



By JENNIFER DENEVAN, Needles Desert Star
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City approves development agreement

NEEDLES — Following a presentation by City Manager Rick Daniels at the Nov. 12 meeting, Needles City Council members approved an agreement between the city and Development Management Group, Inc., for economic development consulting services.

The cost is a \$7,000 monthly retainer fee, totaling \$49,000. DMG, who will begin immediately, will remain with the city through the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30, 2014.

Part of the agreement is to be paid with the remainder of money previously set aside for a marketing consultant: \$51,500.

Daniels spent some time at the start of the meeting going through how economic development is defined and what the government's role is in economic development. He also talked about 10 actions the city needs to take in order for economic development to happen.

Part of Daniels' presentation focused on retail recruitment. It is with that in mind that the city council approved the agreement with DMG.

Daniels said DMG's role will be to actively recruit business. They will put together information packets about the city and provide it to businesses.

They are to identify businesses that would most likely fit here and then provide those packets to them, Daniels said.

There are a few immediate needs including a new bank, Daniels said. There is also the thought that there is a market here for a resort hotel.

Other retail services are needed for Needles, he said. Active recruitment is needed in order to bring those services here, he continued.

Referring to a chart he showed in his presentation, Daniels said one way to be sure that things don't change is to do nothing. Marketing Needles is highly important if things are going to improve, he added.

DMG will be hired through June. What happens after that depends on the success rate, Daniels said. If a level of success is shown, then the city will try and keep working with them, he continued.

He said it will be hard to know for sure how successful DMG will be because it's difficult to see immediate results in economic development. This is particularly true with Needles because there's been no growth at all for a long time, he said.

Having virtually flatlined in terms of growth, it's not possible to turn on a dime, he added.

With certain work being done by DMG and hopefully the community working together, the city will see dividends at the fiscal year's end, Daniels said.