

September 2, 2014

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

Happy September! While it's still officially summer, I consider the day after Labor Day to be fall. Even though it's usually still hot for the most of the month, I brought out my wool jackets, tights and boots this weekend.

I figured September was also a good month to talk about public art and the potential impact on a community.

Fortuna is inching toward more public art—and better to inch than not move at all.

What I find interesting about the process of public art is that the approval and build up to the installation can be more angst ridden than the actual display of the art. Case in point are the deer at the triangle by Ray's in Fortuna. It took a lot of behind the scenes wrangling to get those approved and installed, and now I don't think Fortuna would ever let them go away. They are a wonderful addition to the town and beloved by many, including me.

Leadership Fortuna has taken a pronounced interest in public art as all three classes determined that working on a public art project was the best way to enhance and contribute to their City.

Most people know about Leadership 2's contribution of the entrance sign at Kenmar. Here's what's exciting—Leadership 3 is working on a mural project that they will be announcing soon. It will be on a prominent building in town with great visibility.

The inaugural Leadership Fortuna group has continued working on their concept of a north end entrance piece. There is friendly rivalry with

Leadership Fortuna 2, so their plan, which includes a collaboration with public and private entities, is going to cause a stir. In a good way.

Public Art is a proven economic development tool.

Public art isn't frivolous. Which is one reason why there are beautification grants available for public art projects.

Public art builds esteem in a community. As one friend put it, when you go into a community where there is public art, it feels like the town has a higher level of civic pride. And public art can all of a sudden make a town feel quaint.

There are hidden treasures to be discovered in Fortuna. The newest is a fantastic large bull head statue, a bovine bull, not the fish. Drive by Don Brown's office on 12th Street just north of Main and check it out. Gorgeous!

Which proves that public art doesn't have to be found solely in a town square. The Friends of the Fortuna Cemetery District are in the early stages of generating ideas of public art for the seven local cemeteries. Right now they are focusing on large steel topiaries as well as peace poles—which if you haven't seen a peace pole, take a look on line—they're marvelous. They will present their ideas before the end of the year to the Cemetery Board for approval

If you are ever in Cloverdale, they have a Sculpture Trail—a year round exhibit sponsored by the Cloverdale Arts Alliance that features sculptures changing every 12 months. Cloverdale entered the realm of public art eleven years ago. And it is charming.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.