

This is Erin Dunn from the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

July is a special month in the town of Fortuna. We started with the Fireworks Festival last week on July 3—and, as one newspaper noted, we are so Patriotic that we celebrate an entire day early.

Then it's Rodeo Week. And it's non-stop action for a solid week.

First up is the Chili Cookoff on Monday, July 15. If you haven't been before, you need to try it this year. 20 plus teams are cooking up chili for the honor of being the world's best chili...the trophy says Fortuna's best chili, but like everything else during rodeo week, we exaggerate when we talk about it. Come down to Main Street between 5 and 6:30 p.m. and taste some of the best chili EVER (there I go again). But you can also vote for YOUR favorite chili. We do have a trophy for Fan Favorite Chili. We encourage you to buy \$1 tickets and stuff the ballot box of your favorite team. We also have trophies for hottest chili and cattlemen's best beef chili. And, it's free. And we have live music. Judges this year include Sheriff Downey, Supervisor Fennell and Mayor Strehl...so you know it's serious.

New this year right after the Chili Cookoff is a dance at Strongs Creek Plaza beginning at 6:30. While not an official old time street dance, it IS a parking lot dance. Pretty close.

There are so many events during the week that I can't list them all today. Go to FortunaRodeo.com and get the lowdown there.

But I DO want to mention that there is a new event this year on Saturday night. There won't be the traditional dance at Fireman's Pavilion—instead, it's Bulls, Bands and Brew...and it's taking place inside the Rodeo Arena. They have two bands performing throughout the evening, beer is on tap, and there is amateur bull riding and cowboy poker. Cowboy Poker is where people sit at tables playing poker while bulls are let loose in the arena and the person who stays there the longest—or has the winning hand maybe—wins. And if that sounds crazy then you haven't seen the Quadiators on FRIDAY night. THAT is wild...and you really need to experience that at least once.

Then the next weekend is AutoXpo. I love the Cruise on Friday night. I usually pick out a 50-something Thunderbird as my dream car. And Main Street teems with visitors and car aficionados on Saturday. It's a great weekend in Fortuna.

We have something new happening this year. On Sunday, July 28, we are putting together a promotional video on the new Dog Park. Everyone is invited to bring their dog down to the new site—on Dinsmore, just south of and adjacent to Fortuna Feed—and be in the video. The Park isn't fenced yet so all dogs need to be on a leash. It will take about an hour. We will do individual shots of people playing with their dogs and then end with a big group shot. The site is marked with a sign that says "Future Home of the Fortuna Dog Park." You can "like" the Fortuna Dog Park on Facebook for the latest updates on the Park. Right now we're looking at a mid-September opening. Keep your paws crossed.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.