

Sharp, Ryan

From: Jeff Durham Head Lumberjack <jeff@passportag.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 8:33 AM
To: COB
Subject: H. DEPARTMENT REPORTS: 1 Humboldt County Visitor's Bureau Second Marketing Report to the Board of Supervisors and an Examination of the Current Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Rate for Humboldt County

County Supervisors and Staff: Thank you very much for your continued efforts to discuss and consider the funding of the HCCVB.

I have been an independent hotel owner in Fortuna for over 13+ years and have worked with other hospitality businesses throughout the County for the past 20 years. I was an original member of the Humboldt County Tourism Improvement District (HLA) origination and currently serve on the Executive Committee for that group. As of last week, I now serve on the board of the HCCVB.

I am optimistic about the future of tourism and Humboldt County and the future of my business, city, and community.

Yes, the HCCVB has had its issues in the past. There have been growing pains with the HLA; The HCCVB has been obligated to answer to so many and suffered from death by committee.

Having been involved with both the HCCVB and HLA for quite some time, I can state that never have they been more poised and prepared to market and brand Humboldt County as a tourist destination. Both bring strong leadership and engaged members that offer unique, engaging, and exciting ideas to create and build on a Humboldt brand. Each group has experiences and perspectives that are unique as to what can best serve Humboldt County.

The HLA can focus on bringing tourists to the area and put "heads in beds," while the HCCVB can build a strong base of a story and brand to work with all regions within our County and stakeholders. To remain true to its bylaws, the HLA is comprised of hotel owners from across the Humboldt. A solid mix of independent and franchise hotel owners is firmly rooted and invested in the Humboldt region. And then, with my short time on the HCCVB board (I was a previous board member many years ago), I have met some fantastic members from different backgrounds and perspectives, which bring a sense of place to the discussion to create a Humboldt brand.

It only serves the County best for the two entities remaining separate while working together, each focusing on each group's strengths. With my time on the HLA and my time spent with members of the HCCVB, this is the consensus. Each entity is working on the same goal with different means and different resources and contacts. That is why it is imperative that the County fund the HCCVB.

I highly respect the Trellis Project and the marketing opportunities that it presents. The Trellis Fund can continue to support cannabis marketing. Simultaneously, the HCCVB promotes all the rest of Humboldt County offers and, hopefully with future opportunities, work with cannabis marketing. The funding for the HCCVB should be from the General Fund, as this is where the results of their work are realized in the TOT that is collected from the County bed tax.

The work of the HCCVB has been paying into the General Fund for many years. With a sound plan and goals, an investment into the HCCVB, the County will see increased unrestricted funds year over year. The time to act is now. With the HLA, as a separate entity of hotel owners, moving forward with marketing goals, the HCCVB can act decisively with its board and build a Humboldt brand.

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