



Growth No Longer Creates Community Prosperity


Physical expansion & population growth are costly

I owe you an election report on my recent city council run in my hometown of Colorado Springs. I wasn't sure the citizens were quite ready to embrace a modern, sustainable economic model that recognizes perpetual growth is no longer profitable. My city, like most, and like our entire nation, is in a state of crisis. Our tax revenue is down thanks to the collapse of the housing and consumption bubbles.



'Growthbuster' Gardner in council race

Dave Gardner, who refers to himself as the "self-appointed local growth critic," will compete for the District 3 City Council seat in which incumbent Jerry Heimlicher is seeking re-election.



Dave Gardner

The district covers the city's southwestern quadrant, taking in the southern part of the Westside up to Uintah Street. It is one of four districts up for grabs in the April 7 election. Each seat is for four years.

Gardner, 53, is a native of Colorado Springs and graduate of Wasson High School. After building a film-making business over a 20-year span in Dallas, Texas, he returned to the Pikes Peak region in 1993. He had come back because he disliked the sprawl and crime of Dallas, but he soon found himself worrying that the Springs has a "growth addiction" and is heading in a similar direction.

That's why the Cheyenne-area resident is running for office now, he said. About eight years ago, he started "Growthbusters," a volunteer group that rejects the commonly held civic principle that cities need ever-increasing size for economic health. As proof, he points to the last 15 years, in which the city grew at a steady pace. "But it didn't bring prosperity,"

See 'Gardner,' next page

As I feared, current leaders believe we just need to rev up the growth engine to solve this problem (their faith in growth everlasting prevents them from seeing that our growth boom of the past two decades created more problems than it solved). It created costs faster than revenues. And it didn't exactly do wonders for our quality of life. I wanted to offer an alternative to re-inflating the housing bubble, a smarter,

more sustainable long-term solution.

We captured much of [the campaign](#) for use in my documentary, [Hooked on Growth](#), so I thought I'd share some [video highlights](#) with you.

In running I sought to do an intervention – spotlighting our city's growth addiction and getting us into a recovery program. What is happening in Colorado Springs is a microcosm of what's occurring on the world stage. If we perform a true accounting of all the costs of physical expansion and population growth, we find these activities do not generate true prosperity.

That's good news, as it means we don't have to sacrifice to get unhooked from growth addiction. We we'll be better off in every way to get on a sustainable path of economic and population stability. This council campaign served as a proving ground for this "good news" message, which is the message of Hooked on Growth.

The election was April 7, and I surprised many with a very respectable 43% of the vote. The incumbent, with substantial growth industry funding, garnered 2,000 more votes. Does this mean the public will respond to the good news that getting unhooked from growth will help us achieve real happiness and true prosperity? If I'd won by a landslide we could be more certain. In my view, the jury is still out.

- Dave

More Information:

[Campaign Website](#)

(includes endorsement video from former Colorado Governor Dick Lamm)

[Anti-Growth or Pro-Community?](#)

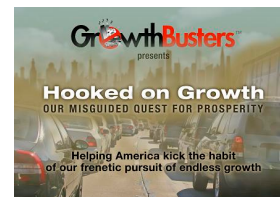
by Mike Swaim, 3-term mayor of Salem, OR

[True Path to Community Prosperity](#)

Interview with the candidate



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Thanks for your help,

Dave Gardner & All the Growthbusters
at Citizen-Powered Media

Citizen-Powered Media is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation producing the documentary Hooked on Growth: Our Misguided Quest for Prosperity. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. [For more information about the organization and the Growthbusters documentary project, visit www.growthbusters.com](#)

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