

FRIDAY WITH *Friends*

MEETING NOTES Experience Chehalis May 13, 2022 | 8:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Susan DeLaire, David Hartz, Brian Wilkins, Annalee Tobey, Michael Ervin, Chip Duncan, David James, Andrew Hunziker, Terry Harris, Chelsea Barr, Brandon Rakes, Tony Ketchum, Melissa Shoemaker, Mitch Moberg, Cynthia Mudge

Veterans Memorial Museum – Chip Duncan

- The museum has many events scheduled this summer in partnership with other area non-profits. These include many car shows and other affordable family friendly events. Check out their website for details: <https://www.veteransmuseum.org/>
- They estimate 5,000 attendees at their previous Halloween Trunk of Treat, a huge success.
- Jesse Lloyd will be the director of “Veterans Moving forward” a certified peer counseling program.
- The museum is currently researching grants to create a Veteran resource center. There is currently only one certified veterans service officer for the entire county. The resource center would help vets with addiction, job training, mental health, etc.
- When the VA closed our local the clinic, the next closest service center is Olympia and many are not willing or can't travel for services. Homelessness is an issue.
- The museum has hired a curator to assist visitors with museum information.
- Lewis County has approximately 8,000 veterans (or 10% of population). Most Washington counties average 3-5% or population.

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce – Cynthia Mudge

- Cynthia has been on the job about two months.
- A marketing staff person was recently hired filling a recent vacancy.
- They are currently working on updating their website with Silver Agency.
- The Chamber is conducting a business survey to assess business needs, desires, and expectations.
- They will be holding a hiring event on June 21st
- Chamber is concerned about a lack of volunteers in their organization and sees this trend in many other organizations. They are interested in partnering to promote and highlight available volunteer experiences in our community. They would be interested in holding an event with other area non-profits to recruit volunteers.

- They will be holding the Top 25 Students luncheon again this year for the first time since the pandemic began. This event provides scholarships to area high school students.
- Business After Hours is next week at the Fox Theater
- The Chamber is evaluating their events and will make decisions on what to drop and what to continue.
- Chamber Forums are the second Thursday of each month at O'Blarney's in Centralia.

City of Chehalis – Andrew Hunziker, Facilities Manager

- The facilities department services more than 200 acres of parks, grass, and facilities within the City of Chehalis.
- The wet spring has been challenging for employees as mowing and other outdoor tasks require more dry weather.
- Currently, there are five full time employees in his department. Two of these employees are out on L&I so there are three currently available to work. There are also six seasonal staff positions open that have not had many applicants.

Committee Reports

Promotion Committee – David James

- Chehalis brochures are being printed.
- Postcards are being sold at local businesses
- The committee is working on other Chehalis merchandise and swag
- ChehalisFest planning is well underway. Audrey at Garby's is heading up the Chehalis Ave. activities including car show, beer garden, vendor fair, kids zone and live music. 68 vendors lined up so far. Businesses on Market are encouraged to create sidewalk sales to encourage people to visit downtown. The airport is working on their plan for Young Eagle flights that has typically been held during ChehalisFest.

Organization and Economic Vitality Committee – Annalee Tobey for Michele Gallagher and Laura Six

- New Safety and Security grant available to help businesses increase security
- Facade grants are available to beautify businesses
- Digital Marketing grants are available for businesses to improve their online presence.
- Block captain program is being developed to serve our business community with monthly or bi-monthly visits from a block captain to both provide and collect information.

Design Committee – Annalee Tobey for Emily Von Flotow

- Earth Day event on April 23rd was a great success. Thank you to all who participated. They event will be planned again next year.
- Mural season is here and four murals are being planned currently.
 - Kajia's yellow warehouse across the street from their retail store.
 - National Frozen Foods' long white wall next to sidewalk on West Street.
 - Historic Royal Bakery/Star Tavern (co-op project with Lewis County)
 - Fourth location is not yet confirmed. More information to follow.