

April 1, 2015

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

The Fortuna Chamber of Commerce program – Leadership Fortuna – is about to finish up its third year. This year's class of 13 has one month of the four-month program left to complete.

I want to take this opportunity and thank community members who have participated on panels and led tours. They are the reason this program is successful.

And it's a special thank you, because this group meets at 7:30 a.m. at City Hall in Fortuna each Thursday. It is not an easy jaunt for our panelists!

We've had our County officials—Supervisor Estelle Fennell, Clerk of the Board Kathy Hayes and County Administrative Officer Philip Smith Haynes all joined us. This panel puts County operations in perspective.

Our state elected officials representatives also joined us—John Driscoll from US Congressman Jared Huffman's office and Zuey Goosby from State Senator Noreen Evans office. I love watching the light bulbs go off when our class participates in this session. They begin to see the difference between what a state elected official can help with and what a US elected official can assist with. And that our local representatives are doing much of the heavy lifting. Thank you gentlemen!

Our City Staff also made the early morning wake-up call. City Manager Regan Candelario—a huge supporter of the program—City Clerk Linda Jensen and Associate Planner Stephen Avis have all made it to City Hall just a little bit earlier than usual.

In addition to sessions featuring panelists, we also have field trips.

For the third year in a row, we visited the Waste Water Treatment Plant. And for the first time, we had a tour of the new College of the Redwoods facilities by President Kathy Smith. Stephen Roper joined the group to give a behind the scenes look at the gorgeous new theater facility.

This week they are visiting Eel River Brewing operations in Scotia. Thank you Mike for accommodating us. Did I mention this is one of the most popular tours?

We'll be hearing from the Safety officers again this year featuring Sheriff Downey, Fortuna Police Chief Bill Dobberstein and our CHP Information Officer. This is Chief Dobberstein's second year—he was IN Leadership Fortuna the first year!

In addition to in-class work, Leadership Fortuna participants also have to attend at least two public meetings they wouldn't ordinarily attend and report back to the class. A couple of Leadership members went to a County Planning Commission meeting a few weeks ago and came back with more questions than answers.

Another component of the Leadership curriculum is working on a group project. I don't want to spoil the announcement of this year's class, but it's going to be terrific. The group project is designed to teach about the process, the final product is a bonus.

The group has been meeting since the second Thursday in January and will graduate at our Chamber's Annual Dinner on April 28.

Thank you to all of those involved in Leadership Fortuna—those I had time to mention and those I did not. Based on our Leadership Fortuna groups, the future of Fortuna is in great hands.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.