

# Economic Vision

3-8-12

“Where there is no vision the people perish.” (Proverbs 29:18)

Like most old proverbs this one is as true today as 2700 years ago when it was written; When the masses have no idea where they are going: vision fades and people ~~to~~ come unglued.

Another way to say it is: Bad talk creates bad vibes. How many times have you heard, “There are no jobs in Humboldt!” Negative mantras help little -- hinder a lot.

But where does vision come from? the visionary can be a poet, prophet, philosopher, political, civic or religious leader, ~~etc.~~ But any vision ultimately has to catch on with the people, which means the vision that truly inspires is normally one that gives voice to what the people are already thinking in their heads and holding in their hearts.

On the other hand, a clear articulation of where a community needs to go, backed by common sense and a bit of honest research, results in success—even prosperity.

The economy of Humboldt is in the doldrums right now, along with the national and world economy. But the Economic Development Coordinator for Humboldt, Jacqueline Debets, has been working hard to mobilize our community around a vision that is balanced, encouraging and sustainable. The vision is also bold: aiming at nothing less than ‘prosperity’. The North Coast Strategy for Prosperity aims to maximize our region’s economic competitiveness without sacrificing our communal and rural way of life. How?

The community vision identifies nine base industry clusters that form the foundation of the North Coast’s economic future: They are:

1. Lumber and wood products--
2. Education and research
3. Tourism
4. Fisheries, Processing and Aquaculture
5. Dairy and Dairy processing
6. Manufacturing
7. Arts and culture
8. Information and technology
9. Specialty Agriculture and Horticulture

In order to sustain and grow these industries, if we focus upon what we don’t have we’ll increase our chance of failure. ~~So~~ On the other hand, we focus on what we *do* have, such as a strong sense of community, a region rich in natural resources and stunning natural beauty, a forward thinking population, and strong historical and cultural roots enhanced by access to higher education--we can make Humboldt a place of prosperity. It’s up to us.

Prosperity has more to do with the resourcefulness and energy of the people than a region’s natural resources. I lived in Switzerland for 3+ years before coming to Humboldt 19 years ago. Switzerland is small, has few natural resources, no access to ports, and little arable land. Yet it has become one of the wealthiest nations on earth. How? Through the resourcefulness of her people. The Swiss are smart and work hard; they are mindful of the past without living in it, and they are good at managing their limited resources.

Another proverb says, “A slack hand causes poverty but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” Let’s create a prosperous future for ourselves and generations to come. It’s up to us...to catch the vision and keep at it!

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment