

KINS Community Comment – June 29, 2015

Hello, this is Tom Schallert, Board Chair of The Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Did you know that approximately 70% of the City of Eureka's operational budget, come from Sales Tax? In all of the other local Cities and Humboldt County as well, sales tax is a significant portion of the revenues that fund local government.

There has been a lot of shall we say, "input," provided to local government trying to advise on the most important uses of this critical sales tax revenue. Voters recently approved to increase or maintain sales tax levels to pay for police and fire and we all have expectations that other areas of service provided by local government including roads, parks, and social services are maintained and enhanced as well.

There are on going discussions regarding needed funding for this or that organization from non profits, the Chamber, Eureka Main Street, the Visitor and Convention Bureau, levels of pensions, parks, the zoo and the list goes on. Everyone wants a safe community but also one that continues to be livable and enjoyable.

Most of us have heard of the county wide efforts encouraging folks to "Buy Local." We all should know when we buy locally, we enhance the local job market. Friends and neighbors can have jobs. Successful businesses contribute to the local economy and sustain the local non profits that help seniors, youth, and many other causes.

When we buy locally, we are also helping fund local government including police and fire as well as the many other expectations we have. The Eureka Chamber encourages folks to shop locally. Why buy in Santa Rosa or San Francisco, or Online and fund someone else's

police and fire departments, parks, roads and social services with your sales tax dollars?

The Eureka Chamber has initiated a study in concert with Humboldt State University, the City of Eureka and Humboldt County Economic Development to try to determine what the so called “leakage” is in sales tax dollars from purchases made outside of our area. We believe it is significant. A recent study by Humboldt State and Humboldt County in which the Chamber participated, demonstrated that many of the trucks we see on the road, are coming into the county full, and leaving mostly empty. That means a significant amount of taxable purchases are being made out of the area and are shipped into the area.

We are trying to estimate what is being purchased out of the area, what are the total dollars spent and why purchases are made out of the area or online rather than locally.

The link to the survey is posted on a variety of websites including the Eureka Chamber’s and is in our newsletter. The City of Eureka will have it, as will Humboldt County. It is also going to be emailed to as many folks as we can with a link. We urge you to complete the survey. It is completely anonymous and will not be tied to any individual. The survey is at WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/S/HUMLOCAL.

It is accessible and will be available for a couple weeks. Results will be available by the end of July, 2015 and then a county wide plan will be developed in response to the survey results.

The Eureka Chamber hopes you will complete the survey but as always, encourages folks to buy local. Our community needs successful local business, and we also need local sales tax revenue. Support your police, fire and other government services by buying local.

This has been Tom Schallert with a Community Comment.