

MAYOR'S REPORT - APRIL 2016

The other day, I spent 3 hours driving new, downtown building owners around The Dalles; telling them about all the positive changes, showing them the new businesses and plans for other new developments. We talked about the Tokola apartment complex planned for the Tony's building area, the successes of the three new craft brew pubs (one of which is a brewery already looking to expand), the National Neon Sign Museum slated to open next spring and I showed them recent new shops opened up on 2nd street. They were enthusiastic and encouraged.

Then, unfortunately, after they left me, they encountered several existing business owners who rained on their parade. They heard negative comments, the kind that have become a bad habit even in the face of overwhelming evidence that our downtown is changing and seeing economic growth with optimistic new business owners moving to 2nd street and investing.

The changes are exciting; a hair college, a large hair salon, a new music store, a skateboard store, the Thai market, one brewery open and another about to open, plus two craft beer tap houses. And more is in the works. My prediction is that there will be a run on the remaining empty store fronts before long.

With MCMC locating 50 plus employees in the refurbished Craig Building and the completion of the Tokola apartment complex, more people will eat, drink and buy products downtown than have in years. Already, on Friday and Saturday nights, you can see people strolling between open businesses.

So where does the negative attitude come from? I suspect it's just an old habit - hard to break and like other bad habits, it needs some attention. Let's break it now. Stop complaining. If you have a suggestion about how to fix an issue and are willing to work toward a solution, step up, roll up your sleeves and stop the unfounded attacks and diatribes on Facebook or in the media. Out of town businesses looking at those kinds of comments might have second thoughts about moving to The Dalles.

The other day, I read some nasty Facebook comments about deep pot holes on 10th street, west of Dry Hollow. Instead of calling public works or me, for that matter, the writer was saying how disgraceful it was and how the city had just left it that way. The truth is, if you let us know, we will respond. I called public works and they will fix them.

Our economy IS coming back and all citizens and businesses WILL benefit from the growth. Be happy about these good changes. Get informed. Ask questions. Get involved in Main Street or the Chamber. How do you break an old habit? Like Nike once said, "Just Do It!"