

BECON
10/8/21

We were back at Cedar Hall this morning and they enticed us with a bunch of donuts – curse those Metra food gals but bless their hearts. It's hard to stay away from the donuts!

Guests

- Lanny L. brought in Jesse McKee for a second visit to the club and sounds like the chances are good he'll request membership!
- Kim Lewis, the Executive Director of United Way, was the guest of Craig Burke.
- Our speaker today was Haley Vannatta from NAI Business Properties. She was the guest of Lisa Jensen.

Announcements

- Dina reminded us of the American Committee's Chili Cook-off to be held at the American Legion on November 6th. For those of you who want to throw your hat into the ring as a chili chef, go for it. We need some cooks!
- A thank you note from the Burn the Point was circulated this morning.
- We have added some more NILE events to the website for sign-up. These are for the NILE's day activities that will be taking place at the Expo Center. These are long shifts – from 1 or 2 pm to 8 pm. I didn't break these up into more than one shift on the website. However, just email me and tell me if you can put in some time during the day or in the evening of a particular day and we'll divide-up the shifts if need be. We only need a couple people to be working at any given time.

Speaker

Our speaker today was Haley Vannatta from NAI Business Properties and she gave us a general update on the real estate world in Billings, which was quite interesting. She confirmed what we all kind of already knew in that the real estate market in Billings (and a lot of other MT locations) is crazy – both on the commercial and residential side. NAI deals with business properties, which she said typically lags behind the residential trend by 6-8 months but since this spring, commercial real estate sales have been as crazy as on the residential side both from local and out-of-state developers. Some of the highlights from her talk are as follows:

- Due some changes in which the SBA loans money, it has turned many renters into buyers. The COVID-created increased costs for building materials did temper this trend a bit but that has apparently come and gone.
- There is only a 2% vacancy rate in Billings for industrial space. Given that Billings is a retail hub for the region and given its proximity to other large retail areas, there has been an interest in Billings for big companies wanting to build distribution centers here.
- Retail is extremely strong but the trend is for smaller footprint, non-shopping mall, store fronts.
- Demand for office space has softened during COVID, which I think we all know about given the number of people working from home. But also the lack of "Class A" office space in Billings has limited growth in this real estate segment.

- All of Billings is experiencing growth but the greatest growth is still being seen on Billings' west end. There are many new businesses cropping up both from locals and non-locals but also from expansion of Bozeman businesses.
- Many local and out-of-state developers are jumping into the multi-family development market and doing so with lower than normal rate of return on capital investment expectations.

Bruce mentioned that Haley's talk today is an example of a plan to bring in more speakers that aren't necessarily our grantees to talk about a wide variety of things that may be of interest to the club.

Have a great weekend and work tonight or tomorrow if you can.