

SAFETY DOWNTOWN

Your safety is our concern and one of the primary reasons for Downtown Visions' existence. In the January issue of this newsletter we reported that Downtown is one of the safest areas in the city, according to the Wilmington Police Department (WPD), and yet the feelings people have about their personal safety in Downtown is often quite different from the reality. Here we offer insight into why that may be and what you can do to help alleviate any concerns you may have.

First, don't believe everything you hear. If you were to believe some of the emails that have been circulating, recently, you may never want to leave your office building. But just as a simple phrase morphs as children play "whisper down the lane," so too does information shared by adults sometimes get distorted as it's passed from one person to the next.

"We recently saw an email go around saying that a person was robbed while on a smoke break right outside the building where he works," says Mike Maggitti, director of safety, Downtown Visions. "When we started digging, we found that it didn't happen as the email reported, and the incident occurred several blocks away – beyond the Downtown area."

"A lot of information people receive is from emails that have been forwarded three, four, five times," continues Maggitti, "and not only do they contain misinformation, but they've been inflamed along the way" – which leads us to our next point. When in doubt, check it out.

With the best of intentions and concern for friends and colleagues, sometimes people who live and

work Downtown inadvertently dissuade others from doing the same by perpetuating a negative image of the area. Rather than forward an email with questionable content about crime on to friends, send it to DTV to verify its veracity (mmaggitti@downtownvisions.org).

One Downtown employee, DuPont engineer Duncan Rowan, took steps to get more information for himself and his coworkers when he solicited input from DTV, the WPD, and city officials for the company's monthly safety meetings.

Mike Maggitti, Police Chief Michael Szczerba, and City of Wilmington's director of communications John Rago spoke with several hundred DuPont employees about Downtown safety as they attended three meetings. The sessions were also videotaped for online viewing by additional employees that were unable to attend.

"They [Maggitti, Szczerba and Rago] shared some statistics and talked a bit about the camera surveillance system – which provided some comfort to people, areas of town to avoid, a little bit about the City of Wilmington and what it's doing to keep Downtown safe, and the fact that you can call DTV for an escort," he says.

"I would recommend that people at other companies take the time to do the same. I thought the meeting was quite helpful," says Rowan who received emails from employees who also found the sessions helpful because they now better understand the situation. For more information about hosting a safety meeting at your place of business or for answers to questions you may have, please contact DTV!