

July 8, 2014

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

Is there a better place than Fortuna in July? The place becomes electric with activity and buzzes from all of the visitors.

Next week is Rodeo Week. Starting on Monday, we kick off Rodeo week with the Chamber's Annual Chili Cookoff. We have about 20 participants who come out in the middle of the day on Monday, cook chili from Noon – 5, then serve about 1000 people from 5 to about 6:30. I couldn't cook chili for 7 let alone 700. My apron is off to you!

People of all ages line up in front of specially decorated booths on Main Street to try out the Chili. Judges carefully rank the chili in a blind taste test. Trophies are given for Fortuna's Best Chili, Rookie of the Year, and Professional Chili—plus a few more. For any rookie judges who might be participating this year—the key is to pace yourself and don't heap the chili on your spoon.

And this year the Delta Nationals return to provide music to eat chili by.

Then of course it's non-stop action the rest of the week. Carnival rides start Wednesday, Motorsports on Friday night—including the Quadiator competition—and if you haven't been to one yet, you need to put it on your list—Kiwanis breakfast Saturday morning, the big parade, Beers Bands & Brews on Saturday night that includes amateur bull riding, and oh yeah—a sanctioned professional rodeo on Saturday and Sunday!

Yes, the rodeo is fun. Yes, the people-watching is incredible. But why do so many people volunteer to help and why does Rodeo Board put in countless hours every year?

To help our community.

Did you know that the Rodeo Association only spends the money they raise on improving Rohner Park? Their latest donation of \$7500 was made to the City to improve the Bocce courts in Rohner Park. And each year the Rodeo Board works on the rodeo grounds repairing the stands, keeping the arena in good shape and helping the Park stay beautiful.

Thank you Fortuna Rodeo Board.

If Rodeo isn't your thing, the following weekend is the big car show—Fortuna AutoXpo. They have a cruise and sock-hop on Friday night and the big show on Saturday on Main Street with awards on Sunday. It always feels like Fortuna doubles in size that weekend.

Plus, Fortuna has the cutest Farmers Market every Tuesday from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in July and continuing through October. Is it as big as the Farmers Market on the plaza in Arcata? No. Are there countless rows of wares to be seen? No. But, it's adorable! It's one block long—but oh, what a block. Fresh produce, fresh lamb, fresh bread from Beck's. Friendly vendors, appreciative shoppers—a great place to spend 30 minutes on a sunny afternoon.

July is also the time for kids on their bikes so please be extra careful. We hear a lot about texting a driving—but I saw a young girl, 10 maybe, talking on her phone while she was riding her bike on Main Street. And she didn't have a helmet on. So please use extra caution when driving these next two months of wonderful summer.

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