

## **Recreation and Tourism Dollars**

Recently I went to the 2007-2008 Annual Tri Counties Economic Forecast Conference at Chico State University. Prior to that, several months ago, I attended the Butte County General Plan Economic Summit at the Sierra Nevada Conference Room. After going to both these informational conferences, what I came back with was that the economic drivers for the greater Butte County, but most importantly Oroville, are recreation and tourism. The Oroville area has such an abundance of recreation, such as hiking, boating, fishing, biking, and yes – even bird watching, which has become the fastest growing spectator sport in the United States. Geo-caching, biking, hiking, and extreme water sports such as whitewater rafting and kayaking, are also growing in popularity. Adult and youth soccer, baseball, softball, golf, aquatics, and other traditional sports and the tournaments that these sports are associated with also bring in tourism dollars.

What I also heard and have believed myself for a long time is that these economic drivers are the core of tourism for Oroville. It was mentioned repeatedly in both conferences that tourism dollars are critical to the development of positive economics for any community. Oroville's abundance of recreation is premier in Butte County, as evidenced by all of its natural resources and evolving recreation. For example, Riverbend Park's Disc Golf Course and the Bedrock Skate & Bike Park which have become incredibly popular and full of recreational enthusiasts on a daily basis. But the missing link is still the tourism element and how it is funded. For Oroville to fully realize its potential, money has to be allotted for the Chamber and the Downtown Business Association to market these wonderful recreational resources, both locally, regionally and even statewide.

During the time that I served on the Oroville City Council, I was always confused why the tourism tax (the Transient Occupancy Tax, or TOT) was not allotted to the Oroville Chamber of Commerce or downtown businesses to be used for marketing. This tax is collected when visitors stay at local hotels and motels. To the best of my recollection, roughly \$300,000 is collected by the City of Oroville from tourism tax every year. At one time, the Chamber of Commerce was able to market using these funds, but there was a change a number of years ago whereas all of these collected taxes were allotted to funding other city services.

Just recently the City of Oroville commissioned a costly study on tourism. A similar study was done 20 years ago, with very much the same resulting findings in that recreation and tourism are the economic drivers for Oroville.

Both the conferences I attended heralded the cause for using tourism tax revenue towards marketing for tourism. This economic driver, recreation, and its abundance in Oroville, will attract many dollars for this community and ensure a robust economy that this community sorely needs. I would suggest who better than the Chamber of Commerce to receive these funds. It only makes sense.

Why not, after attending these conferences, follow through with funding from the tourism tax and make the Chamber of Commerce the driver of the economic bus? Hey, Paul – Beep! Beep!

### **FRRPD Treasure Hunt #3**

Argh! They be sniffin' around. Tha beast – he found it and came to collect his bounty. Ah, but there be many treasures still in the land of gold. And many gates as well. Argh, the gates!

Avast! What kind of pirate ye be without a treasure map? Get yer cup of mud, and the key to yer next clue, from tha poppets at tha coffee shops. A map there be, with treasures in abundance. Argh!

### **Quote**

“Sometimes my dreams are so deep that I dream that I’m dreaming.” Ray Charles

### **Fun Facts**

In Cleveland, Ohio it is illegal to catch mice without a hunting license.

The earth is approximately 6,588,000,000,000,000 tons.

It costs about 3 cents to make a \$1 bill in the United States.

### **FRRPD Upcoming Events**

Mitey Mites Basketball begins Sat., Feb. 2 at the Municipal Auditorium.

A Senior Valentine's Dance will be held on Thurs., Feb. 14 from 4:30 to 7:30 at the Municipal Auditorium.

Livespot will be hosting a teen dance at the Municipal Auditorium on Fri., Feb. 15 from 6-8:30 PM.

Sign up now for CPR/First Aid, which will be held on Feb. 19 and 21 from 5-9 PM in the Municipal Auditorium.

See you in the parks!