

Alberta Invitation

Salberg focuses on local small businesses

Marty Salberg, director of business development, stepped into the spotlight last week when he was invited to attend the Economic Developers Association of Alberta's annual conference in Hinton, Alberta.

Salberg mingled with around 150 delegates and politicians from our next-door neighbor to discuss good business development strategies.

Salberg said communities across the provincial border have taken notice of Swift Current's success in attracting and retaining businesses.

"In Swift Current, we have to look after our existing businesses first," he said. "Being that statistics show that upwards of 80 per cent of new employees come from existing businesses expanding."

Salberg said that, in the past, the strategy for many communities was to chase after "smoke stacks" – trying to attract large manufacturing companies.

But that philosophy hasn't worked and Salberg's message is: focus on your existing entrepreneurs.

"We've seen it – we've sold lots and lots of property and we're getting more and more interest each and every day. It's working," he said.

Salberg said the credit goes to Action Swift Current, city council and the many volunteers who are committed to fostering local businesses.

He also said that the business incentive program brought forth by Action Swift Current and endorsed by city council has caught our neighbors' eye.

For an existing business that's expanding, that taxes that are applied to new assessment of the construction are exempt at 100 per cent for two years, 50 per cent for the third year and 25 per cent for the fourth year.

Also, for any new businesses coming into Swift Current, they get one year exempt at 100 per cent, another at 50 per cent and the third year at 25 per cent.

"It's just another arrow in our quiver that we can say we want you here," Salberg said. "And at the end of the day you're not giving them up because, if (businesses) aren't here, you're not collecting any taxes off of them anyway."

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