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New CREDCO chief promotes aggressive marketing strategy

By: Vicky Gits , Staff Writer

Castle Rock has to work harder to market itself to high-quality businesses to create community wealth, the town's newest authority on economic development said Monday.

David Mitchem, president and CEO of Castle Rock Economic Development Corp., spoke to an overflow crowd of nearly 100 businesspeople at a luncheon at the Union American Bistro in Castle Rock. It was Mitchem's first public appearance since his appointment was announced Aug. 1. He is a former executive director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development and former director of the Colorado Division of Labor.

He succeeds former CREDCO executive Meme Martin, who left in February after nine years on the job to become director of The Colorado Horse Park in Parker.

CREDCO's goal is to attract a variety of businesses that export products and ideas beyond the local community, as opposed to relying on mostly retail, Mitchem said. While meeting the local business community, Mitchem also revealed Monday that Boeing Co. is planning to move 500 to 1,000 space engineers to Colorado and that "several busloads" of Boeing personnel had recently toured the Castle Rock area to look at houses. He said Boeing is looking for office space in the Denver Tech Center.

Castle Rock has a lot to offer economically, he said, including:

- A resident-drafted master plan called "Vision 2020."
- Recognition in June by Money magazine as No. 1 in job growth.
- Cooperative relationships among builders and town administration.
- A vibrant entrepreneurial community with 53 percent of local businesses described as home-based.

Mitchem advised those in attendance to preserve Castle Rock's desirable combination of "hometown charm" and "downtown technology ... to cater to the citizens and be in lockstep with them." He also urged moving cooperative relationships in the direction of active partnerships.

Castle Rock could benefit from a "fresh, aggressive" marketing campaign that targets certain types of businesses such as credit and finance, digital information, management and technical services. He stressed the importance of marrying entrepreneurial types with marketing know-how in order to generate jobs. He also stressed more attention be paid to pushing forward with the proposed "critically important" southern interchange in connection with development of the massive southwest quadrant. He also urged a "proactive development plan" for downtown, which needs more "infill" and parking. "You don't want random development," Mitchem said. "You don't want to be known as a bedroom community for Denver."

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