

MGT-19

Town sells souvenir manhole covers

When the town of Vail, Colorado (5,000), installed new manhole covers featuring the Vail logo with its 1962 founding date and elevation (8,150), the new manhole covers disappeared quickly. The city decided to turn these distressing thefts into an opportunity; if the manhole covers were so popular, people might be willing to pay for them and thefts might decrease. Sales of the manhole covers exceeded city leaders' dreams, and profits from the sales now support the town's public art projects.

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Implementation notes

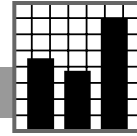
Leadership/staffing Sales of the manhole covers are coordinated by the art in public places coordinator, whose program benefits from the profits on the manhole covers.

Timeline Sales of the manhole covers began shortly after the town installed its new manhole covers in July 2002. Recently, the town launched a new line of "deluxe patina" covers in a range of colors and finishes.

Budget/funding The small water valve cover sells for \$65, the large manhole cover sells for \$295, and the deluxe patina covers (in the small size) sell for \$120. The city originally calculated its profit margin at 65 percent, but now believes that its profit margin is actually lower when all of the true costs associated with the program are taken into account.

Program description The small and large covers are made from the same cast and materials as the actual covers, but they are slightly lighter (6 pounds and 52 pounds, respectively) than the actual covers because they lack the collars used to attach actual covers to the street. The deluxe patina series includes "bronze verde patina," "nickel silver black patina," and "antique bronze patina." The small covers are typically used as trivets, decorative wall displays, paperweights, and garden accents. The large covers have been used as stepping stones, garden accents, patio/driveway inlays, and coffee table centerpieces. The





covers are popular with year-round and seasonal residents, and sales are particularly brisk during the holiday season. Initially the proceeds from the sales of the covers went to the city's general fund. But when sales grew rapidly, the city decided to use the proceeds to replenish the budget of its Art in Public Places program, which had recently been cut. The covers are advertised in publications read by second-home owners, as well as in cities with high concentrations of second-home owners. The covers can be ordered by telephone or purchased at the town's municipal building. The covers have also been sold on eBay and at the town farmers' market.

Results To date, the town has sold 500 of the covers and has taken in over \$60,000. Thefts of the manhole covers from the streets have declined, although this may also be attributable to the use of a stronger adhesive. The town is now planning to branch out into a new venture, selling street signs, as these have also proved popular with thieves.

MGT-20

Wireless support for code enforcement

When code enforcement officers in the city of Ontario, California (158,000), are in the field, they use laptops to obtain code enforcement data on a map of the city, share data with other city departments, and link to and exchange data with other systems. The city purchased hardware and software, along with several customized forms and reports, for \$150,000. City staff then attended two days of training so that they could develop additional forms and reports for the system at a much lower cost. The system ran into problems when several officers entered data into the same record during the day, making it difficult to update the system at the end of the day. However, this was resolved by assigning different identification codes to each laptop. The system is about to become Web based, once the city determines how it will provide wireless access.

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