Meeting Notes – May 7, 2024

The LaFayette Rotary Club held its weekly meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. Rotarian Merilyn Vines introduced her speaker, Mr. Kim Langley, co-owner of Hometown Mercantile and The Venue in downtown Lafayette.

Kim spoke about Hometown Mercantile and The Venue downtown businesses. Kim displayed some of the merchandise sold in Hometown Mercantile, such as a popular tote bag and tea towels, which can be special-ordered with the design of your choosing. The store also sells pillows, candles, and other locally cultivated goods.

Hometown Mercantile opened in July 2023. Kim reported that his largest customer base is not comprised of local citizens but of "out-of-towners". The out-of-town visitors typically remark how low the prices of the merchandise are. The local community seems to have the opposite opinion! Kim mentioned that the price point needs to stay low in order for the business to be successful. He is interested in getting community feedback on what types of items to stock. Kim feels the store is currently reaching a very narrow sample of the community and he wants to reach a broader representation.

The Venue, located next door to Hometown Mercantile on the square in downtown LaFayette, opened approximately six months ago and is doing very well. It is an event center that can be used for birthday parties, retirement celebrations, weddings, receptions, reunions and other events. Opening The Venue has actually helped business at Hometown Mercantile.

Kim thanked several Rotarians, who through their businesses and jobs, were instrumental in helping Kim get his businesses started. He spoke of his desire to see our community grow and believes the process has begun. He wants to see the citizens invest even more into our community. He hears people from the Auburn area frequently talk about how nice it is here in LaFayette and how tired they are of the traffic in Auburn. In his opinion, LaFayette is on the cusp of recovery from the downward trend over the past few decades. His future plans include continuing improvement to the Wheeler building. They have added a porch and hope to improve the interior. It is his hope that someone will purchase it to use as a restaurant that would be open on the weekends. He left our Rotary Club members with a challenge, "How can I invest in my community?".

Diane Sherriff