	354,210
Airport	69,000	68,800
Transfers Out	495,000	598,850
Other	195,610	130,131
Total General Fund	\$3,530,118	\$3,706,427
Library Fund	123,520	127,174
Perpetual Care Cemetery	1,600	1,300
General Capital Outlay Fund	1,335,000	2,833,000
Concrete Projects Fund	30,000	30,000
Storm Water Fund	31,000	31,000
G.O. Pool Bonds Series 2012A	67,088	70,735
G.O. Bonds Series 2014A	67,570	66,460
G.O. Police Dept. Bonds Series 2017A	83,275	82,075
Economic Development Authority Fund	906,642	392,418
Fire Truck Lease	90,865	90,865
NSP (Xcel Energy) Grant Fund	3,787,000	2,991,640
Tax Increment Dist. #8	203,744	40,200
Water Fund	553,053	563,723
Sewer Collection & Disposal	893,324	913,940
Electric Fund	3,378,117	3,457,241
Liquor Fund	356,094	363,355
Garbage Collection Fund	173,460	282,660
Revolving Loan Fund	12,000	12,000
Grand Total	\$12,081,352	\$12,337,786



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ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE POSITION

- Direct, manage, and coordinate activities of all City departments and offices, except when such authority is vested by Statutes in boards and commissions or elected officers of the City; assign, delegate, and supervise department heads. Provide follow-up to ensure effective service is being provided to the public by efficient conduct of all municipal affairs.
- Advise and provide recommendations to the City Council on significant matters and major policy issues, report on financial status and general operating conditions, and recommend development of objectives, action, policy and/or legislation required to best meet the public interest.
- Serve and actively participate as a leader and member of the leadership team, exercising a leadership style that promotes positive and active support from City staff at all levels. Provide advice and counsel on many diverse, complex, and sometimes difficult issues.
- Establish general direction and primary goals for operating departments and cause the development of related work plans, operating budgets, and capital improvement plans; propose the annual budget and promote a sustainable budget approach in recommending expenditures, projecting revenue, adherence to policy, and ensuring budgetary compliance.
- In conjunction with City Council, develop, monitor, and communicate the City's vision and mission and implementation phases of the City's strategic plan to ensure that long range goals and objectives are met including the documentation of those metrics and milestones necessary to measure success.
- Ensure the development of an effective municipal organization which includes recommending changes in organization structure as appropriate and working with department supervisors to ensure effective job design and utilization of employees.
- Appoint and remove, upon the basis of merit and fitness, all subordinate officers and employees in the departments except the department heads who shall be appointed or removed by the City Council upon the recommendation of the City Manager. The Manager, however, may temporarily suspend a department head per Charter rules.
- Ensure effective management of financial assets and effective investment of available funds and proper accounting practices to control financial assets and provide for financial planning.
- Prepare and submit to the Council suggested amendments to the administrative code.
- Ensure proper public relations and follow-up with all departments to make sure that all complaints and public contacts are effectively handled which may include identifying appropriate service levels to meet customers' needs. Participate in local affairs as appropriate.
- Provide professional support to the City Council and serve as a liaison to the Council by attending meetings, committees, boards, and commissions as may be required; confer with and prepare reports and recommendations for elected and appointed officials on operational or policy matters as requested and act as a liaison with other municipal bodies, the County, the state legislator, and federal agencies.
- Lead the development and implementation of City strategies for human resource practices and the collective bargaining process. Ensure labor contracts are settled in a timely and minimally contentious manner.
- Build on relationships that enhance and advance various collaborations and initiatives that benefit the City and its various partners. Represent the City at various functions pertaining to issues of importance to the community such as civic and business associations; meet with developers, officials, businesses, citizens, and representatives of the press to establish goodwill and resolve/respond to issues.
- Stay abreast of legislative issues specifically affecting local government and economic growth.
- Assume roles of Zoning Administrator and Floodplain Manager.



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DESIRED MANAGER ATTRIBUTES



- Has five years of city management experience and can bring new energy, drive, and fresh eyes to the organization.
- Has the ability to effectively tell the City's story, share the City's vision, and find ways to accomplish the Council's goals.
- Is tech savvy.
- Understands and leads using the City Manager form of government. Is comfortable being the conduit between Council, staff, and the public.
- Operates with a level head and uses practical knowledge. Can see the whole picture while balancing the needs of staff and financial constraints and is willing to pivot when necessary.
- Fosters a team atmosphere. Puts faith in staff and relies on good people. Uses the appropriate level of delegation; does not take it all upon oneself.
- Has general knowledge of streets, sewer, and water utilities. Is willing to learn the intricacies of a City-owned electric utility.
- Is a relationship builder and an informed decision maker. Is collaborative and resourceful, builds trust, and is not afraid to ask questions and reach out to potential partners.
- Is adaptable, flexible, and sees disruption as exciting.
- Has a firm grasp and understanding of local governmental accounting practices, open meeting laws, and statutes.
- Has honest and ethical personnel management.
- Is communicative and approachable, a good listener, and open to new ideas. Gets out and about - brings City Hall to the streets! Gets involved, understands, and appreciates small town life. Cares deeply for the community.



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NEW MANAGER PROJECTS AND GOALS

- Support and lead the City's efforts in being a welcoming community.
- Become familiar with the City's Comprehensive Plan and spearhead its updating over the next year or two. Carry on the City's vision for continued and managed growth and attract more retail options to the revitalized downtown area.
- Provide for the addition of a 26-mile electric power transmission line and aid in the City's process to become NERC compliant within three to five years.
- Continue to push forward the permitting process of Nature Energy's \$80 million anaerobic digester renewable energy/biogas project.
- Lead efforts in succession planning in all departments. Lead an effort to analyze the level of current City wages as compared to local and regional markets.
- Formally develop a policy for the allocation and use of the \$14 million Economic Development Fund for future economic development opportunities.
- Become the conduit in developing positive working relationships and opportunities for collaboration with the school district, county, state, and area communities.
- Facilitate removal of a City-owned elevator located within the downtown area.
- Promote opportunities in the community for entrepreneurship, renewable energy, telework, fiber connectivity, and recreation activities throughout the seasons.
- Support the financing, reconstruction, and maintenance of streets and utility infrastructure in coordination with the Council, City staff, and formalized capital planning.
- Informally meet with members of the community through various means – having coffee, attending City events, visiting local business owners, attending community meetings, etc.
- Be ready to take on a City Hall project (e.g. space study, ADA accommodations, interior renovation).
- Initiate an engineering study for the potential annexation of 120-acres on the south side of town.
- Be at the forefront of the planning process for the City's next housing projects which include quality rental units and a planned twin home project.



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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

CITY: BENSON, MINNESOTA
POSITION: CITY MANAGER
SALARY RANGE: \$105,000 TO \$130,000
APPLICATION DEADLINE: 07/31/2022



The City of Benson seeks to fill the position of City Manager as the City Manager has retired after 25 years of service to the City.

JOB SUMMARY: This position plans and directs the administration of City functions as delegated by the Benson Charter and the City Council to ensure efficient municipal services and development in line with Council objectives. The City Manager operates with considerable discretion in administrative functions and in implementing policies of the Council and is responsible for effective recommendations in areas of policies, staffing, budgeting, etc. where Council action is required.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree in Public Administration or related field.
- Minimum of 5-7 years' experience in a responsible management position with broad municipal management experience.
- Experience and skill with budget development and management and strong understanding of financial controls.
- Knowledge of water and sewer utilities operations and familiarity with sewer and water capacity planning.
- Possess a valid Minnesota Driver's License and safe driving record.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master's degree in Public Administration or related field.
- Experience in the area of Municipal Electric Utilities.
- Experience in development and redevelopment with economic development corporations.
- Experience/understanding in the following areas:
 - Development of affordable, single household housing
 - Labor management, union negotiation skills, staff development, performance evaluations
 - Public financing techniques including successful grant writing experience
 - Retail development and downtown streetscape development
 - Land use planning in conjunction with the County and other governments
 - Successful team building and strategic planning processes
- Familiarity with annexation procedures, planning and zoning functions, liquor operation.

APPLY: Visit <https://daviddrown.hiringplatform.com/110548-benson-city-manager/376459-application-form/en> and complete the application process by July 31, 2022. Finalists will be selected on August 22, 2022, and final interviews will be held on September 12 and 13, 2022.

Please direct any questions to Liza Donabauer at liza@daviddrown.com or 612-920-3320 x111.



DDA Human Resources, Inc.
Waconia Office
P.O. Box 534
Waconia, MN 55387

Phone: 612-920-3320 x111
Fax: 612-605-2375
liza@daviddrown.com
www.ddahumanresources.com



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