

Tuesday, September 1, 2015

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

Changes are taking place at Humboldt Made. Bully for them. Up until this point it has felt to me like “Humboldt Made for Humboldt.” The pretty but bland “films” that told a serial story featuring our scenery and wares were touted as the next viral sensation. It never really materialized that way.

Then there was that special Humboldt Made App that cost a few dollars and was not created or marketed in a successful way.

It’s pretty much been “look at us Humboldt, we’re kinda groovy so buy our Humboldt goods.” That had no chance of widening the Humboldt Made brand—and it didn’t.

The new approach seems to understand we need to look outside Humboldt—that connections in other parts of the state and country are what’s going to put our goods on the map. And that big companies like Whole Foods can help us reach the demographic we have so sorely missed.

And I don’t blame the past Humboldt Made Director for taking a chance to consider adding our green commerce to the Humboldt label, but I’m so glad they thought the better of it (at least for now). We already have that reputation—we don’t need to muddy the waters and dilute the brand of Humboldt Made with pot. The board showed leadership and an understanding of what is happening outside Humboldt in choosing to exclude cannabis. Outside of Humboldt, people don’t talk about pot 24/7. There are more important issues at hand—like successfully marketing local goods.

I'm encouraged by the new vision because it brings to light the importance of the Richardson Grove project. It's not about Wal-Mart coming in (they are already here), it's about getting our goods OUT. The cattle ranchers understood this concept long ago, maybe the naysayers can catch up with that idea now.

Dave Spreen, a Kneeland resident and spokesman for the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities said in a letter to the editor a few days ago instead of improving Richardson Grove for truck passage we should look to a rural creative class economy. I don't even know what that is—a rural creative class economy. It sounds pretty, but I'm not sure how many living wage jobs are in that category.

Before I go, I wanted to weigh in on the Napa Wine Train incident where a group of women were asked to leave the train for being too noisy. They claim it was a racist action.

I wasn't there, so I don't know. But I have been on the Napa Wine Train. It's expensive. It's very close quarters. You are paying for an experience that includes taking in the pastoral scenery and enjoying a special meal.

If someone was talking on their cell phone loudly it would ruin the experience, so I'm thinking that a group of people talking and laughing could have been pretty loud in that setting. Believe me, I was one of the loud ones 25 years ago. I'm really sorry about that now. My karma is still recovering.

This has been Erin Dunn with a community comment.