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Newton said his school is about the same size as Eureka's high school. He congratulated Eureka High's teachers and students for their close, working relationships.

"This is a good choice in terms of a sister city," Newton said. "We have lots of similar interests -- the sea fishing, forestry and arts, and we're really hoping to push those advantages."

Like Newton, Glue was impressed with Eureka and the high school.

"We've had a fantastic, lovely day," she said.

Glue said she is looking forward to seeing Old Town and the redwoods.

La Vallee recalled how when he was vacationing in New Zealand a few years ago his plans for lodging fell through. A couple overheard him and offered him a room in their

## Eureka signs friendship agreement with Nelson, New Zealand Cities exchange gifts

By Meghan Vogel The Times-Standard

EUREKA -- Although already on friendly terms with its sister city, Nelson, New Zealand, Eureka made it official on Friday with the signing of a friendship agreement and the exchanging of gifts.

A delegation from Nelson is in town this weekend enjoying the beauty of the North Coast and one of the area's biggest cultural attractions, the Redwood Coast Jazz Festival. Bourbon Street Beat, a band from New Zealand, is performing at the festival this year.

"This is a signing ceremony, but an informal one because it's also a friendship ceremony," said Rick Littlefield who helped organize the delegation's visit.

The New Zealand guests had the opportunity to tour parts of the region on Friday with Eureka Mayor Peter La Vallee, and are looking forward to seeing more of what Humboldt County has to offer this weekend.

Despite the rain on Friday, the Nelson delegation were enjoying themselves.

"It rained on the delegation from Eureka when they came to visit, so now I guess we're getting paid back," said Nelson City Councilwoman Marilyn Gibbs.

Gibbs said she liked the historic buildings in Old Town and meeting the friendly people of Eureka.

Charles Newton, principal of Nelson's Nayland College, which is equivalent to a high school, spent the day at Eureka High School along with Judy Glue, the college's director of international students.

"It was fun to see an American school and it dispelled misconceptions that I had about your schools," Newton said. "I was very impressed with the friendly, open and respectful students."

Newton said his school is about the same size as Eureka's high school.

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home.

"As an American," La Vallee said, "I was blown away. It was my first introduction to what I call New Zealand hospitality."

He also said he was struck by the similarities New Zealand has with America, but joked, "except you guys drive on the wrong side of the road."

Former Eureka Mayor Nancy Fleming, who worked on the sister city project as mayor, also spoke at the reception.

"It's lovely to see old friends," she said. "The warmth from the heart of New Zealand is very touching.

"It's a perfect fit in terms of geography, people, arts and timber," Fleming continued. "Many, many things are just a perfect fit, and I hope this will be a long, long friendship, possibly one to last for generations."

Nelson Mayor Paul Matheson exchanged jokes with La Vallee and called him "your worship," the honorary term for mayor in New Zealand.

"I'm thrilled to be in your city," Matheson said. "From a purely social exchange this brings a huge understanding between us all. Social interaction creates long and very worthwhile friendships."

Matheson presented La Vallee with an aerial photograph of Nelson, and another very special gift.

"We don't mind reminding you and the United States that the Lord of the Rings won 11 Oscars," Matheson said of the movie, which was filmed in New Zealand.

The featured ring in the film trilogy was made by a jeweler from Nelson. The jeweler made 100 copies of the ring. While the ring maker kept the first ring, Eureka received ring No. 2.

"This is the first one out in the world," Matheson said to the gasping crowd.

Gary Todoroff presented the Nelson delegation with an aerial view of the lagoons near Trinidad. Sally Arnot of the Humboldt Arts Council gave the visitors a collection of the Morris Graves Museum of Art's previous catalogues. Artists from Nelson will be exhibiting at the museum this summer. La Vallee gave Matheson a plaque welcoming him to Eureka and the redwoods.

"We now have a deeper understanding of each others' lives and traditions," Matheson said.

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