

The Tale of Two Towns

A long, long time ago, about 50 years, two small picturesque Washington towns near Seattle were in dire straits. Their fortunes had evaporated and their futures looked gloomy.

One town, of about 2,000 souls, in a dead-end mountain valley, far from just about everything, seemed to have no prospects. The other town, of about 10,000 residents, was a Pacific seaport, near many neighboring towns, all with abundant cultural and outdoor resources.

As it came to pass, the little town in the mountain valley formed a business committee of about 12 dedicated people. They began to list all of the things they could do to transform their little, forgotten town into an interesting, fun tourist destination. They formed strategic alliances with travel companies, tour agencies, developers, financiers, media groups and more. They stayed true to their cause and built a dreamy, picturesque Tyrolean village. Today, this little Tyrolean village of a mere 2,500 families, earns \$80,000,000 a year in tourism.

The other seaport town, with vast natural and cultural resources, near to multiple other seaports of entry, a National Park, and much more, continues to flounder. The town is in such disarray it is hard to find anybody in the town who seems to know how much the town earns a year in tourism. There is little consensus on what to do to improve the income of the town. Factions play tug-of-war, the tax money goes into a few content people's pockets, and the tourists go elsewhere. While the \$6,000,000,000 in nearby Seattle tourism goes to properly-promoted competing towns, the seaport town merchants are busy with their new cute little cartoon map which they hand out to each other.

The moral of this sad tale is: Without vision, you see nothing.