



By JENNIFER DENEVAN, Needles Desert Star
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Continued cleanup one key component to economic development of city

NEEDLES — Rick Daniels, Needles city manager, gave a shortened version of his economic development presentation to the Needles Chamber of Commerce general membership during the meeting of Dec. 12.

He made many of the same points he presented to city council about a month ago. Again, there are 10 items Daniels laid out as being the most important to be able to turn the economic ship around for Needles.

The points include continuing to clean the city, he said. It's also important to continue to keep Needles safe and keep the crime rate relatively low, he continued.

Other items focused on recruiting business but also supporting existing business. Having an educated workforce and working with both the school district and the Needles Center of Palo Verde Community College are very important, he said.

Attracting visitors via Route 66 is a major element, he said. It will help a lot with bringing people to the city but there needs to be a way to keep them here for a while, he continued.

He discussed the importance of the chamber taking the lead with Route 66 and making that their project in terms of economic development.

At the end of his presentation, Daniels took some questions. He talked a little bit about the newly approved agreement between the city and Development Management Group, Inc.

City council approved the agreement at their Nov. 12 meeting. The cost will be covered by money that had already been set aside for the previous consultant, Elaine Cullen, of Western Regional Consulting.

He said the information Cullen had gathered will be used and be turned into data developers need. He and the new management group will begin doing outreach to businesses that will fit within the city, he added.

He's trying to set up meetings with a few different organizations, he said. The primary job for this new group is to focus on getting a secondary grocery store or to at least find a way to keep the current store and to get a bank, he continued.

There's no retail in the community and that's a primary goal for this group, Daniels said. There is also a resort opportunity that hasn't yet been capitalized, he added.

He said there is an individual from DMG that will be coming to Needles.

The city manager will be working with that person, he said.