

The Fair is over. The days are getting shorter. It's back-to-school time. Even those of us who haven't been in school for years still long for new school clothes and a brand new peechee by Labor Day. Did I just date myself with the peechee reference? There's a sense of a clean slate and that all things are possible.

The city of Fortuna is experiencing its own "going back to school" excitement right now—both literally and figuratively.

Our Elementary School District is newly consolidated and this fall will be the first time Superintendent Patti Hafner and the four Elementary school Principals will have a chance to solidly work together and create collaborations that weren't possible in the past.

And it's as if the entire community was assigned to the "cool new teacher's" class. We have a new City Manager as of September 4—Regan Candalario. We are sitting at our desks, hands folded, on our best behavior, waiting for him to arrive. We've heard great things about the new guy, so the atmosphere in Fortuna is positive and hopeful. I want to give a shout out to the substitute teacher—or interim city manager—Loretta Nicklaus. She's done an outstanding job and we appreciate her can-do attitude and genuine caring for our town.

-Erin Dunny/page 1-

And there have been remarkable results from summer school. Plans for our new Multigenerational Center are moving forward. The Center's conditional use permit was recently approved by the Fortuna Planning Commission. The MGC Committee and start-up coordinator Sabrina DeLashmutt are doing a tremendous job turning this community dream into a reality. We are so appreciative of our local Foundations that have made this project possible.

We are already looking forward to mid-terms. In January, 2013, the second class of "Leadership Fortuna" will begin meeting weekly to get a behind-the-scenes look at the issues impacting our region's economic health and quality of life.

Our curriculum integrates guest speakers, candid round table breakfast discussions and field trips to local businesses and institutions. Contact the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce to learn more.

What is school without fun activities after class is out? New in Fortuna this year is an expanded Apple Harvest Festival the first weekend in October. It starts with the First Friday arts evening October 5, followed by the traditional Apple Harvest day on Saturday with hay wagons and a black hawk helicopter demonstration sponsored by the Fortuna Police Department. New for Sunday is a Harvest Market--featuring fresh produce and locally made products--on Main Street from 11 – 4 p.m. And, the 4-H is having their annual Lamb BBQ in Rohner Park that afternoon.

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In Fortuna we're sharpening our pencils, cleaning the chalkboards, oh...and powering up our laptops in preparation for the new school year. See you in class!

This has been Erin Dunn of the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce for Community Comment.