

Thumbtack

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business is doing a couple hundred thousand a year, a couple thousand dollars gets lost in that.”

Seymour previously lived and worked in Charlotte, which received a B- on the survey. This difference in score may be a matter of perception, because different businesses are attracted to different cities, said Seymour.

“If you’re founding a brick-and-mortar business that you expect to grow fairly quickly over time, you’ll make a large upfront investment, then Charlotte’s easier. If you’re talking about a shoestring business that you’re going to start with a small investment and live off of the income from, Asheville’s easier,” Seymour said. “We walk down the street in Asheville or even downtown Henderson and we don’t expect to see businesses with a chain name, in Charlotte people expect the chains.”

Although Charlotte is larger than Asheville, Seymour says Asheville has a more diverse consumer base that makes it hard for a small business to have mass appeal. A business that appeals to the traditional agricultural base, or an artsy base, might struggle to draw customers from another base.

Graphic designer David Lynch worked in Asheville for nearly 18 years. He said he thought Asheville’s diversity is part of what gives the city its character. He said it recently seems to be trending towards higher-end customers and tourism. He said he recommends pushing against the state government.

According to the Asheville government website, the city is no longer able to levy the privilege license tax, or the tax on business licenses. This went into effect July 1, and the only exception is beer and wine

taxes. Lynch said he does not like the loss of revenue for the city.

“They are neutering the power of municipal government and that’s the sort of power that keeps Asheville local. I’m seeing that change,” Lynch said, “and I’m afraid Asheville is going to lose its local flavor and become another stain on the map on the United States of Generica if we’re not careful.”

Lynch recommends that, in order to maintain the small business atmosphere in Asheville, businesses need to do research, get connected, find local resources and networking opportunities. Asheville received a B grade on the Thumbtack survey for its training and networking opportunities.

Ridgely said she used Mountain Bizworks and Business Networking International. These organizations exist to help coach and grow small businesses. Seymour recommends resources and job training provided by Goodwill and SCORE, the Service Corps of Retired Executives. He said he is planning to partner with Bill Gilliland of ActionCOACH to provide coaching for small businesses and wishes there were an easier way for Asheville business owners to find this information.

“You look through meet-ups and you find a few of those, you do Google searches and you find a few of those, but unless someone shows what’s available most businesses have no way to compare them,” Seymour said. “In my ideal world I would be able to type in ‘business networking meeting in Asheville’ and get a listing that would have some reviews and some description. That kind of layout would help small business owners find those groups.”

Ridgely said she would like to see more services to help find

and hire qualified employees.

“There’s Craigslist and Headhunters, but it all costs a lot of money and is not affordable for a small business. They want \$1,000 for an employee and I can’t afford to do that. I tried the unemployment office and that was really no great help at all. They wouldn’t even post my ad,” Ridgely said. “If there was a system to find employees who matched with me that would be phenomenal. There’s equipment you’ve got to know and the right cleaners for the right job and you have to be detailed.”

Lieber said the survey found that cities with good networking and training often receive a higher score, whereas cities with many regulations receive lower scores. The survey’s goal is to find what is most important to small business and improve their local environments.

“Entrepreneurship is an important outlet not just because all fast growing businesses are the ones creating those jobs and providing promise for the future, but because the kind of micro-entrepreneurship that happens on Thumbtack really gives people alternatives. It gives them the chance to be independent, to work for themselves, to build a business on their own and to serve their community by sharing their skill.”

Despite Asheville’s below-average score, Ridgely said she finds the city to be no less friendly than other places she lived.

“People are saying ‘it’s hard, it’s hard.’ I’m not that kind of person. Don’t just sit around worrying and crying. You have to want to do it, you have to have drive,” Ridgely said. “If I work for someone else the levels of skill and creativity I have doesn’t get utilized. I can say I’m not scared sometimes, but I let the adrenaline of the fear push me forward rather than get me down.”

Police

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systems in the building,” Todd said.

Todd said the renovated facility includes a new equipment room, locker room, break room, officer workspace, dispatcher break room, handicap bathroom and telecommunications office. The renovations costed around \$380,000.

“We gave it what we would call kind of a facelift,” Todd said.

According to Boyce, Weizenblatt is a huge improvement compared to Vance Hall. He said it allowed them to almost double in square footage.

“We’ve received positive reactions from the community,” Boyce said. “We’re excited to be here.”

Four divisions now work from Weizenblatt, including the university police, environmental health and safety, parking and transportation and emergency services, Boyce said.

“This move has enabled us to work out of the same office space,” Boyce said.

The unoccupied, Vance Hall building will undergo some minor renovations in the summer, Todd said. Renovations include new carpet and paint and may include relocating a couple of walls.

“Anytime we do a renovation like this, we work with the department and help them program the space, which is kinda deciding how you’re gonna use

the space, what your different needs and uses are and then we handle all the contracting and financial aspects of the project,” Todd said.

IT services will occupy Vance Hall upon completion of renovations in August 2016, Todd said.

Until renovations start, mechatronics students plan to use Vance Hall this semester and next as a project workspace, Todd said.

According to Todd, the move had many benefits and was a good thing for campus police. It also allowed Health Services and alumni development to expand and opened more space for IT.

“I definitely think it’s been an improvement because now with that location being there they have their own designated parking lot area. It’s also a little bit more secluded,” said Anna Emslie, a sophomore political science student from Carrboro.

Emslie works on campus as a resident assistant and said she is glad to have the police on campus.

“One of my residents came back really late and she was able to call and get someone to escort her back to campus,” Emslie said. “Little things like that really can make a difference for someone and make them feel a lot safer.”

Drug use

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why students may be exposed to drug use is the sense of camaraderie it maintains. Flannery Jones, a junior anthropology student, said there is a sense of community generated through drug use. This stems from people using because it is in groups because it is safer and because they are scared of using by themselves.

Opioid usage could prove to be the Altamont that taints the Woodstock-ian image Asheville strives to create. Derek Plumb, former community

director at UNCA, said he believes taking this image at face value could come at a price for students in particular.

“One question I ask students is, ‘Why UNCA? Why here?’ and most students say things like, ‘Well, it’s Asheville,’” Plumb said. “There’s this loaded element about what Asheville brings. I try to get on that level and ask, ‘What is it? Is it the art, the food, the beer?’ And they say, ‘Aw, no, it’s Asheville. You gotta be here.’”

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