

MY WORD

The First Step in the Right Direction

There's a new committee in town, and it means business...but not business as usual.

What's new about it? It's based on collaboration, synergy, the sharing of ideas, knowledge and responsibilities to create new alliances, novel ideas and original means to make them work. The New Committee of representatives from the four agencies with direct jurisdiction over Humboldt Bay Harbor has begun such collaboration to create living-wage jobs and give our economy a much-needed boost. They deserve kudos and a watchful eye.

As a result of two years of work, the *Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group* (HBHWG) has helped bring the agencies together for a common goal: JOBS. Representatives of the Eureka City Council, Humboldt Bay Harbor District, Wiyot Tribal Council and Humboldt County Board of Supervisors met on January 29 to organize themselves, as equal partners, into a working committee. With facilitation assistance from the HBHWG, the Committee began to make decisions for carrying out their work.

The agenda consisted primarily of nuts and bolts issues: the committee's purpose, the Brown Act, process for decision-making, etc. The group decided that the purpose stated in the resolutions signed by all four agencies, "to work collaboratively to create jobs and sustainable economic growth through Humboldt Bay's Harbor" is not necessarily this committee's purpose, so the item was tabled until next time.

The Brown Act does not apply to this committee, which is an ad hoc group, and therefore is not an official decision-making body. The committee members decided not to have open meetings or public participation in order to protect their time for deliberation and discussion. They agreed that by reporting the group's business to their governing bodies, they adequately disclose the business to the public.

The Harbor District's representatives reported to the group that the Harbor District has budgeted \$5,000 for support of the committee, and further volunteered the District's staff and facilities for the Committee's use: to hold the meetings at their site and prepare agendas, minutes, etc.

The Committee will meet again shortly to complete their organizing tasks and will then plan to meet on a quarterly basis.

The Humboldt Bay Harbor Working Group, whose members will not be present at the meetings, will nevertheless continue to keep abreast of the Committee's progress and keep the community informed.

This ad-hoc collaborative Committee can achieve exciting enterprises for our community by transcending the familiar, by not just dusting off old plans, but by working together to generate creative and feasible projects to increase job opportunities and improve our community. This is truly a great "First Step in the Right Direction."