

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

This past Tuesday night, September third, the Eureka City Council voted unanimously to adopt a proposed motel ordinance designed to penalize those establishments that generate a lot of crime related calls. From what I have read in the Times/Standard newspaper there are thirty two motels and hotels within the Eureka city limits. They generated just over seven percent of the calls for emergency services in Two Thousand Eleven. With a total of ten thousand properties in the city, motels and hotels make up less than one percent. With that type of imbalance, something had to be done. From what I understand, the idea for such an ordinance for Eureka was introduced by Eureka Police Sargent Steve Watson. Although there are other California cities, including Chula Vista, that have a similar ordinance, Eureka has wisely taken the time (over one year) to craft an ordinance that will be acceptable to the city residents and the motel/hotel owners in general. There has been much input by all those involved which is the way it should be. The ordinance calls for a "two tier" classification, based on the number of calls for service to police and fire; Responsible, well run establishments will be classified under "Tier One". Those establishments with excessive calls for police and fire service will be charged a yearly fee plus a fee for each call made above the predetermined ratio. Hotels/motels that fall under Tier Two would also be inspected annually and those who don't reduce their excess calls within one year will be required to provide twenty four hour on-site uniformed security. From what I have seen and read so far, I think that the City of Eureka has made a positive move to help clean up blight plus provide the traveler with safer conditions and a more enjoyable stay in our city. I have not had the opportunity to read the details of the ordinance but I would hope that the name of the violating establishment would be published for all to see. I would like to thank Police Sargent Steve Watson and all those people who have been working on this project and also each member of the Eureka City council for their involvement. A group on face book titled "Remember in Eureka When" is very interested in local history. Last Monday, one of the members posted a copy of an article taken from a Eureka newspaper dated March, Eighteen Seventy Six. It read "Hotelkeepers often have hard cases to deal with. Yesterday an intoxicated individual undertook to "run" one of the hotels in this city, and was politely shown the door. He returned the second and third time, but forbearance ceasing to be a virtue, he was pushed out of the door in rather an unceremonious manner. The mud was not quite deep enough to drown him." So there you have it: hotel troubles in the old days were handled a bit differently.

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