

# FRIDAY WITH *Friends*

## MEETING NOTES

### Experience Chehalis

October 11, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.

**Attendees:** David James, Michael Ervin, Jenna Nacht, Joe Clark, Alexis Besio, Mary Kay Nelson, Kate McDougall, Tony Ketchum, Stacy Denham, Brian Wilkins, Jessica Kinney, Annalee Tobey, Jo Kuehner, Susan Delaire, Jeff Robertson

### Partner Updates

#### Joe Clark - Lewis County Transit

- Lewis County Transit is leasing the former adult store property next to the Park N Ride off Exit 77. They have received \$380K from the state for funding the development of the property as an enhanced visitor area. They would like to find another \$2 million to fully expand the project. The \$380K grant money will fund a lane for a bus pickup in the parking lot. Phase 2 would include additional parking, and Phase 3 would add another parking lot.
- Napavine service will begin in spring of 2025.
- A \$275K grant applied for with create a sidewalk from Lewis County Coffee to the Boys and Girls Club; a route with heavy use.

#### Mary Kay Nelson - Chehalis Centralia Railroad

- Pumpkin Trains will run October 19 and 20.
- Polar Express will bring 6,000 people this winter and 80% are from out of the area. There will be a total of 54 runs. It is a trademarked event and the railroad has rights by way of royalties. 30% of revenue goes to Warner Bros. Staff attend training camps earlier in the year to learn more about putting on the event.
- The organization has worked very hard to build a more strategic board. They are working on deferred maintenance. They are still waiting on FEMA funding from the January 2022 flood. The organization has replaced the Sterns Creek Bridge, a \$100k project as well as replaced 500-1000 railroad ties, another \$100k project.
- Rail bikes are coming in October via the company Joy Rails.
- In order to increase profitability, the train has located a car in Snoqualmie. They will trade a turntable for this car. They have received a \$50k pledge to renovate the new car.

### Committee Reports

Promotion Committee – David James

- Ladies night is not happening this year as the event coordinator, Ashley, has just opened a new store downtown, Country Chic Baby Co. Instead, we will host a smaller Harvest Hop event on November 2.
- The 2024 coupon book is being finalized. The coupons will be good from November 2nd to Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

Executive Director - Annalee Tobey

- The Imagine Downtown Chehalis project continues and the next open house will be in January.
- A new mural has been installed at the library, called "Nature's Library." The mural celebration gala hosted with the Chehalis Timberland Library was a great success.
- We had our annual Main Street visit from the state program. They encouraged our program to apply for national main street designation. The visit was very positive and encouraging.
- Several board members will be attending the PLACES state Main Street conference in Walla Walla next week.

**Good of the Order**

Jo Kuehner would like us to address the Chehalis Coworks alley area.