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Downtown Dashboard Tracks NWA Revitalization Efforts

by Kyle Leyenberger | Dec 09, 2014

Northwest Arkansas -- A new report provides a snapshot of downtown revitalization efforts across the region.

The Northwest Arkansas Council is calling for a concerted effort to strengthen the hearts of cities in the region. Rob Smith, Communications and Policy Specialist for the council says downtown redevelopment is a way to attract big business, and better talent to the area.

“Younger folks that may be moving here for great jobs are really interested in living in downtown settings,” he says. “That’s a key, key attraction. They show companies, if they’re strong and if they’re they look good, that we’re a community that takes care of itself, and I think that’s important to attracting companies here.”

Its Downtown Dashboard report details the current work underway in NWA’s top five cities. It also gives information on key areas, like retail, office space and the residential market in each city. Smith says the cities are doing well, but there’s still room to grow.

“The restaurant scene in Bentonville is incredible,” Smith says. “Fayetteville’s got a great entertainment district... (but) from Siloam Springs, our smallest city that was part of this process, all the way up to Fayetteville, our largest, there’s opportunity for those downtowns to get even better.”

Lisa Ray, vice chair of the Downtown Springdale Alliance says the Razorback Greenway is speeding up the city’s revitalization.

“The funding was all very very easy to land,” she says. “In years past, that might have been a big struggle.”

She says the dashboard report is also helping to sell the city to investors.

“For people who are looking at building downtown... they wanted to make sure that we really had all of our ducks in a row,” Ray says. “We’ve got property values. We’ve got maps. We have our vision.”

Jonathan Perrodin lives and works and plays in downtown Springdale.

“There’s a great connectedness that happens when you walk around a city rather than driving,” he says. “You see the flowers... You hear the birds chirping... These are just quality, quality experiences that make uh, make your life better.”

Perrodin is excited to see Springdale’s historic downtown coming back.



“There’s a lot of activity, a lot of new businesses coming, a lot of businesses renovating and and trying to freshen up,” Perrodin says. “This is my town, and so to see it healthy is really satisfying.”

For a copy of the report, [click here](#).