

This is Jon Sapper.

During my last community comment I talked about how important innovation is to the economic health and well being of our country. I ended by saying, "Don't count this country out just yet". We still lead the world in innovation.

I received quite a few calls and comments after that aired. One call was from a woman who told me her son just graduated from a university in Southern California. He was a Fortuna High School graduate four years ago and his dream was to get a degree, invent something and then bring that business back to Humboldt County. She went on to say he entered a college business competition last year, placed in the top 3 of 88 entries, received a cash prize and is now working with a group of angel investors from Silicon Valley. Not bad for a 23 year old.

I received another comment from a gentleman who said, "I agree with what you said about the importance of innovation, but locally we really don't support people who want to start or grow a business." He went on to say, "All we get are regulators and permit people telling us about the hoops and hurdles we have to jump through and not being enthusiastic about working with us or helping us to navigate the requirements of starting or expanding our business. They don't seem to be on our side."

I'm sure that's not true in all cases or all cities, but if this is true in just one of our local communities, it's one too many. Those who are willing to take the risks and in many cases risking every penny they have, to try and start or grow a local business need to be encouraged and supported.

I'd like to see every city on the North Coast, and the county jurisdictions, hang out a sign that says.....We support local entrepreneurs, and we have zoned property, pre-permitted sites,

local financing options and a customer friendly staff that will work with you and support you through the entire process.

Every community in this country that is healthy, vibrant, forward thinking and a great place to live for children and families has a solid economic foundation underneath it. The economy of the North Coast is based on entrepreneurship and small business development. Let's roll out the red carpet for local entrepreneurs. Our future depends on it.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.

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