



## Online survey to give insight on downtown revitalization

DECEMBER 13, 2010 BY JOE GIESSLER • THE EAGLE-GAZETTE STAFF

LANCASTER -- Resident, business owners and public officials are being asked to give their opinions about how to strengthen Lancaster's downtown core.

A nine-question online community survey is available through December, and is the final piece of an effort to develop a downtown vision to improve the viability of the city. The anonymous survey can be found at [www.mainstreetlanaster.com](http://www.mainstreetlanaster.com), and takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Main Street Lancaster Director David Uhl said the results of the survey will be combined with answers from focus groups, completed earlier this year, to form a concise vision for downtown.

"Our philosophy in the past has been, 'Wait and see, someone is going to find us and locate a business here.' And that has happened," Uhl said.

"I'm not sure that is the most effective strategy moving forward. (With the vision) we can start targeting people and going after people."

Uhl hopes to have the vision project completed by the spring. The project is a collaborative effort between Main Street Lancaster, Lancaster Fairfield County Chamber of Commerce and the Lancaster Economic Development office.

Four Reasons co-owner Therese Ryckman said she recently completed the online survey.

"One thing I think could happen better is coordination between downtown people and the museums," she said.

Ryckman added she would like to see downtown employees be given a day of free access to the museums, in order to better explain what is available to their own patrons.

"I think the more people know, the more they can promote it," she said.

Earlier this year, focus groups consisting of business owners, property owners, residents, and other varying demographics were assembled to answer questions about the future of downtown.

He said the some of the determinations of the focus groups included the need for more social events, longer hours of retail operation, more variety of stores and the need for increased parking.

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Uhl said he's equally interested in people taking the survey who do not frequent the downtown area.

"We're certainly interested in folks who live down here, work down here, and eat down here," he said. "And we're certainly interested in those who don't want to -- and we want to know why."

Uhl said he hopes people realize their opinions will be taken seriously.

"This is not just an exercise, we really are interested in hearing what folks have to say," Uhl said.

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