

Group seeks your help in jobs quest

It's time to act and bring new jobs to our county. That's what the Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group is attempting to do.

In 2011, a group of us decided to do something about the employment and economic situation in our area. We realized that the Humboldt Bay Harbor has enormous potential as a source for decent jobs for decent people who want to work and raise their families in this beautiful area. We gave ourselves a name and got to work: Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group.

Who are we? We're men and women, retirees and working folks, Democrats and Republicans, union members, surfers, artists, businessmen and women, engineers and educators ... a real mixed bag of folks who care deeply about our town and county and have put aside differences to achieve a goal: find ways to create jobs while preserving our unique environment. Is that possible? Absolutely!

Our first step was to join the Humboldt County Prosperity 2012 effort, organized to involve citizens in bringing forth new ideas for improving the local economy.

We also realized that our community needs information about the potential the Harbor has to offer, as well as the challenges it faces. To that end, we are hosting a



MY WORD

Susana Munzell

series of public forums at the Samoa Cookhouse on the last Wednesday of each month, with speakers on topics related to the harbor. The information is valuable, the turn-out is excellent, and the feedback is always positive. Guests are encouraged to suggest other topics and speakers of interest and we do our best to oblige.

Members of the HBHWG also recognized that the various governmental agencies in the area all have plans and goals, some of which are similar. We decided it was crucial to bring these agencies together to coordinate and leverage efforts and focus on specific goals and a marketing and long-term plan to achieve them.

We are happy to announce to the community that four entities have adopted a resolution affirming their commitment to creating jobs and sustainable economic growth through Humboldt Bay's harbor: The Eureka City Council, Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, the Wiyot Tribal Council and the Humboldt Bay Harbor,

Recreation and Conservation District. We thank them.

What are the benefits of a thriving harbor with good jobs and new income for the area? Better funding for our schools; a chance for small businesses to grow and new businesses to get a start; better services for safety and those in need ... The list is long.

We have received enthusiastic letters of support from Humboldt State University, Eureka City Schools, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 14, the US Department of Agriculture, the Building and Construction Trades Council of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, and the Greater Eureka Chamber of Commerce.

Next steps? To bring representatives from these four agencies and members of the HBHWG together. Soon we will begin the process of sharing plans, finding commonalities, listening to community members and identifying funding sources. Our goal is to create a unified vision with specific steps, a timeline, and reporting deadlines to inform the public of progress made and challenges to be met.

We all care deeply about Humboldt County and its uniqueness. It has an authentic and caring culture that values art, nature, and the celebration of all that is good here ... a special quality

we never want to lose. However, that special quality cannot survive without some new energy and change. It is possible to have a community that is culturally rich, that protects and nourishes the environment, and yet is innovative and proactive so what is best is never sacrificed, but rather is enhanced by providing the means for families to remain here and to flourish.

That's our job and our commitment. We can enrich our community without betraying the values we hold dear. It may not be easy, but it is possible. It requires creativity, hard work, commitment and knowledge. It requires balance; a delicate balance between the familiar and the new; between heritage and a changing world; between our individual needs and those of the larger community.

Let's abandon a way of thinking that pits camp against camp, that polarizes the community until it begins to wither. Let's achieve that balance and become a model for others.

Join us at the Samoa Cookhouse on Wednesday from noon to 1:30 p.m. RSVP at 497-6137

Susana Munzell resides in Eureka and is chairwoman of the Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group.

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