

Downtown Activity Report

2011-2012

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Downtown Ventura Partners (DVP) manages the Downtown Ventura Business Improvement District (BID) under contract with the City of Ventura. Pursuant to this contract, DVP provides a semi-annual activity report that documents the BID programs and activities during the prior six-month period. This report provides a narrative description of the activities from July 1 – December 31, 2011. A statistical summary of Clean & Safe activities and financial statements are included as attachments. The report is divided into four major categories as defined in the voter-approved District Management Plan:

- Clean & Safe Program
- Economic Development Program
- Marketing & Promotions Program
- Advocacy & Administration Program

CLEAN & SAFE PROGRAM

Creating a clean, safe environment for shoppers, visitors, employees, residents and other stakeholders is fundamental for businesses to thrive in downtown. A multi-faceted approach is used to effectively address the many sanitation and maintenance issues Downtown. The Clean and Safe Program focuses primarily on Downtown's overall physical appearance through its buildings, streetscape, level of cleanliness, sidewalks, landscaping, parking lots, alleys and roadways, resulting in an enhanced perception of safety and accessibility.

DVP contracts with Service Group Inc., a national expert in downtowns, to provide clean and safe services.

The Clean & Safe Ambassadors crew is made up of five uniformed employees whose main function is to keep Downtown looking sharp. They also are trained to interact with visitors, offer directions and share relevant information.

A Clean & Safe Committee made up of volunteers meets monthly to review the program's status and discuss district improvements, sanitation and security issues. Priority project areas of the Clean & Safe Program include:

Clean & Safe Team

The Clean & Safe Ambassadors focus on sidewalk cleaning, trash collection, graffiti removal, landscape improvements/maintenance, paper sign and handbill removal and vagrancy/nuisance issues. The team also acts as ambassadors for visitors and residents alike. All Clean & Safe members are trained in CPR and relevant visitor information.

In addition to the BID-funded three person crew, two additional staff members provide baseline janitorial services through a contract with the city. With this contract, DVP is able to maintain a consistent quality of cleanliness while providing more efficient services.

DVP also works with Goodwill's job-training program to get additional workers on the streets. Goodwill provides employment to individuals and pays their wages at no cost to DVP. In return, DVP provides on-the-job-training and has hired two full-time staff members at the conclusion of their training period. Thanks to Goodwill, Downtown is cleaner, individuals are given an opportunity to re-enter the workforce and DVP is able to leverage its resources.

SnapShot System

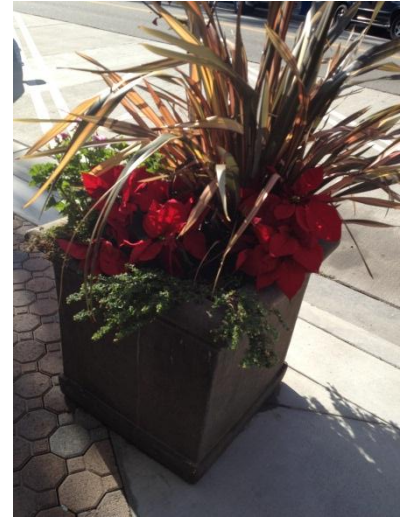
The SnapShot work order system allows us to carefully track the location and types of activities that are being conducted and also allows merchants, property owners or District stakeholders to submit their own web-based work order. If someone sees litter or graffiti, for example, he or she can go to our website and fill out a request. The request goes immediately to a Clean & Safe member's cell phone, and a confirmation is sent to the requestor. Once the issue is resolved, a follow-up e-mail is sent. This also allows us to track the timeliness of our responses and benchmark our activities. Over the last three months, since my hiring, the average response to a submitted request was less than 24 hours, and often less than four hours for requests the desired immediate attention.

Power Washing

A comprehensive power washing schedule is now in place ensuring consistent cleaning of the sidewalks, alleys, and parking structure stairwells. The schedule was distributed to all affected businesses, providing clearer communication and coordination of services. Power washing frequency has increased from twice a week to up to five times a week. A second, smaller and more mobile power washer was purchased in January to provide more immediate response and spot cleanups.

Planters

The DVP purchased 26 new planters, extending down Main Street into the 200-, 600-, and 700-block areas in the previous six months. The DVP entered into contract with landscape architect Brian Brodersen to look after the plants once every two weeks, update the Clean & Safe Committee on their health, and refresh the planters with seasonal plants. The purchase of the planters was funded in part with revenue generated from the parking meters. All 72 planters are watered by our Clean & Safe Ambassadors who took over the watering contract in July.



City Janitorial Services

DVP in October 2010 entered into contract with the City to provide baseline janitorial services in the Downtown that were previously provided by the City. DVP's success in providing the services led to both parties extending the contract in October for one year through Oct. 6, 2012.

Maintenance of Festival Swag Lighting on Main Street

Several electrical issues causing inconsistent lighting of the swag lights have been remedied. The light strand by the Mission and the strand outside Chicago For Ribs are now in working order. All strands are on timers that turn on in unison thanks to City employee Joel Diaz, who reviewed numerous timers along Main Street.

Downtown Perimeter Lights

The perimeter lights on City Hall were removed due to their "temporary" permit status. Perimeter lights were restrung at the Erle Stanley Gardner building. In December, DVP and Bright Star Lights conducted a physical inspection of each outlet where perimeter lights were plugged in, resetting timers where necessary. The effort was done in coordination with City Fleet and Facilities Manager Mary-Joyce Ivers.

Review and Approval Process for Recycling Bin Advertising Program

All artwork for advertisements posted on the black recycling "PartnerBins" Downtown requires approval and the advertiser is preferred to be located within the Property Based Improvement District (PBID).

Reduce Panhandling and Vagrancy Issues

The Clean & Safe team deters panhandling and vagrancy on a daily basis. The team removes unattended belongings and garbage and reports severe cases of public intoxication, nudity or violence to the Police Department. The team works jointly with Police and the Downtown parking cadets to keep the area secure, safe and welcoming to visitors.


In November, the City and DVP, in collaboration with merchants, Police and our community and social services providers, came together to more efficiently and effectively address issues related to vagrancy and homelessness in Downtown. The City and DVP unrolled an anti-panhandling campaign to reduce misguided charitable giving on Downtown streets. Giving to panhandlers is a disservice to the individual and to the quality of life in our community. Instead, we urged people to give to charities that can actively help and offer services that are beneficial to the person in need. Posters and business cards listing appropriate charities were distributed to all merchants. The campaign also was communicated in DVP's newsletter, on radio and through opinion pieces printed in the Ventura County Star and Ventura Breeze.




ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM


The District's economic development activities are designed to enhance business activity and increase values within the downtown boundaries. Activities include recruiting key businesses, developments and venues that respond to the Downtown market needs including those of residents, employees, businesses, and tourists. The DVP Economic Restructuring Committee involves merchants, property owners and other stakeholders who meet monthly to develop and implement economic strategies. Some of their recent activities are listed below.


Downtown Available Property Listing


A listing of available properties located downtown sorted by retail, office, for sale and/or, for lease is updated bi-monthly. The listing includes property, cost, and broker contact information. The information is attractively packaged and available online.





 Home
  New Business
  Show Closed Businesses


 Contacts

 Businesses

 Sites

 Partners

 Reports

 Utilities

Name

Categories

Email

77 Palm Restaurant

info@77palm.com

A Beach, The (Art Boutique)

Retail

web@beachtheshop.com

A Secret Place, Secret & Sexy Spa

Service

secretplacespa@secretplacepa.com

A.K. Fine Jewelry, Inc.

Retail

akfinejewelry@gmail.com

Acce. Area (Promotions)

Service

info@acc-area.com

Adulco

Retail

Alfina Clothing

Service

Alm Photo Rental

Service

Alm Photo Transport

Service

Allen, Barbara A

Phillips.Allen@Ventura.net

Alma Mikoluk

Retail

Alma's Dressful

Service

Alpha Skinholistics

Bar/Restaurant

jah@alphaholistics.com

Amelia's Salon/Day Spa/Esthetic Suite

Service

Amnesia Apparel

Retail

info@amnesiaapparel.com

American Soap & Candles

Retail

shop@americansoap.com

American Home & Gardens, LLC

American Home Antiques & Garden

Retail

shop@americanhomeantiques.com

Database

DVP created a new online accessible database of downtown businesses, property owners and economic information. We have updated our comprehensive listing of all businesses and available properties, and this information is available on our website at any time. The database also is able to be manipulated by businesses owners and we will roll this out in the first quarter of 2012. The database is always being fine-tuned so we can track vacancies, tenant mix, lease rate trends and values.

Business Recruitment – New Businesses

We are pleased to announce that 12 new businesses have opened in the past six months, and two pop-up businesses (marked by *) joined us for the holiday season!

- Bigguns Sports Cards & Memorabilia 433 East Main Street #4
- Beautiful Disaster & Handsome Devil Boutique 518 East Main Street
- *Fashion Forms Direct 540 East Main Street
- *La Catrina Mexican Folk Art 230 East Main Street
- Lingerie at Kama Sutra Closet 451 East Main Street
- Little Birdy Lane 654 East Main Street
- Neverland Toy Shop 230 East Main Street
- Pyur Real Estate 366 East Santa Clara
- Tiki Girl Boutique Wear (new ownership) 451 East Main Street
- W Gallery 21 South California Street
- Whirly Cups 377 East Main Street
- William M. Slaughter Attorney at Law 625 East Santa Clara Street

Marketing and Promotions Program

DVP works to market existing business, events, available spaces and business opportunities while promoting an enhanced vibrant image of Downtown. This is achieved with the guidance of our Marketing and Promotions Committee comprised of business owners, downtown residents and interested stakeholders. Following are some of our achievements from the past six months.

Newsletter

The quarterly newsletter highlights important news about events, special projects, and programs. The print piece is written in-house and underwent a re-design this winter. It is mailed to nearly 1,000 stakeholders. The newsletter is also available electronically to those who prefer this delivery system and is available online.

Social Media

The amount of people who have liked DVP's Facebook group continues to grow at an accelerated pace. We have increased our posts to multiple times a week alerting stakeholders and those who follow Downtown with up-to-the minute happenings and photographs.

Weekend Events Eblast

DVP regularly sends electronic messages to over 900 email addresses. Our new eblast – This Weekend Downtown – highlights events occurring Downtown, while our intermittent updates relay information about special projects, programs and news to help keep people informed.

Communication & Outreach

Six Months—In the Numbers

*2,213 – Number of on-line views of
downtown newsletter*

*57,932 – Number of views on downtown
Facebook account – up 102% from
previous 6 month period*

*183% - Increase on Facebook post
feedback*

294,644 – Unique hits on Facebook

*1,800 – Number of printed newsletters
mailed*

*36 – Number of public meetings hosted
by DVP*

*35 - Average number of attendees at
each Third Thursday event*

*38 – Number of e-blasts sent to
downtown database*

Downtown Website

The website features photos, special events, business listings, links, organization information, beach cam, maps and even a virtual tour of Downtown. Our goal is simple: If we write it, design it, promote it or program it – it's on our site. Check it out at www.downtownventura.org.

Comprehensive Downtown Events Calendar

Staff maintains the most comprehensive Downtown events calendar available. If it's happening Downtown – it's likely on our calendar. This calendar is available online with highlights of larger events with their own direct links, emailed on a monthly basis.

Ventura Fire Department Breast Cancer Support

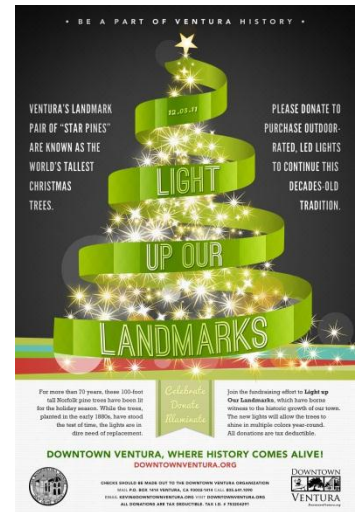
DVP worked as a liaison with the Ventura Fire Department to sell breast cancer awareness shirts in Downtown. The stores were then advertised in the Ventura County Star and online. The fundraiser raised several thousand dollars, with all proceeds going to a local breast cancer foundation.

DVP Events

- Staff created a series of Halloween events over three weeks that attracted dozens of families into Downtown. The DVP hired paranormal historian and local celebrity Richard Senate to provide ghost tours on consecutive Thursday nights, drawing more than 50 people on each occasion. Jen Livia of the Red Brick Gallery hosted a mask-making workshop in the Downtown Mini Park. And on the Saturday before Halloween, the DVP organized three activities: a pumpkin patch manned by the West Coast Derby Knockouts with proceeds (more than \$800) going to FOOD Share, a costume contest with more than 100 youth and adult participants, and Downtown Trick-or-Treat tour inside storefronts that brought over 500 people.
- The holiday tree lighting ceremony was held at the Mission and had the largest audience to date. Gift wrapping was offered two December weekends and was manned by City Corp. Santa roamed Main Street on two weekends. DVP offered a screening of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* with over 100 kids and parents attending. Grinch characters were available in the CA Mini park for snowball fights and photos.

Light Up Our Landmarks

DVP has partnered with the San Buenaventura Mission to raise funds to purchase new, LED-rated, outdoor lights for the 120-foot Star Pines outside the Mission. Funding allowing, the lights will be able to change color so they could be used year-round and tailored for special events, such as red for Valentine's Day or green for St. Patrick's Day. This campaign kicked off at the holiday tree lighting ceremony and will continue through 2012.



Support for Downtown Events

DVP sponsors and provides in-kind support to numerous events. In-kind support could include assistance with coordination, promotion, management, special security or clean up. We created a business participant form for business event sponsorships. Some of the larger events we were involved with in the past six months: Winter Wine Walk, Restaurant Week, Ventura Film Society, Farmers Market and Paint Ventura.

Occu-Pies Campaign

Capitalizing on an Occupy Ventura event at Mission Park, the DVP in October created a unique promotional effort that involved the creation of 300 individually wrapped “Occu-pies” that were specially made at Savory Café & Bakery and included the cake, a map of Downtown retail establishments and a Savory coupon. The Occu-pies were distributed by hand at the event and sparked numerous conversations about Downtown goings-on and various establishments.

Small Business Saturday

In November, DVP bought radio and print ads to promote Small Business Saturday, started in 2010 by American Express, to help drive sales to small businesses and recognize their vital contributions to the economy, job creation and local communities.

Downtown Dining Guide / Restaurant Listing and Map

A map and comprehensive listing of downtown restaurants and bars were highlighted in the Downtown Holiday shopping guide. This information is being re-purposed for the VIP Downtown Axxess cards.

VIP Downtown Axxess cards

DVP partnered with Ventura Axxess to produce 8,000 VIP Downtown Axxess cards for hotel guests, convention guests, and Downtown visitors. These cards offer discounts to stores, restaurants, and services. The goal is to direct those who come to Ventura to visit Downtown and see what we have to offer.



Meetings / Workshops / Events

DVP hosted numerous meetings over the past six months. Some examples are the quarterly merchant meetings, monthly committee and board meetings and our monthly Third Thursday mixers open to all downtown businesses and patrons. October's Third Thursday event at Palm 71 Restaurant drew more than 60 individuals.

ADVOCACY & ADMINISTRATION

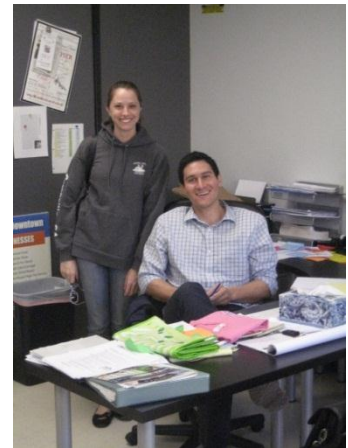
DVP is very active in advocating for downtown interests. DVP works closely with departments throughout the city to effect positive changes for Downtown.

DVP Board of Directors and Committees

The 11-member DVP board is elected by the property owners and consists of a super majority of 7 property owners, one City Council-appointed member and three business owners. The board meets monthly to set policy, implement programs and review finances. The board also receives regular updates from the Ventura Police Department, city staff and reports from each of the committees.

DVP Staff

Five additional employees have been hired or promoted in the past six months: Kevin Clerici, DVP Executive Director; Meredith Dilg, DVP Project Manager; Rony Herrera, SGI Supervisor; Larry Estrada, SGI Crew Member; and Daniel Soto, SGI Crew Member. Under the direction of Director Kevin Clerici, the staff and morale continues to grow and evolve.



City Partnerships

DVP works as a liaison for the City to communicate information regarding special projects, events and programs to the Downtown property and business owners. For example, DVP distributed posters and event materials for the Restaurant Week, informed merchants of programs changes being discussed for city owned parking meters and went door-to-door to help promote anti-panhandling campaign. We work closely with numerous departments in the City, including but not limited to Department of Public Works, Community Development, Economic Development, Police Department, and Parks, Recreation and Community Partnerships.

Agency Partnerships

Collaboration is a cornerstone of the DVP's success. The DVP is grateful to its many partners who have generously shared resources and teamed up to achieve common goals. Many thanks to the City, Downtown Ventura Organization, Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau, Ventura Chamber of Commerce, Museum of Ventura County, San Buenaventura Mission, newly formed Ventura County Lodging Association, among others.

Downtown Action Team

DVP board members meet monthly with City department heads and city staff to set strategy and track progress on a large number of downtown programs, capital improvements and initiatives.

Prosperity Council

After a hiatus, and with some changes, a more informal group started meeting again in October. A monthly lunch meeting is held, including DVP Director Kevin Clerici, Ventura Chamber of Commerce CEO Ed Summers, along with the City Manager Rick Cole, Community Development Director Jeff Lambert and Community Services Manager Peter Brown. Topics discussed include economic development opportunities, ongoing projects, areas of mutual interest and ways to better partner and communicate.

Parking Management

DVP works closely with the City and the Downtown Parking Advisory Committee to effectively manage the metered spaces on and off Main Street in the district. Director Clerici is a member of the committee, who voted in favor of a \$.50 decrease on the side streets – Oak, Palm, Chestnut – to facilitate more use of the available metered spaces.

Public Safety

DVP and the Ventura Police Department continue to look at new strategies to create a safer Downtown district. Through the parking management program, a dedicated officer, Corporal John Snowling, continues to patrol Downtown and police cadets provide additional “eyes and ears” on the street and use their police radios to immediately call in incidents. Clean & Safe Ambassadors communicate on a near daily basis Corporal Snowling, often sharing incidents of graffiti and other vandalism they encounter. The loss of Redevelopment Agency revenues is likely to threaten the ongoing funding of two officers for a summer weekend foot patrol.

Restorative Policing Support

As part of its 2012 budget and work plan, the DVP has budget up to \$2,500 for the explicit purpose of assisting homeless and cash-poor individuals reconnect with their out-of-town families for the holidays and throughout the year. Occasionally, individuals arrive in Downtown penniless or with limited resources and are unable to get to their desired location and instead panhandle to obtain funds. The DVP payments would be made directly to Amtrak or bus service to provide the transportation. Police officers would assist the person to connect with their relatives or support group and would receive confirmation from those out-of-state individuals before payment would be made. The restorative policing program is modeled after a similar program in Santa Barbara that has successfully reconnected individuals with relatives who live out of state.