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

I want to make it clear before I begin that I am speaking as an individual today who is the CEO of the Chamber, but I am not representing the entire Chamber with my opinion.

It's early in the election cycle but I wanted to take a moment and talk about Measure V – the one cent sales tax in Fortuna.

The Chamber board has voted to not take a position with this Measure.

No one likes to pay extra taxes. No question.

What Fortuna is voting on is a chance to stabilize the budget after the State of California left our City—along with many cities in California—in a fiscal bind. Measure V will provide a guaranteed source of local funding that cannot be taken by Sacramento. It will also prevent further cuts to essential city services.

For many years, the City of Fortuna did not make Economic Development a priority. We were told that the City was in charge of water, infrastructure and safety. Period. And of course that's true—but it shouldn't end there.

With our City Manager Regan Candelario at the helm, and a City Council that understands the importance of economic development, Fortuna has a chance to flourish.

For the past few years, including this fiscal year, the City has had, by virtue of chilling cutbacks, ZERO dollars in the Economic Development budget.

Fortuna is lucky to have a local Foundation that cares about economic development and about the City's future. The McLean Foundation

committed to funding an Economic Development specialist for three years beginning July 1 of this year. I'm on the board of the McLean Foundation and it was not only the right thing to do, but a necessary thing to do.

However, it's time for the citizens and the City of Fortuna to take make economic development a priority. It's not the McLean Foundation's job to be the sole, unending supporter of economic development in Fortuna. It needs to be a collaboration if we are to be successful. The citizens—us, me—need to step it up and become part of the solution. We can step it up by voting for Measure V.

Fortuna is known as the little city with the big events. Rodeo, AutoXpo, Apple Harvest, the Color Run, Hops in Humboldt—and too many more to list.

If you like going to events in Fortuna then you need to vote for Measure V. We take for granted the City work that goes on behind the scenes. Signage, street closures, lawn care, and clean up. You might think “it's part of their job,” but when it's a choice between allocating staff time to support events and keeping a safety officer in an already slim police department, you know what decision will have to be made. We need to support our events. It keeps people coming to Fortuna. It's part of our identity.

We need Measure V.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.