



City Administrator James Cleavenger – Bio

James Cleavenger has been the Oakridge City Administrator since 2022, after being hired by the Oakridge City Council by a unanimous decision. Prior to becoming the City Administrator, James served Oakridge as a fulltime police officer, beginning in 2017. In addition to being the CA, James continues to serve Oakridge as a volunteer Reserve Police Officer. He also served as a Reserve Police Officer in Junction City from 2010-2013 and in Coburg from 2013-2017.

As a police officer, James graduated from the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Leadership Institute, served on the State of Oregon’s Police Policy Committee, and is a Field Training Officer and ORPAT instructor. In 2019, he was awarded a Medal of Honor by the Oregon Peace Officers Association, for single-handedly disarming a suspect who had just murdered both of her parents and was in the process of attempting to kill a 3rd victim.

James is also a licensed attorney in Oregon and Washington. He earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of Oregon School of Law in 2008, and his LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of Liverpool in England, in 2005. In addition to his private practice, James worked as a Judicial Law Clerk for US District Court Judge Michael McShane for 4 years in Federal Court in Eugene from 2013-2017, and for 6 months in Multnomah County Circuit Court in Portland in 2008.

Prior to his dual career as a police officer and lawyer, James worked in politics and government, including as the Special Assistant to the Cook County Assessor in Chicago from 2001 to 2004, and as a motorcade driver for Al Gore (2000) and Barack Obama (2008). Before going to law school, James earned his BA in Political Science & International Studies at DePaul University in Chicago. He also studied at Harvard, Oxford (England), and the University of Sheffield (England).

James grew-up in Richland, WA, where his grandfather was an electrical engineer and manager on the Manhattan Project at Hanford. His mother also worked at Hanford as a technical science librarian, and as a schoolteacher before she retired. His father is a retired police officer and DHS Child Protective Services Investigator.

James currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Oakridge-Westfir Chamber of Commerce, the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s Rural Fire Protection Review Taskforce, and multiple other civic and charity organizations. In his spare time, James is a competitive skier and can be found at Willamette Pass skiing off cliffs in his trademark 1970’s polyester leisure suit and “skiblades” (*very* short skis).

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