

Erin Dunn
Community Comment
August 28, 2018

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

The last week of August always has me thinking of new beginnings. Labor Day weekend is like the start of a new year. We're starting fresh—new classes and a new grade at school, football season begins, we have a clean slate—or blackboard or white board.

In the office I'm cleaning up files, updating information, recycling the old phone books—the new ones just arrived in bulk. We have an HSU Intern this Fall, so I'm planning for his time at the Chamber, creating a scope of work that will be a fulfilling experience for him.

Our office hours change next week after Labor Day. We have slightly shorter office hours so we can be out meeting with businesses and working with committees.

We have a brand new committee starting up—the Public Art Committee. We are working in collaboration with the City and starting small, while at the same time updating ordinances to make future projects go smoothly. It's been in the works for about a year, and now we are ready for prime time.

I want to tip my hat to Eureka for its recent street art festival. They showed the rest of County how it can be done—and that it should be done.

Rob Holmlund spoke to the Fortuna Chamber last week and I was taken with his story that there was a time when he felt there were more pressing issues to work on besides public art—homelessness, drug

abuse, economic development and zoning issues--any number of heavy city needs.

The moment of clarity came when his son asked him what his seventh favorite color was. It made him think--maybe public art could still be an economic development tool even if it was the seventh most important piece of the puzzle. It didn't have to be number one to accomplish great things.

For the record, Rob's seventh favorite color is Orange. Mine is eggplant.

Rob showed a video made up of stills taken during the arts week showing the progress of the murals. When it was finished, he asked the group gathered how many dumpsters did they notice—the people present all shook their heads—they didn't see any. Rob said there were 62 dumpsters in the pictures (I made that number up, but it was something like that). Then he asked how many people saw the weeds growing around the buildings—again, no answer. Oh, they were there he promised. And finally, who saw the cracked pavement? No one saw the cracked pavement because they were focused on the art.

A shout out to Fortuna artist Dakota Daetwiler. She is represented in Eureka with a mural and an electricity box. You can catch more of her work—and purchase it—at Hot Brew in Fortuna.

Public art doesn't have to be a number one priority, it can be the seventh most important element of economic development and still be vital and important to the overall health of a city.

What are you doing to start fresh this Labor Day? Join me in decluttering your home and office and figuring out how you can support public art.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.