

February 3, 2015

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

A week ago tomorrow, in the early morning hours on Wednesday, the heart of Fortuna's Main Street was ablaze. When I went to my Rotary meeting at 6:30 a.m. the flames were shooting above Green's Pharmacy. Heroic firefighters from all over the Eel River Valley were fighting the fire. They worked as only firefighters know how to work and they contained the devastation--saving many businesses from burning. By noon, five businesses had burned beyond recognition and we had lost a historic landmark—the Star Hotel. We lost Green's Pharmacy, Horizons Business Products, Kelly's Barbershop, North Coast Music and Dakota's Designs.

We had a few things to be grateful for.

First, no lives were lost, thank heaven.

Second, Fortuna had recently invested in a new water tank. And that new water tank provided the million plus gallons of water needed to fight the fire and provided the vital water pressure that was needed.

And, the firefighters saved the Centennial clock. There is a great photo of that on the City of Fortuna facebook page.

The outpouring of support for our community is overwhelming. There will be ways that you can help in the near future.

Here's how you can help now;

\*Please shop in Downtown Fortuna. The businesses that were burned are not the only businesses affected by the tragedy. The surrounding businesses need your help too.

\*Check out GoFundMe and make an on-line donation. You can find the link at GoFundMe (G O F U N D M E) Dot com Backslash Fortuna Strong. Every dollar counts.

\*You can pay your Horizon's and Green's Pharmacy bills directly at Umpqua Bank.

\*Shop at Ferndale Clothing this Saturday, February 7 and 20% goes to help the fire victims through the GoFundMe account.

\*Buy a ticket or donate an auction item to the Fortuna Strong fundraiser on February 27 at River Lodge. There will be a no host bar and Dinner with a live auction. If you can't make the dinner but have an auction item to donate, you can drop it at the Chamber office. Tickets for the event are \$50 each and you can buy tickets at the Chamber office—14<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets in Fortuna.

Thank you to our state elected officials that up until this year we didn't see much of in Fortuna. Senator Mike McGuire called our city officials directly and his Chief of Staff left a message for me early that morning assuring me that they had already been in touch with the Office of Emergency Services.

Assemblymember Jim Wood was on the scene on Friday.

We greatly appreciate their efforts.

Fortuna will get through this. It's made us stronger in some ways.

I want to personally thank the Fortuna Fire Department and Women's Auxiliary; the City of Fortuna; Dianna Rios at the Fortuna Business Improvement District; Judy Harrison, our Economic Development Coordinator; and each of you who donated food, money, time and energy to the people impacted by the fire.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.