

Hello this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

When I was in high school in the late 70's, I worked at the Captains Galley and The Seafood Grotto. These two restaurants were owned by Eureka Fisheries. The Seafood Grotto was as busy as a restaurant could be the entire summer. There was always a long line outside during the lunch and dinner rush. They served the best clam chowder on the coast. Humboldt County was a thriving timber and fishing community that had tourists from all over the world choose our beautiful piece of paradise as a vacation destination. I was a busboy and enjoyed talking to the tourists as I poured their coffee and cleared the table. They loved visiting us. They would comment on the scenic rivers, the majestic redwoods and our mild temperatures. I can remember many of them talking about spending an entire month or more in an RV park just to beat the summer heat of wherever they called home. When someone graduated from high school, they could get a job almost anywhere. I remember guys who worked in the lumber mills that would quit their jobs during hunting season and get a new job after getting their deer. Jobs were plentiful. Fast forward to 2013 and what do we have? There are more harvestable trees now than forty years ago, yet timber jobs are few and far between. Our climate and spectacular scenery hasn't changed, yet the number of tourists visiting our area is but a fraction of what it once was. Humboldt Bay has a substantially reduced fishing fleet now compared to years ago, yet our coastal waters are full of salmon and other commercial fish. The reality is that we have one fish processing plant, less than ten lumber mills and a tourist industry that is sputtering along. There are many reasons for this

pathetic business climate. The most glaring reason for this environment is the fact that the ANTI-CROWD has infiltrated every decision making department in our government. Many of our elected officials have as a primary objective to stifle growth and make the business environment as difficult as possible. They made sure that building permits took years to get approved. Subdivisions died in a pile of paperwork at the Planning Department. The ANTI-CROWD attended every meeting and dominated the microphone time given to the public. When someone spoke in favor of a project, these extremely rude individuals would interrupt the speaker by yelling and screaming like a two year old having a tantrum. Any potential investor quickly invested their dollars in communities who welcomed them with open arms. Today, Humboldt County has a reputation of being closed for business. We have the highest fuel prices in the United States, so when tourists do visit us, they don't return. Our marijuana industry has attracted so many street people that driving down Broadway has turned into a dangerous game of dodge the druggie. Old town is infested with these same vagrants. Every busy corner is clogged with beggars. I often drive throughout Eureka for my work and decided to pretend I was a first time visitor or a business owner wanting to invest here. What an eye opener. It is sad to see such a great place go to waste. The gas prices and drug addicts alone would make me cross Eureka off my potential vacation or business investment destination. How do we fix this? Elect politicians and hire government employees who are pro business. This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment