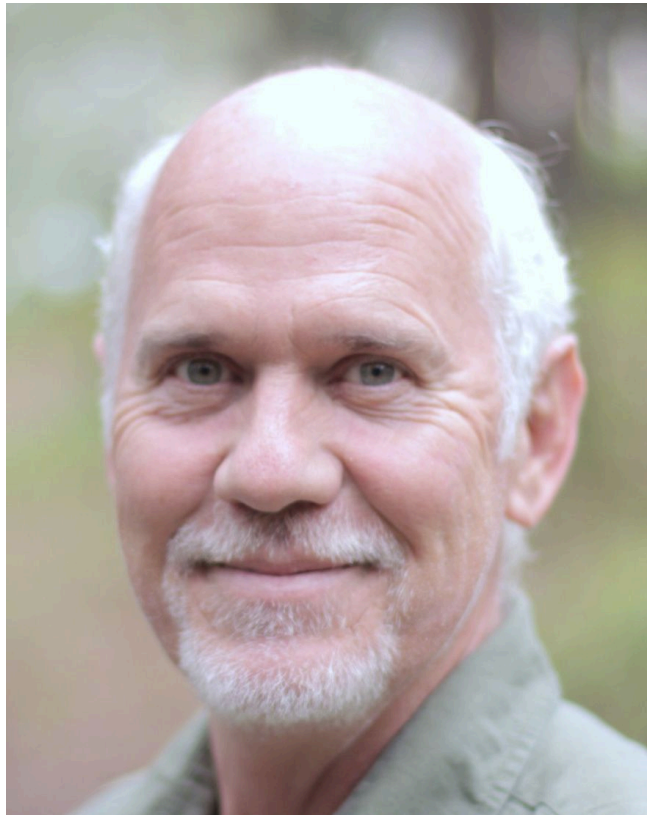

Guest Column: Grants are good for Del Norte

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I don't understand why some people say that grants are bad, and that we should not accept grants from the government. I disagree. Grants are good!

Applying for grants is one of the ways that we get tax dollars back to help meet local needs. Grants bring money into our community, create jobs, and do not have to be paid back. Grant funding can help with all aspects of local government programs and services. All government employees should look for grants to support their mission.

I acknowledge that some grants are not always a good fit for an organization. For eight years, I worked for an environmental foundation. I would counsel applicants not to change their core programs just to meet the criteria for a grant.

Only if grant funding can supplement and complement program efforts is it worth applying. Sometimes a single one-time grant will build enough momentum to start and maintain a project that would otherwise not be feasible.

Vast amounts of grant funding will be available in the coming years from the federal government and the State of California. We need to pay attention!

California has a \$97 billion surplus this year. This is not from taxes paid by you and me. Most of this surplus is from taxes on wealthy Californians who made huge profits on their investments.

Like Robin Hood, California will allocate this surplus to help fund education, infrastructure, social services, affordable housing, reducing homelessness and more.

Last year President Biden signed the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill. California will get \$44 billion. How much will come to Del Norte County?

It would be irresponsible for our local government agencies to not request our fair share. If we don't take it someone else will.

There are a few local agencies that are pursuing infrastructure grants. The Harbor District contracted with a grant writer and is applying for \$25 million of infrastructure grants to pay for much needed repairs in the Harbor. Crescent City is applying for a \$11.5 million federal infrastructure grant to repair Front Street. Del Norte County recently created a new grant writer position so that they can more successfully compete for state and federal grants. This is smart.

Without grant funding, some essential projects might not happen. I commend these agencies for having the vision and making the effort to apply for grants that will benefit our community.

Grant funding helps to supplement the limited funding that we can get from our local tax base. Overall, Del Norte County gets back far more funding than we pay in taxes.

This is how we pay for our roads, schools, social services and more.

Local government agencies and non-profit organizations both large and small, should aggressively pursue grants that will help fund their programs and services. If we bring more grant funding into our community, this will help us become a more successful and prosperous community.

Kevin Hendrick is the Chair of the Del Norte County Democratic Central Committee