

WDDC Board Endorses "Yes" Vote for Ambassador Hotel Guest Tax Referendum

WICHITA, Kan. - 2/22/2012 - The Wichita Downtown Development Corporation Board of Directors endorsed a "yes" vote on the February 28 referendum vote on use of the hotel guest tax. City of Wichita voters will vote on February 28 whether 75 percent of the hotel guest tax will be rebated to the developers for the first 15 years. Otherwise, the full 100 percent of the guest tax goes to the City of Wichita for convention and tourism related activities.

According to WDDC Board Chairman Tom Docking, there were a number of reasons the Board endorsed a "yes" vote.

– The project meets the criteria of the Project Downtown master plan developed with months of citizen input and extensive economic analysis.

– It was the first project to go through the new downtown development incentives policy process that has a committee of business people, planners and financial experts review all projects and provide a recommendation to the City Council.

– The building sat empty for 12 years generating $22,000 in yearly tax revenue. During the first year the Ambassador Hotel will generate more than $235,000 in additional tax revenue for the city, county and school district with that amount expected to increase.

– Project Downtown included the analysis that Wichita needs more than 400 hotel rooms downtown, and the Ambassador will create 117 rooms in a boutique hotel.

– The project has already been a catalyst for additional downtown projects with the entire city block now under redevelopment plans, including the Kansas Health Foundation's new facility and the former Henry's building, all of which will use the new parking garage.

"This is an exciting economic development opportunity," said WDDC Chairman Tom Docking. "The opportunity to see an entire city block redevelop, jobs created and a beautiful and historic building coming back to life is a great opportunity for any city at any time, but especially during these economic times."

WDDC President Jeff Fluhr said, "We have a lot of synergy going downtown with multiple projects, developers and opportunities. It's important that potential local and national investors have predictability when it comes to working in Wichita."

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