

It's happening: creativity and partnering

Posted: Tuesday, July 19, 2016 12:04 am

The downtown is evolving and the old mantras that "no one works together" and "all we have are tchotchke shops" is a thing of the past. I found this out first-hand recently when Annie Letendre, Main Street Gettysburg (MSG) business liaison, and I took to the streets to focus on the new businesses in town. When we returned from our day out, we were uplifted and energized. The wide variety of new shops and restaurants are focused on attracting our local community downtown. More businesses are finding that working together to create a unique Gettysburg experience with good food, drink, and later hours to provide things to do "after the museums are closed," attracts both the locals and visitors alike. This business environment is exactly what MSG advocates, encourages and supports.

We first stopped at the Dime Museum, 224 Baltimore St., where Mark Kosh gives a new meaning to the word museum. For those who love oddities and the old sideshow circus attractions that spurs curiosity and amazement, it is a must see. Listening to Mark's experiences in opening his shop helped us discover how MSG might support the promotion of his attraction and tie it into the broader Gettysburg experience.

Erik Dorr and Cheryl Reichling at The Gettysburg Museum of History discussed how they approach their business and how it has grown. We talked about generating "outside the box" approaches when business falls off in the winter due to the tourist season slowing. Erik and Cheryl provided helpful insight from a business that started small and is growing beyond its space. E-commerce and partnering with "American Pickers" and "Pawn Stars" are all resourceful ways that this museum has wisely addressed some of the innate challenges of having a business with a strong ebb and flow of tourists.

If you have not been there yet and love "nerdy" things, stop by Nerd Herd Gifts & Games where a group of high school students are excited about selling products that connect with the younger generation. Timbrel Wallace, business owner of Lark, grew beyond her existing space on Baltimore Street and moved to the northwest corner of Lincoln Square. She partnered with several businesses around her, creating a brand new experience for shopping that includes Gettysburg Baking Co., Hauser Winery and Waldo's & Company. Her teenage son Nick filled the space on Baltimore Street with a group of high school peers that were equally interested in entrepreneurship. The energy and excitement is contagious in this shop and we applaud both Nerd Herd and Lark for their innovative approach to business and cooperation.

Partnering to create an exceptional experience is the essence of how Nick Argento of Knob Hall Winery explained the relationship between the winery and several neighboring businesses, including A&A Village Treasures, Food 101, and Johnny Como's. By working together, they are forming a shopping and dining destination on Chambersburg Street. In addition, there is a new downtown wine trail that includes Hauser's, Adams County, Knob Hall, and Reid's wineries. Yet another example of our downtown businesses stepping up and taking that new perspective of working together to help Gettysburg become more attractive to our community and visitors alike.

We have a lot more to do, but hats off to all the creative businesses working hard to invest in the town's future.

Deb Adamik is president and CEO of Main Street Gettysburg.