

Action Swift Current Seeking Business Solutions

Action Swift Current is close to launching an ambitious project aimed at helping improve local businesses.

The committee is planning to unveil a major Business Retention and Expansion program for the city and the surrounding R.M. of Swift Current. The project is aiming to build a positive business environment for the success of local business and ultimately the success of the community.

The program has a growing list of successes to follow, so the committee is hoping by starting the process they are taking control of their own destiny.

"If we just sit around for something to happen, we might be sitting for a long time," said Action Swift Current Chairman, Pat Parrot.

He said by reaching out to businesses they are trying to follow successes enjoyed by neighbouring communities such as Moose Jaw. They focused their business expansion attentions together and now the entire outlook of the community has changed.

"I mean if anyone would have done things individually they wouldn't have accomplished what they did. You know they all worked together.

They first got together...and then from there the whole attitude of the city changed and then they just started to take off and that's what we're looking to reproduce here."

The committee is looking for 150 volunteers to help survey the 279 businesses necessary to give them an accurate database of business concerns and positives in the community.

They have agreed to hook up with the University of Minnesota, the developers of the Business Retention and Expansion

Program, to analyze the data and provide recommendations out of the survey results.

A launch date near the end of March or early April is being planned to fully unveil their plans.

Action Swift Current Leadership Team member, Al Chilton, said the whole process is a catalyst for improving business in Swift Current.

"The function of this whole committee is business retention and expansion. The first thing is to retain the businesses that we've got – to get them put into a position where they can expand and grow," Chilton said.

The other thing is it's been proven that people in other communities who look at moving to a community with a business will observe if other businesses are happy. They always ask the businesses what it's like to do business in that town. They'll go there because it's a pretty vibrant, active community.

"Everybody likes to be part of a winner, and that's the attitude we're trying to do, is get it to an attitude where we're going to be a successful, positive community, and that people want to come here."

Most importantly the survey is trying to determine what one thing would improve business in Swift Current, or improve the city itself.

Before a community can assist existing businesses, it must first identify the businesses' needs, concerns, problems and opportunities. These survey results are kept confidential, as truthful answers are key to determining the true business climate in the city.

There are various timelines to return information back to businesses after the survey. The committee would like to react

to red-flag issues quickly, and the full report will result in further reaction.

“ I do expect that there’s going to be an immediate result procedure, and then there’s going to be some long-term projects spin-off this. Where they go or what they are, we don’t know. That’s why we’re asking the questions.”

The survey is currently being finalized, and the manpower necessary to complete the work is being organized.

The Business Retention and Expansion program is a true community effort and will not yield results unless community leaders support the action and join in the effort.

The program builds action-oriented partnerships between federal, provincial and

municipal government agencies, local development organizations and private sector businesses and entrepreneurs.

“If there is a service or a need...then maybe that’s something that the city should be looking at moving towards, or the provincial government moving towards,” Chilton said.

Members of the Action Swift Current Leadership Team are:

Corey Adam, Mickeal Berteig, Karen Bonesky, Terry Brodziak, Gord Budd, Al Chilton, David Forde, Melanie Friesen, Rudy Friesen, Doug Howorko, Dawn Odegard, Pat Parrott, Carl Parsons, Marty Salberg, Clay Thompson, Chuck Thomson, Mike Vaughan, Daryl Wall, and Bernie Weinbender.

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