

FRIDAY WITH *Friends*

MEETING NOTES

Experience Chehalis

November 17, 2023 | 8:30 a.m.

Attendees: Brandon Rakes, Jo Kuener, Mitch Moberg, David James, Jill Anderson, Annalee Tobey, Katie McDougall, Shawna Herringford, Bill Duetscher, Tony Ketchum, Michael Ervin, Christy Ervin, Kiera Pennington, Jason Matson, Kelsey Rodriguez, Rebecca Gallagher, Joanne Schwartz, Chelsea Barr, Lindsey Senter, Jessica Kinney, Lance Bunker, Lindy Waring

Jill Anderson, City of Chehalis Update

- Downtown Revitalization
 - The city is currently in negotiations with HBB to do the planning and design work for a downtown revitalization project for Market Boulevard, Boistfort Street and surrounding Washington Ave and Pacific Ave.
 - Once the plan is complete, the city will work to secure grants to raise funding
 - The city is replacing burned out street lights downtown with LED streetlights.
- The city has allocated a \$75,000 in the budget to support Experience Chehalis through a 2024 B&O tax donation
- There is a South Chehalis UGA planning meeting December 4th at 6pm in the council chambers.
- There is currently an open city council position. Anyone interested in applying can contact Chehalis City Hall.

Bill Duetscher, Chehalis Centralia Railroad & Museum

- The railroad has sold 6,000 tickets to the Polar Express bringing in more than \$400,000. Rides are sold out for the 2023 season.
- According to data collected 80% of the customers travel from over 25 miles away.
- They purchase cookies and beverages for the riders from local businesses including Northwest Cookie Co. and L&E Bottling.
- Over 25 dedicated volunteers are involved in producing the Polar Express rides each year.

David James, Promotion Committee

- The Experience Chehalis website is being refreshed with new content and several new additions.

- The historic walking tour will soon be reprinted and an online version will be available. Plaques will be placed under the existing walking tour plaques with a QR code to take visitors to the website guiding visitors.
- The email e-newsletter has been reformatted and will be launched each month with the help of new volunteer, Jenny Zenkner.
- Ladies Night on November 11 was a big success. This event featured two successful vendor fairs and many local businesses joined in the festivities. The next event will be in March 2024.

Annalee Tobey, Executive Director

- Holiday Festivities
 - The elves of Experience Chehalis will see that children sending local Santa letters will receive a hand-written reply again this year. Mail boxes will be placed at Book N Brush, Totally Pawsome, and Market Street Ace where kids can “mail” their letters. There were about 80 letters last year
 - We will do local holiday bingo again with a winner drawn to receive \$100 in local gift cards
 - The 2nd annual tree lighting will be held at the historical museum at 3pm after the Santa Parade. McFiler’s Chehalis Theater will be showing Christmas movies after the parade as well.
- New Businesses!
 - Bigfoot Treasure held a successful grand re-opening.
 - The Bartels building has a new tenant that will be opening an artisan market and café.
 - M&K’s corner space is being converted to an organic juice bar.

Jason Mattson, Lewis County Historical Museum

- The Author’s Book Signing event will be held at the Museum from 5-8pm on December 1.

Chelsea Barr shared that the LC Young Professionals is doing a decorated tree auction on December 14th. Organizations can decorate a tree, the trees will be auctioned off, and the revenue raised will go to the organization that decorated the tree.

Jessica Kinney shared that the Chehalis Farmers Market held a fundraiser dinner that was a big success! Thank you to all who attended and supported the museum.