

Erin Dunn
Community Comment
November 21, 2017

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

We are about to enter the much-loved holiday season. For me, it officially kicks off tomorrow—Thanksgiving Eve, which happens to be my favorite day of the year.

With the holidays—be it religious or cultural—traditions take center stage. They make us sentimental and give us a lot to look forward to. We love our traditions.

Sometimes it's tough to see traditions change and sometimes, we have to make our own traditions.

Such is the situation in Fortuna. For years, the weekend after Thanksgiving, the Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department put up holiday cut-outs up and down Fortuna Boulevard. The figures ranged from Santa, to a nativity scene to Happy Hanukah and everything in between.

When I first started at the Chamber office 10 years ago, the cut-outs were being repainted. There are almost 20 of them, each two sided. The artist who was working on them then was exhausted and I remember her saying we'd have to find someone else the next time they needed to be updated.

A couple of years ago, the figures were starting to look a little ragged. We pondered how to fix them while being fiscally responsible.

An idea was presented by a volunteer high school group wanted to fix them as a community project. Because it was such a large project, it

would be take two years. The Chamber would provide the paint and they would paint and repair.

This is not an easy project—it is a tedious project. One where people can get easily bored. And miscalculate how much effort it would take to complete. And it seems like that's what happened. And only a few were finished.

We put out the best ones, leaving many in storage, but even the “best” ones were not in great shape. We received calls from people who were rightfully upset at the condition of the cut-outs.

So the Chamber had to make a decision about the cutouts and future boulevard decorations. The Board decided the best option was to wrap the trees on the boulevard with white lights—a look I am partial to because of my past traditions.

What about the cut-outs? We will make them available at no cost to Fortuna residents who would like to lovingly restore them and display them at their own home during the holidays.

That way, when you drive through the neighborhoods looking at Christmas decorations you will every so often see a blast from the past—holiday cut-outs that used to line the boulevard in December.

We know that many people love those cut-outs and look forward to seeing them each year. We also know that losing traditions doesn't feel good. Our hope is that the lights will be the start of a new December tradition that people will grow to love.

We will keep you posted on the process of picking up a cutout from the Chamber.

This has been Erin Dunn with a community comment.