

2014-5 Downtown Bend Mid-Year Report

January 26, 2015

Dear Downtown Supporter,

We have just passed the halfway point of our fiscal year for the current Economic Improvement District. The EID is a program of the independent, private nonprofit Downtown Bend Business Association and exists as the most equitable way to ensure that all contribute to keeping downtown vibrant. For the past several years, the EID has collected an annual assessment of \$0.18 per square foot on all commercial leasable space in Downtown Bend.

The EID will be up for reauthorization this spring. The Board will request that property owners agree to the same rate and term-an annual assessment of \$0.18 per square foot for a three-year term. This funding helps achieve a scope of work to beautify, maintain, improve, and promote downtown. The EID has accomplished a great deal since our last report to you about six months ago, including:

Keeping Downtown Beautiful

Flowers-Our annual flower program continues to be iconic and stands as a symbol that Downtown Bend is welcoming and well cared-for.

Cleaning and maintenance-One goal of the EID is to make downtown as welcoming as possible to visitors. Our friendly staff dressed in yellow EID vests along with several volunteer groups and community service workers we have coordinated are out virtually every day cleaning the sidewalks, alleys, parking lots, and all public areas and infrastructure. We have had positive feedback about the cleanliness and will continue to stay on top of it.

Staff has also been making it easier to navigate downtown during every snowfall. We will continue to assist businesses by clearing snow from curb ramps, accessible parking stalls as well as creating a safe walking path along all sidewalks in the district during storm events.

Banners-Banners add a lot to the beautification of downtown as well as inform visitors about upcoming events. This year we have added over a dozen banners directing customers to the parking garage. We now hang about 25 different sets of messages annually to help beautify downtown and promote community events displaying up to 100 banners at a time.

Holidays-We installed about 50 Christmas wreaths this year, over 500 strands of lights, and decorated the new Christmas Tree planted in Drake Park. We recruited volunteers and had a LOT of help from a community organization called The Tree of Humanity that did a bunch of heavy lifting to help decorate downtown. The Christmas Tree Lighting event held at the new tree was very successful as were the Visits With Santa we hosted on Wall Street throughout December. The Bend Christmas Parade was a success and drew over a thousand people.

Business Advocacy

Mirror Pond Redevelopment-The DBBA has been closely involved in the progress of the conceptual proposal to manage the Mirror Pond reach of the river. The proposal is to reconfigure the waterway and fund the project with redevelopment along the river through Downtown Bend. In partnership with the Bend Parks District, the DBBA held a well-attended community meeting in downtown to get feedback on the proposal. More information is available at: <http://www.mirrorpondbend.com/>

Street Vendors-Working to balance a positive impact from the culture and vibrancy that come with food carts and the needs of bricks and mortar businesses, the DBBA is working closely with the City to amend the policy to make sure that food carts are an asset in our community.

Behavior Issues-We are facing a challenge of behavior issues. A small number of individuals are loitering downtown and causing problems. We are working closely with the Police Department to address the issues. A livability committee has formed to assess the complete dynamic of the issues and the root causes of the problem individuals.

Promoting Downtown

Marketing-The DBBA has been working to market downtown via a variety of avenues including:

- A holiday campaign on print, radio, and web investing about \$5,000 to promote downtown.
- Web traffic surpassed 220,000 views in 2014 and we now have 23,000+ followers on Facebook.
- The revamping of the downtown brochure with a new map, printing and distributing over 7,000 to visitors in 2014.
- The gift certificate program, Downtown Dollars, broke another record and issued just over \$42,000 in 2014-more than double last year. This program has been tremendously successful in helping create increased spending downtown. We now have over 125 participating businesses that accept them.
- We have hired a new Marketing Assistant. Kelli Brooks, former owner of At The Beach, a downtown business for 17 years, is now helping market downtown. Her practical understanding of what is effective for downtown business has proven very beneficial.

In partnership with Mt. Bachelor, we have been working on visitor promotions. The DBBA has been organizing promotions for about 50 ski clubs coming to experience Central Oregon this season. Our efforts have resulted in many of these 1,200+ people to come spend money downtown.

We are also encouraged by our occupancy rate. This week we announced that our occupancy rate for the retail/restaurant sector is at 97%. We now have seen 20 consecutive quarters with occupancy over 92%!

Events-The monthly First Friday Art Walk is a wonderful event for downtown. The DBBA has heavily promoted the event across many different mediums. Participation is still strong with each event seeing about 3,000-5,000 people visiting downtown.

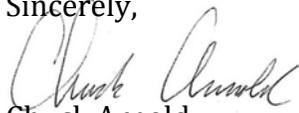
We coordinate with street festivals, parades and sports events that occur in downtown. While these activities increase exposure for downtown as well as foot traffic and sales for many businesses, they can present challenges. The DBBA works with the City, event producers, and downtown stakeholders to strike a balance to ensure that downtown overall gains maximum benefit from these events.

Your Downtown Organization

The mission of the DBBA is to promote the economic vitality of Downtown Bend and work as an advocate for business. The staff works in earnest every day with the goal of improving downtown. Our work is very public and we welcome feedback on the direction of downtown.

Additional info about the DBBA and our programs is also available on our website: DowntownBend.org. Thank you for your cooperation and support of Downtown Bend.

Sincerely,



Chuck Arnold

Executive Director (541) 788-3628