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Hand-in-hand for marketshare

One of the interesting themes emerging in this morning's discussion in Chattanooga is the cooperative hospitality effort to recruit convention and corporate business.

"We truly work together, and we're always interested in bringing new business to Chattanooga rather than fighting back and forth," said Tom Cupo, general manager of The Chattanooga, the city-owned hotel and convention center.

"We're interested in making the pie bigger rather than stealing marketshare."

There's a lesson there for Wichita, in hospitality business recruitment and on a broader downtown revitalization scale.

By Bill Wilson

Posted Yesterday at 7:47 a.m. Filed under Uncategorized PERMALINK SHARE THIS COMMENTS RSS TRACKBACK URL

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LonnythePlumber

Posted October 15, 2009 at 2:38 pm | Permalink

City owned hotel huh?

Bill Wilson

Posted October 15, 2009 at 5:23 pm | Permalink

Maybe not for long, Lonny.

But it's significant that the city dealt itself in in what they call here a "catalytic" project, or a project that stimulates development. We're going to have to be patient in Wichita because catalytic projects act over a period of years, not months.

bth

Posted October 15, 2009 at 5:36 pm | Permalink

Bill - years? Or decades? That is the problem - we have some languishing for far too many years without pulling the plug.

Bill Wilson

Posted October 15, 2009 at 9:09 pm | Permalink

Decades, Ben. Chattanooga's evolution has occurred over 40 years, and it's not complete. Any expectation that downtown can be revitalized in a



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matter of a few years is thoroughly unrealistic.

To put the current planning process in perspective, it seems entirely plausible to me that two plans could be required before Wichita begins to resemble Chattanooga. Don't forget that the late Walter Cronkite kick-started this city's project in 1969 when he dubbed Chattanooga "the dirtiest city in America" on CBS News.

Your point, though, is well taken: Several on this trip have seen innovations that could have been in place in Wichita already.

Let's be clear, though: Past failures are no reason – and a terrible disservice to the community – to shy away from making the changes the Goody Clancy plan will suggest.

Wichita needs an attitude adjustment, from this pathological fear of taxation and an equally pathological fear of failure into the aggressive change-seekers that we've met in Chattanooga.

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