

Business Retention Solution Pitched to Swift Current Businessmen

A business-led solution to strengthen Swift Current's existing business sector was introduced to a small group of city business owners on Monday.

The Business Retention and Expansion Program was unveiled to a small discussion group to gauge possible interest in starting up the program in the community.

Doug Howorko, who sits on the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, said the introduction of the program was made to facilitate a coordination of a single directive instead of different agencies working in different directions.

"We really wanted to present it to the community to get some feedback and say 'do we as a community want to develop a game plan, an action plan, and implement a number of initiatives that can focus on helping our existing businesses develop and grow in our community?'"

During the presentation on the program it was pointed out that the majority of business growth in communities comes from its current business core.

"Any key economic development strategy must focus number one first on growing and retaining its existing base, helping it grow, helping it achieve new markets, helping it access new information to develop and grow. And then from that if we can build a positive business climate and a good culture and a positive attitude here, and things are rolling well in our community, investment attraction becomes secondary, it follows a good healthy business climate," Howorko said.

"The whole process of this is being in touch with the business community. It involves all of us as key business leaders and stakeholders to be in touch, to work together, to meet the needs of the existing business base now, immediately, with any kind of issues and concerns they may have, as well in the future as we build and develop a game plan for the city and implement actions that will be there to help sustain growth and development of our existing business base."

Marty Salberg, Director of Business Development for the City of Swift Current, said the introduction meeting was an important first step.

"I think the feedback is going to be good. We're all in this together. We want to see Swift Current grow, we want to see businesses succeed, we want to see the community grow in population. It affects a lot of different areas. In order to do this we definitely need to have the input of the businesses and colleges and elected officials."

Salberg said instead of being a government driven initiative, the program will be more viable if it is businesses directed.

"The more businesses we talk to the better results we're going to have and the more strategy we can put together to solve their issues or help with the opportunities," Salberg said.

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