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Businesses Prepare for Graduation Weekend



Chico, Calif.--The Chico State graduation is just days away now and businesses are preparing for what's going to be a busy weekend as thousands make their way to Chico.

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Katie Simmons, president and CEO of the Chico Chamber of Commerce, said that all 1,200 of the city's hotel rooms are booked. Families already have somewhere to stay, and now they'll need a way to get around, and that's where G-Ride Pedi Cab comes in.

For the last twelve years, Mike Griffith, widely known as Mike G Ride, makes his way through the streets of Chico playing music and while bringing his passengers to their destination.

This weekend will be bittersweet as he provides rides for Chico State grads and their families one last time.

"I've known a lot of these people through the four years they've gone to college, or five or six, so for me it's like, finishing getting them to that stage, and off the stage when they're done," Griffith said.

Graduation ceremonies begin on Thursday and go until Sunday, something that Simmons said is great for business.

"You see a lot of tot funds being generated, transient occupancy tax, comes through the hotel stays, you see a lot of restaurants and dining and a lot of activity in our downtown, a lot of retail purchases for gifts and those kind of things, so it's great to have parents and people celebrating the graduates come in and do their shopping here," Simmons said.

Mike G Ride said before they extended the weekend, he used to make a lot more money.

"Thursday and Friday is pretty slow because they all go to Laxson, they don't need rides. It took a little bit of income away from us as far as pedi cab and travel industry but we just gotta roll with the punches and be prepared," he said.

While downtown businesses prepare for the weekend, Mike said he'll be resting these next few days to make sure he's ready to go come Thursday.

"There's nothing like a graduation, you know. I graduated high school, went to college and never graduated but to see the excitement in everybody's, the families, are all crazy during graduation because they're so happy with their kids, they become the kids," he said.

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