



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

Position Profile

President & Chief Executive Officer Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber:

The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce is a bi-state regional federation of nearly 2,000 private, public and non-profit member organizations. The Chamber's mission is to promote economic growth and prosperity for business and its members through leadership in advocacy, education and engagement. As the largest local chamber in North Dakota and Minnesota, The Chamber's strategic goals include:

- Establish the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo region as a full-service metropolitan marketplace;
- Be a bold voice for business through strong thought leadership and a rich policy agenda; and
- Build a place of belonging to best serve members' interests.

The Chamber has been recognized by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives as a "Chamber of the Year Finalist" twice in the past five years. The organization provides a variety of programs and services for members and for the region, including business development, advocacy and public policy, military affairs, youth and community leadership development, professional women and young professionals networks, workforce development, membership development and services activities. The Chamber has also formed a joint venture initiative with the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation called Fueling Our Future. Fueling Our Future is a long-term regional effort to bring resources together and focus on workforce development, economic development and community assets/quality of life.

With a 15-member staff, a budget of \$1.9 million and a 16-member Board of Directors, The Chamber has a strong reputation on a regional and multistate-wide basis. The organization has developed and presented a variety of events and programs that are valued by members and the community at large and has generated revenue through sponsorships and attendance fees. In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the regional economy, The Chamber staff and volunteers have creatively ensured that relevant programs and events are offered virtually and through ongoing communication with the membership and metropolitan community. While the pandemic has influenced the finances of The Chamber, the team-oriented efforts of the staff have minimized this and continued to demonstrate the value of the organization to the region.

Craig Whitney served as The Chamber's previous President & CEO for nine years and passed away in December 2019. The Chamber's Vice President of Finance & Operations is now serving as Interim CEO. The Board of Directors has embarked on a national search to recruit a new President & CEO, who will guide The Chamber and its prominent leadership activities within the region.

More information on The Chamber is available on its website, fmwfcchamber.com.

The Position:

Location:

The position is based at the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce offices at 202 First Avenue North, Moorhead, MN 56560; telephone 218.233.1100.

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Reporting Relationships:

The President & Chief Executive Officer of The Chamber interacts directly with the Chair of the Board of Directors and reports to the 16-member Board. This executive will directly supervise the Vice President of Finance & Operations, Director of Events & Programs, Manager of Communications & Marketing, Manager of Government Affairs & Advocacy, and Manager of Membership; total staff of 15. The Chamber also engages with a Washington, D.C.-based contract lobbyist.

Other important interactions include: representatives and employees of Chamber member organizations; local, state and national elected officials and their staffs in both North Dakota and Minnesota; executives at other public- and private-sector partnership organizations including the Downtown Community Partnership, Greater Fargo Moorhead County Economic Development Corporation, Fargo-Moorhead Convention & Visitors Bureau; education officials; military leaders; and members of the media.

Position Charter:

The President & Chief Executive Officer is the chief paid executive and administrative officer of The Chamber and reports to a 16-member Board of Directors (including a five-member Executive Committee) and serves in a leadership role as the Secretary for the Fueling Our Future (“FOF”) joint venture partnership with the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, the CEO serves as Chair of the business advocacy group Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Air National Guard Support Group (“FMWFANGSG”). This executive is also responsible for ensuring the organizational structure is appropriate to fulfill The Chamber’s mission and vision by hiring, developing, motivating, evaluating and providing leadership to staff. The CEO is charged with being a visionary, bringing ideas forward to the Board and staff, and continuing to build and lead The Chamber to transform it where it needs to go to serve the regional community in these dynamic and challenging times.

This executive is the chief voice of The Chamber and operates with a focus that includes public/member relations, lobbying activities, strategic planning, community and region. The CEO will serve as the chief strategist, innovative thinker and collaborative team leader and lead overall program development, fundraising and messaging. This executive should demonstrate expertise in strategic thinking and planning, public policy, member engagement and relationships, program and event management, non-profit governance and operations, public speaking, and have an understanding of economic development. The CEO must be a dynamic leader with the ability to build relationships and work collaboratively within the regional community to achieve The Chamber’s and Fueling Our Future’s strategic objectives.

Major Duties and Responsibilities:

Chamber Communications and Representation

- Serve as the chief spokesperson for The Chamber and communicate the organization’s position on community, public and political issues, approving all public communications to ensure a consistent voice and messaging.
- Represent The Chamber, Fueling Our Future and FMWFANGSG in meetings on the local, state and federal levels.

Board of Director Governance

- Develop and maintain a strong, open, respectful working relationship with the Board. Carry the responsibility for the execution of policies adopted by the Board and assist the Board in the development of policy as required.
- Assist the Board of Directors in the interpretation, review, modification and development of governance policies, procedures, and position statements, ensuring they are followed and adhered to.
- Plan Board and Executive Committee meetings along with the annual planning retreat in conjunction with the Board Chair.

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- Serve as the secretary and chief staff liaison for the Board of Directors, its committees and Board-appointed task forces.

Strategic Planning

- Responsible for working with the Board of Directors to develop and execute a strategic plan that guides The Chamber's efforts toward fulfilling its mission and addressing key issues in the community that impact members. Provide periodic updates to the Board as to progress toward meeting the goals outlined in the strategic plan.

Public Policy

- Responsible for The Chamber creating and maintaining a public policy program at the local, state and federal levels.
- Oversee and manage the Public Policy efforts by monitoring all legislative activity on the city, state and federal level. Bring forth any issues that will need to be addressed that may have impact on members and communities.
- Direct all messaging as it relates to public policy.
- Develop and maintain relationships with city, county, state and federal government officials.

Economic Development

- Responsible for The Chamber's role in economic development, including business retention/expansion, infrastructure, workforce/education, health and safety, civic innovation, and collaboration with city and county governmental agencies and other economic development organizations.

Public Relations/Outreach

- Responsible for maintaining The Chamber's dynamic, positive and forward-thinking public image, including strategies for marketing, communications, public speaking and relations with members, the community and media.
- Ensure that Chamber policies as established at Board meetings are properly recorded and assists in the interpretation of such policies as required

Fundraising

- Continually fundraise to ensure annual budgets and new initiative goals are met or exceeded.
- Serve as lead fundraiser for Fueling Our Future campaigns in collaboration with Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Economic Development.
- Maintain relationships with current and potential key investors.

Member Recruitment and Retention

- Responsible for the overall performance of membership activities, including membership recruitment, stewardship and retention.

Event and Program Management

- Responsible for the evaluation of programs and events making appropriate adjustments as necessary to maintain relevancy.
- Provide guidance and approval to the overall look and operation of all program and events.
- Approve the creation of any new program or event.

Fiscal Management

- Responsible for overseeing the development of The Chamber's annual business plan and operational budget and relating that business plan and budget to The Chamber's mission, vision and strategic plan.
- Ensure The Chamber follows financial practices that provide organizational safety and soundness, achieve budget targets, sustain operations and grow capacity for new initiatives.

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Staff Leadership

- Responsible for ensuring the organizational structure is appropriate to fulfill The Chamber's mission and vision by hiring, developing, motivating, evaluating and providing leadership to the staff.
- Oversee the development of The Chamber's personnel administration systems to include the compensation/classification plan, performance appraisal program, employee training/orientation programs, operations/policy manuals and personnel files.

Compensation:

The President & Chief Executive Officer is expected to earn an attractive base salary with appropriate benefits and perquisites.

The Candidate:

Education:

A Bachelor's degree is required; an advanced degree in business, law, public administration or related field is preferred. Demonstrated commitment to continued professional development through the U.S. Chamber Institute for Organization Management or Certified Chamber Executive designation is preferred.

Professional Qualifications:

The ideal candidate is currently serving as the top executive of a comparable Chamber of Commerce or related significant business association or economic development-focused organization. Alternative experience includes serving as a "#2" or senior executive at a larger like enterprise as noted above, or as an executive from a complex private or public sector entity.

Preferred Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- **Executive leadership experience** (strong staff leadership, delegation and human resource development; has led a complex corporate, chamber, community or economic development organization).
- **Public policy** (capable of advocating sound public policy and developing effective and even-handed working relationships with elected/appointed officials and their staffs).
- **Collaborative relationships** (demonstrated track record of developing effective relationships and strategic alliances built on trust among all sectors and constituents).
- **Volunteer organization experience** (proven ability to motivate and utilize volunteers).
- **Economic/business development** (works collaboratively with established public sector delivery systems and private sector resources to effectively promote the economic development of a community or region).
- **Community/regional development** (able to identify both local and regional issues and effectively manage interactions with and among regional organizations to achieve common goals).
- **Planning** (proven track record of successfully developing and executing operational and strategic plans).
- **Governance** (significant involvement with board development and recruitment, governance issues, and interactions with sophisticated business leaders serving as directors).
- **Fiscal management** (demonstrated ability to manage financial affairs of an organization; experience with an annual budget with revenues of at least \$1.5MM).
- **Fundraising** (experience with varied successful resource development activities including capital campaigns, sponsorships and advertising, special events and other non-dues revenue campaigns).
- **Staff leadership** (demonstrated background of leading, managing and developing staff; inclusive while providing basic direction; allows senior staff team to execute without excessive personal involvement).
- **Varied industries** (experience within a business environment with diverse industries including technology, financial services, manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, retail and education).

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- **Inclusion** (experience working with diverse groups; promotes diversity programmatically).
- **Media/public relations** (ability to effectively articulate goals, objectives and policy positions of The Chamber to the media and the community).
- **Military affairs** (working closely with commanders and other leaders of military installations desirable).
- **Technology** (actively promotes enhancements and expansion of technology; recognizes value and potential of social media; computer literate).

Desired personal traits:

- **Communication skills** (good listener; excellent written and oral communication skills; experienced public speaker).
- **Visionary** (able to envision “the big picture” beyond daily operations and lead an organization toward strategic goals and ideas).
- **Interpersonal relations skills** (relates well to people; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Integrity** (possesses the highest ethical and moral standards; trustworthy).
- **Leadership** (a take-charge individual; can manage, motivate, challenge and delegate to others).
- **Persuasive** (able to synthesize various viewpoints and mobilize support for policy objectives).
- **Executive presence/credible** (polished; self-confident; able to command respect of Board, staff, business, government and community leaders).
- **Teamwork** (recognizes that many parties are necessary to accomplish big things; speaks of “we” first, not “I”; relishes in sharing credit with others).
- **Genuine** (fair; self-aware; walks the talk; takes responsibility).
- **Servant leadership** (excellent human relations skills; humble; builds constructive and effective relationships).
- **Energetic self-starter** (genuinely enthusiastic; strong work ethic, sense of urgency, and a “can do” attitude).
- **Focused** (pro-active; able to establish Chamber agenda and maintain key priorities).
- **Decisive** (makes decisions in a timely manner and achieves desired outcomes).
- **Executes for results** (proven track record of “getting things done;” holds others accountable).
- **Regional knowledge** (has or able to develop an appreciation for Midwestern US culture and ways of doing business).
- **Political acumen** (demonstrated ability to strategically navigate among municipal, county and state leaders).
- **Sense of humor** (genuinely light-hearted; able to enjoy life and see the humor in sometimes difficult situations).

Challenges and Opportunity:

Key accomplishments and challenges for the new President & CEO in the first year and beyond include:

- Establish his/her presence as The Chamber’s CEO by immersing him/herself into the details of the day-to-day operations of The Chamber and becoming knowledgeable about the work of its staff, finances, programs, Board members and committed volunteers.
- Initiate formal and informal introductions and connections with The Chamber’s membership and investors, through varied communications and in-person meetings. Communicate The Chamber’s relevancy and value to existing and prospective members by connecting investment with tangible outcomes.
- By listening and observing, form effective working relationships with key municipal, county, regional, state and national government leaders, entrepreneurial business owners and corporate executives, economic, community and tourism partner organizations, college and other educational officers, cultural arts leaders.

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- Help guide The Chamber staff, Board and volunteers through the issues the pandemic has fostered on the regional community. This includes the funding campaign for Fueling Our Future along with continuing The Chamber's creative and effective measures in offering programs and services virtually and through direct communication with members and regional stakeholders.
- Articulate an ongoing vision. Work with the Board and staff to evaluate the strategic direction and efficiency of The Chamber and offer his/her vision for possible short and long-term changes. Initiate a multi-year operational and budgetary review of the entire organization and its engagement with other related entities in the bi-state region.
- Become actively involved in the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo community, attending multiple Chamber and non-Chamber events; become known as "the face" of The Chamber within the regional community.

The President & Chief Executive Officer position of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce is an outstanding opportunity for a chamber of commerce, association, economic development or perhaps private sector executive to lead and expand an organization committed to the success of the growing region. The Chamber enjoys solid member relations and an excellent reputation with key organizations in the area along with strong fiscal results. The CEO will inherit an enthusiastic and dedicated Chamber staff and a committed Board of Directors. This CEO position represents a leadership opportunity to bring the organization to "the next level" along with an exciting role in defining the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo region for years to come.

About the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Region

The Fargo and West Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, region offers an outstanding quality of life and business environment. The region boasts a population of over 259,000 residents and is on pace to top 300,000 in the next decade. The community is the economic engine of this bi-state region and key industries include high-tech, manufacturing, education, healthcare, financial services and agricultural. Some of the region's largest employers include divisional, regional, national and global headquarters and facilities for Microsoft Business Solutions, Bobcat Co., John Deere Electronic Solutions, Border States Electric Supply, RDO Equipment Co., Sanford Medical Center, Titan Machinery and American Crystal Sugar. Fargo Moorhead West Fargo is the regional hub for business, education, healthcare, retail, services and entertainment.

The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo metropolitan community is consistently ranked among the best places in the nation to live, work, attend school and conduct business based on education, affordable homes, an increasingly diverse population and workforce and green space. Arts and culture include art and history museums, the Red River Zoo, galleries, a variety of community festivals, restaurants, symphony, and thriving theatre. The educational environment includes outstanding public, private and parochial schools along with institutions of higher learning, ranging from universities to business and technical colleges that enroll over 30,000 students. Professional athletics include minor league baseball and hockey while local colleges and universities compete at the Division I to Division III level in collegiate athletics.

The Fargo Moorhead West Fargo region has received significant national recognition for its business climate and quality of life, including:

- No. 1 of 10 Hottest Job Markets in 2020 (*ZipRecruiter*)
- One of the 100 Best Places to Live in America (*Money*)
- West Fargo named #11 and Fargo named #14 Best City to Live in U.S. (*Money*)
- North Dakota named #1 state for millennials (*Moneyrates.com*)
- Fargo named 8th Best City to Raise a Family (*WalletHub*)

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More information on the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo region can be found on the following websites:

- Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation: <http://www.gfmedc.com/>
- Fargo Moorhead Convention & Visitors Bureau: www.fargomoorhead.org
- City of Fargo ND government: www.fargond.gov
- City of Moorhead MN government: www.ci.moorhead.mn.us
- City of West Fargo ND government: www.westfargond.gov
- Cass County ND government: www.casscountynd.gov
- Clay County MN government: www.claycountymn.gov

Contact

The client organization we represent, and WAVERLY PARTNERS firmly support the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of race, religion, sex, age, national origin or disability. If you are aware of an outstanding chamber, association or business executive who meets these requirements, please contact WAVERLY PARTNERS, the executive search firm retained by The Chamber Board on this search and the preferred provider of executive search services of the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

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