

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

I was out of town last week and when I returned, I was once again overwhelmed by how scenic and beautiful the North Coast is. We live in one of the most spectacular places in our country. Our climate is very mild. The temperature in Eureka never exceeds 80 degrees, and when we get frost, it seldom stays longer than a couple of hours. If you are seeking the heat in the summer time, or snow in the winter, it is less than an hours' drive away. The redwood trees speak for themselves. We have magnificent rivers, breathtaking wilderness areas and the Pacific Ocean coastline can keep a photographer busy for a lifetime. We are truly blessed to live here. Unfortunately, we have overregulated our resources to the point that it has become increasingly difficult to find good employment other than tax-supported jobs. When I was in school, Humboldt County was an economic stronghold. Our timber and fishing industries were always operating. Sure, we felt the economic ups and downs the rest of the country felt, but these swings were never as bad here on the coast as they were elsewhere. We were independent and proud. Long before the extreme environmentalist decided to set up shop in Humboldt County, our elected officials and businesses set aside old growth redwood groves in parks, they established the wilderness areas and operated numerous fish hatcheries along our rivers. They were good stewards of the land. Sure, they cut down the trees and boatloads of fish were brought to our fish processors, but they did this with the future in mind. The timber companies had their own nurseries in which more trees were planted than cut. The fish hatcheries released millions of fish back

into the rivers. These things were done to preserve our future resource industries. What happened? The people who moved into our beautiful area wanted to make sure that it stayed that way, unfortunately, they failed to realize that the reason we had such beautiful forests, was that we already knew what we were doing. Since this conflict of how to take care of our resources erupted, we've seen a steady decline in good paying jobs. Too many lumber mills have closed their doors. The jobs we've lost have been replaced with government jobs. I don't knock anyone who works for the government: there are just way too many of you. Every single government job is supported by tax revenue and that revenue needs to come from the private sector. It is a simple math problem, the number of private sector jobs is dwindling and the number of government jobs is increasing. This has created a budget deficit for almost every public agency. We need to reverse this process before it is too late. The only way I know how to stop this trend is at the ballot box. It doesn't matter what party you belong to, we need to elect politicians who want to bring industry to the North Coast. Wal-Mart isn't the answer. Wal-Mart is a place to spend a dollar, not earn a dollar. We need to attract manufacturers to our area. These types of jobs create products to be sold outside of our region, thus bringing dollars into our community. I'm glad Mike Thompson will no longer be our Representative in Washington DC. He hasn't created any industry on his watch. It is as simple as this; our elected officials need to make it easy for a contractor to have a hammer in his hand. If he is hammering nails, our economy is recovering.

This has been Tom Cookman with a Community Comment