

Mayor David Futcher opened the special meeting and introduced Roger Brooks from Destination Development. Councilmembers in attendance were: Futcher, Slater, Roberson, Wheeler, Myers, McDaniel, and Karnofski.

**TOPIC OF DISCUSSION: Destination Development Presentation and Survey Results.**


**Roger Brooks from Destination Development** presented a very informative slide show presenting an assessment of how they viewed Kelso during their anonymous visit a few weeks ago. Some of the best and worst features of Kelso were presented. Mr. Brooks spoke about tourism and stated Washington State is the eleventh most visited state. He said the first rule is figuring out how to get people to stop. Better signage to direct visitors is needed beginning at Kelso's Interstate 5 exits. The main reasons people visit a city are to see family and friends, for business reasons, and for leisure time. People, who visit a city just because they want to come, spend three times more than other visitors.

Mr. Brooks offered some of the following suggestions:

- Promote the anchor tenants.
- Clean up trash, weeds, and blackberry vines.
- Huge garbage cans should be moved out of site after garbage-day pickup.
- Businesses need to look like they are open.
- Businesses should improve the looks of their buildings by planting trees and flowers, decorating with flower pots, and dressing up store windows.
- Closed signs should not be predominate. It is better to use "Open" signs which state the business hours.
- Provide a gateway to the business area.
- Come up with a community branding theme. What does Kelso want to be known for?
- We need to have action plans consisting of "To Do" lists.
- Create a brochure showing special features in Kelso.

Mr. Brooks concluded by saying Kelso has a great gem downtown. The City staff should be available to help facilitate the plans but should never be the ones to promote it. He stated an assessment report from Destination Development should be received in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Brooks invited people in the audience to ask questions and make comments. Discussion followed. Mayor Futcher thanked Mr. Brooks for his presentation and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

  
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**MAYOR**

  
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**CITY CLERK**