

## Local retail growth surpasses other Dawson County cities and Nebraska

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
Thursday, 17 April 2014 14:08 -

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### 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 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.

NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES			
	2013	2012	
Gothenburg	7.1%	\$90,517,690	\$87,157,226
Govalle	2.0%	\$49,402,000	\$48,400,000
Lexington	6.6%	\$154,283,244	\$144,195,197
Nebraska	5.3%	\$27,344,186,761	\$25,970,494,368

  

MOTOR VEHICLE SALES			
	2013	2012	
Dawson County	6.5%	\$53,000,000	\$49,770,103
State of Nebraska	4.1%	\$3,720,233,793	\$3,575,041,342

  

RETAIL SALES IN OTHER CITIES			
Holmgren	\$2,818,643	Gothenburg	\$9,517,690
Ogallala	\$9,667,947	Aurora	\$7,971,977
Broken Bow	\$2,571,590	Imperial	\$6,229,257
Valentine	\$2,631,113	Animasworth	\$8,619,405
West Point	\$7,480,853	Minden	\$2,690,194

“We’ve seen an increase in lodging tax as well as the sales tax,” Anderson said.

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Overall growth in town with more people moving in and spending money has affected sales tax as has the fact that area consumers shop in Gothenburg too, she said.

With the price of gas, Anderson said people think twice about leaving town to shop if goods can be bought locally.

Daum added that he thinks one can tell much about a community in how its people respond.

“We have a good workforce, people volunteer and are behind the economy here,” he said. “They spend money in the community.”

In Gothenburg, the lowest month for spending was in June when the city experienced its only negative figure in net taxable retail sales for the year which was -1.6%.

Cozad and Lexington also experienced declines that month.

Gothenburg ranked fifth out of 10 towns in similar size in a comparison of net taxable retail sales in 2013.

The \$50,517,490 generated locally was a 7.1% increase over sales in 2012.

