

City retail sales higher for third year

Gothenburg's economy keeps chugging along.

For the third consecutive year, the city's net taxable retail sales percentage of growth exceeded those in Cozad and Lexington and Nebraska.

Overall in 2013, the city retail sales showed a 7.1% hike compared to increases of 2% for Cozad and a 5.6% for Lexington.

Taxable retail sales for the state of Nebraska rose 5.3%.

Community Development Office director Anne Anderson said the figures are "pretty amazing" and Mayor Joyce Hudson is not surprised.

"It's such an amazing community with good support," Hudson said. "People support local business and we also a have a variety of retail businesses."

A strong ag economy has also helped sales, she noted.

What's also impressive is a near 20% hike in retail sales in October, the highest for the year and also the highest for the three cities and totals for the state in 2013.

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Downtown business owner Troy Daum said he thinks strategic planning by the city council and leaders plays a part.

"They started planning for the future years ago and we're starting to see the benefit," said Daum, who owns Five Star Flooring with his wife. Chivonne. "I hope it continues."

He said Gothenburg seems to be a community that recruits and supports large and small businesses.

Anderson pointed to several businesses new in town in 2013 like Charm Boutique, All That Jazz, Hecox Dentistry and the relocation and renovation of Five Star Flooring.

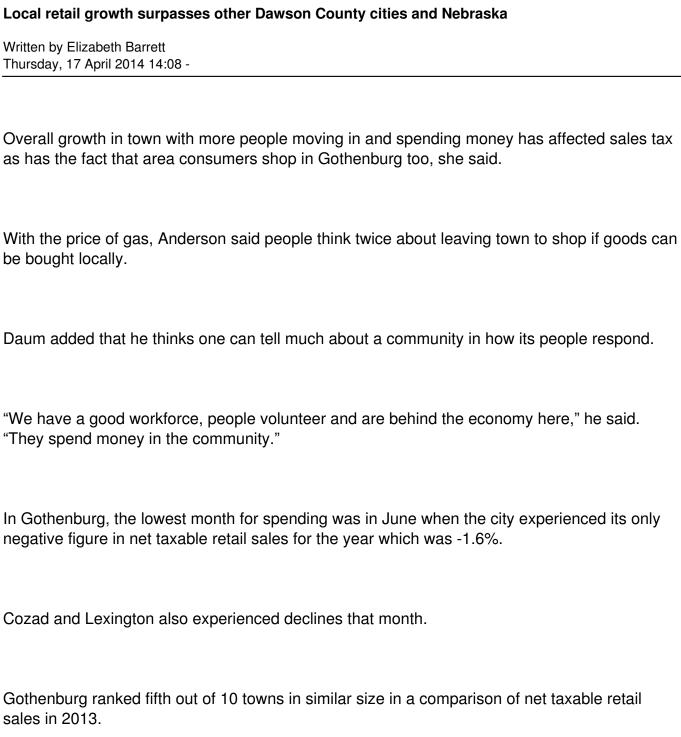
"They and others have helped increase sales and paint a positive picture of downtown," she said.

Larger businesses such as Shopko and Orscheln Farm and Home have also helped the local economy as has Comfort Suites and the newly renovated Howard Johnson hotel, Anderson said, noting that another new business in 2013, the Nebraska Barn & Grill restaurant, also feeds into the increase.

She noted that the hotels and motel in town not only generate 7% in sales tax but also a 5% lodging tax.



"We've seen an increase in lodging tax as well as the sales tax," Anderson said.



Local retail growth surpasses other Dawson County cities and Nebraska

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