

Sarasota County EDC resumes CEO search after efforts halted by pandemic

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SARASOTA COUNTY – The Economic Development Corp. of Sarasota County has resumed its nationwide search for a permanent leader after having halted its efforts last spring because of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent shutdown.

The EDC board tapped Jorgenson Consulting, a nonprofit executive recruiting firm, to help with the effort to replace Mark Huey, who resigned in late 2019 after more than eight years heading economic development efforts here.

Applications for the new position will be released in March.

Jorgenson Consulting was selected through a request for proposals and extensive interview process last year, the EDC said in a press release.

Todd Jorgenson, the consultant's managing partner and principal, noted that the search process will take several months.

“Their years of specialized experience set Jorgenson Consulting apart from other firms, and the EDC board of directors has the utmost confidence that they will identify and recruit the most qualified and best-suited executive for the CEO position,” Charlie Murphy, EDC board chair, said in a statement.

The EDC is the public-private partnership charged with attracting businesses to the county and assisting those already here to remain and expand.

Huey submitted his resignation following criticism by Sarasota County commissioners over the agency's performance.

The EDC is subsidized by tax dollars – often with more than a million each fiscal year – and some commissioners have questioned whether taxpayers are getting their money's worth, especially with the county's longtime policy of offering financial incentives to companies promising to attract jobs.

David Bullock, who retired in 2017 as Longboat Key's town manager, stepped in on an interim basis shortly after Huey resigned.