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Parker tests free weekend valet parking to get people to come downtown

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PARKER — Business leaders hope free valet parking will attract more people who want to spend time and money in downtown Parker, and they're testing the idea on weekends through the end of the year.

Dennis Houston, president and CEO of Parker Area Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber and downtown businesses had observed that parking was a challenge in an area that has more activity more than in previous years. He said the chamber was getting comments from Parker residents who wanted to come downtown and couldn't find parking, so they just left.

"In some cases they're leaving Parker and going further out to downtown Denver," Houston said. "We want them to eat in our restaurants and as a chamber guy, I want them to patronize our restaurants and brew pubs in Parker."



Shoppers browse in the stores on Mainstreet in downtown Parker on Nov. 23, 2012. (Lindsay Pierce, Your Hub file)

The chamber and downtown businesses agreed to do a 90-day trial of complimentary valet service through Rocky Mountain Valet. It started the beginning of October on

Friday and Saturday evenings. Houston said after Jan. 1, the chamber and businesses will analyze results and decide whether to make it a permanent service or expand to other days.

John Hall, economic development director for Parker, said the service is a positive move to get people to all commercial areas of the town.

"The town has spent, and continues to spend millions of dollars on public improvements that benefit all businesses in the community," Hall said in an e-mail.

Adam Sisbarro, operations manager for Rocky Mountain Valet, said participation has continued to increase every day his drivers have been at the northeast corner of Mainstreet and Victorian Drive, across the street from O'Brien Park.

"People are saying 'This is great — we've wanted valet parking for a long time down here ' " Sisbarro said.

He said the company expects to see even more people using the service when when winter weather kicks in.

Rick Moss, who moved to Parker from Dallas six weeks ago, said he was glad for the service that takes away worry about parking.

"They're awesome," Moss said of the valet employees. "The guys are great, they've been very friendly, very helpful and a little bit of a tour guide as well for me."

"I know it's a trial thing," he added, "but I hope they keep it here."

Houston said the service has also been embraced by nearby businesses, including Parker Garage restaurant, which reminds patrons of the free valet parking when they make reservations, as well as with a card that comes with their bill.

Houston emphasized that the service is for everybody.

"If you're driving a beat-up old car that's 30 years old or a brand new Mercedes," he said, "everyone should feel comfortable doing this."

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