

It's a Beaut!

Last week I wrote a bit about how a relocation or expansion into the area might get started. Talked some about thinking and talking positive relative to your chosen domicile. Well, I received a little feedback regarding that column that I think merits a little expanded discussion.

It has to do with community beautification issues. Community appearance is an important element of economic development – good or bad! It's kind of like washing the car before you try to sell it, or getting your hair cut and cleaning up before you interview for a job! Many perceptions are set in concrete based upon the initial contact with the community. Again, while it takes a while for someone to decide to locate in a community, it can many times take just a few seconds for someone to decide NOT to locate in a community. Those first impressions stay with us!

Community beautification is important. Cleanliness is important. Both show a community's pride. When your pride is showing, your community is showing well!

Most of us have driven through communities that look half deserted, in ill repair, or tattered, torn and broken! They are not memories that we look on favorably when considering where we would like to go next time, and certainly not somewhere we would consider living.

One response to last week's column referred to the Casper area as "downright crummy"! The writer was referring to his first impressions after being out of state for about 15 years. While I am in total disagreement with the "crummy" statement, the author did kind of sum up what you are really looking for when you look to an area as your potential new home – "what / how will everyday life be here?"

I grew up in Casper...it's home! And I believe that Casper has worked hard on her image in recent years. Areas of town look completely different than they did....and it's all better. Elected officials and civic groups, as well as crusading individuals, are figuring it out. You feel better, you show better, and you look alive & vibrant when streets are clean, facades are painted and pointed, buildings are occupied, open areas are landscaped, etc. etc. The sculptures around town are incredible.....how many of us walk or drive by without really noticing? The flowers at 12th and Mckinley were beautiful this morning. As you drive through Casper on I-25 there is admittedly a bit of work left to do. But if you drove that same stretch of road 10 – 15 years ago you would marvel at the improvement! Remember the AMOCO

refinery? Drive by today – then again in a couple of weeks – it’s getting better every day! We are moving forward. That’s the good news.

However, the not so good news is that we have considerable more to do. And quite frankly, I don’t think it will ever end! Things age just like people. If you own your own home then you know what I’m talking about! Seems like you just did that a short while back and it needs doing again! Vicious circle! We need to keep on picking up trash until everyone bags or otherwise controls their own, business and individual alike! We need to clean up our commercial buildings and homes, occupied ones as well as the vacant. We need to keep our streets and public facilities in good repair. We have more “redevelop, renovate, or remove” candidates on our plate than we can possibly consume as rapidly as we would like (and can afford).

I commend those who are working to “beautify” our community – make it a place we are proud of and comfortable with. I encourage those who could be a part of this movement to become so! I think that it will “show”! And I know it will help the economic development efforts.

Steve Elledge