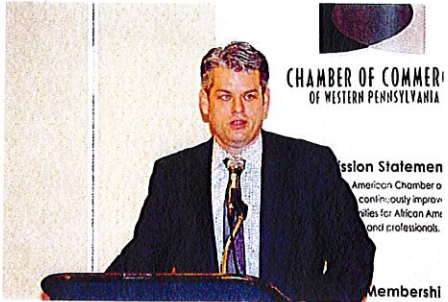


# Waldrup promotes Downtown Partnership at PowerBreakfast

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By Christian Morrow



**BRINGING DOWNTOWN BACK**—Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership President and CEO Jeremy Waldrup reviews initiatives to revitalize Pittsburgh at the Oct. 16 PowerBreakfast.

Four years ago when Jeremy Waldrup came to town to talk about taking the job he has now, he was standing at an intersection about a block from where he was going—but he didn't know that.

"I'm on the phone telling this guy I'm a little lost," said Waldrup. "And he says, 'where are you?' And I look, and there are no street signs, in either direction, on any of the corners."

Now as President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, improving signage in the golden triangle is just one part of his mission in making the city cleaner, more efficient and more navigable for residents and visitors.

Speaking at the African American Chamber of Commerce Oct. 16 PowerBreakfast Meeting, Waldrup outlined the PDP's mission to restore Downtown as a vibrant place to live, work and play.

Perhaps the most obvious thing the PDP does involves its cleanup crews, those men and women in their bright yellow shirts who collectively spend 32,000 hours removing more than a million pieces of garbage from the streets each year. But they do more than that.

"They are all receiving customer service training and helping people find their way around—like I couldn't. They are ambassadors," he said. "But they are also the first line of outreach to the city's panhandlers and homeless. Last year they initiated 685 contacts and made 85 referrals to emergency services."

Waldrup said the PDP is supporting sustainable development initiatives and working on transportation advocacy in an effort to be the city more business friendly, in addition to hosting a number of cultural, educational and artistic events designed to bring people into the city.

Some of these efforts included restoring the facades of two building on Liberty Avenue—the Army Navy store and Specialty Luggage—pushing to get two more daily trains between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and hosting gallery crawls, pop-up urban supper events, open street celebrations, First Night, and the July “Picklesburgh” music and food festival aimed at millennials learning to preserve their locally-grown food.

“That one actually got some national attention, with the 30-foot inflatable pickle on the Rachel Carson Bridge,” he said. “Yeah, the next day, my mother calls from Ashville, NC. And says, ‘Jeremy, your pickle is on Good Morning America.’”

Waldrup said the PDP is also working on ways to simplify and improve the flow of people and traffic around greater downtown—from the North Shore to the South Shore, and from the West End to Oakland, adding that if there is anything he can do to help chamber members’ businesses, just let him know.

“One thing we can do, that a lot of folks don’t know about is reserve parking,” he said. “Say you have a meeting, or a client coming into town at 10 a.m. You know by then the garages will be full. Call us—we can reserve a parking space for you far that time window.”

Though he sees the city will more bike and pedestrian traffic and greater access to the rivers and with more entertainment, art and dining options, he does not, in the near term, anticipate a “big box” retail replacement for Macys.

“Those don’t work anymore unless you’re in a really large city. I see medium and boutiques-size businesses until residency goes way up,” he said. “But it’s up 45 percent in the last five years, and it’s continuing.”