

Fog Bank Clothing wears Del Norte pride on its sleeves

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Three friends have merged their entrepreneurial spirit and a love of Crescent City. The result is Fog Bank Clothing.

The business was formed three years ago to sell exclusively Del Norte County-themed t-shirts, sweatshirts and accessories.

Joe Hanks, Tommy Burley and Fred Victor, Fog Bank Clothing's co-owners, had talked for years about starting some type of business. They didn't know precisely what that business would be – just that they wanted it to be something meaningful.

Then, Hanks called Burley and Victor with an idea: a clothing company with designs specifically featuring Del Norte County and Crescent City themes.

“[Joe] kind of sold me on the idea that there’s not a true Del Norte County brand,” Burley said. “Let’s be the first, let’s have the niche market.”

It took them three weeks to come up with a name for their business. Hanks was driving down the coast and noticed a clouded sky hovering over crashing waves ... Fog Bank Clothing.

They purchased unbranded clothing, created their initial designs, and began branding t-shirts, hats and sweatshirts. That first year, they sold maybe 500 shirts. Today, they said they sell thousands.

Most of their designs involve Crescent City sites and history. Many of them include BigFoot, the Fog Banks mascot. Some designs showcase tsunami waves, others feature the redwoods or an ocean sunset.

Beyond simply selling clothes, the trio said they aim to stimulate good works, too. “We want to inspire people to do better things,” said Victor, “and if we can do it through shirts and hoodies, then there you go.”

Fog Bank Clothing recently donated sweatshirts and t-shirts for an auction in support of a local teenager battling leukemia. In time, said the owners, they hope to establish scholarships for aspiring Del Norte High School graduates.

Today, the business isn’t supporting them financially. “We don’t get paid for this, for the most part,” said Hanks. “Everything is just recycled back into the company. So, the payment is to be able to do things (that help people) and make sure we’re giving back to the community.”

Although the three partners met while living in Crescent City, only Hanks lives here now. Burley is in Portland and Victor lives in Chico, California. They keep the business running by communicating via group text messages and scheduling face-to-face meetings every month or so.

Although they’d like to operate a storefront someday, right now they’re marketing products through booths at farmers markets, fairs and other community events, as well as on social media and their website. Their clothing can be picked up at the Mail Room in Crescent City.

Yes, they hope Fog Bank will provide them with full-time jobs at some point, but they say their top priority today is giving back to Del Norte County’s residents.

Or, as Victor put it, “The end goal is run Fog Bank full time, and help out the community full time.”