

Willits Weekly

EST. 2013

Online & Print

Willits **newspaper**

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
Donations Accepted Edition No. 136 **Thursday, December 17, 2015**

Main Street Corridor proposals submitted

Damian Sebouhian
Reporter
damian@willitsweekly.com

Five design and engineering teams have submitted Willits Main Street Corridor Enhancement Plan proposals to City Manager Adrienne Moore and Local Government Commission enhancement plan project manager Alison Pernell, meeting the December 14 deadline.

"We've received very strong proposals," the LGC's Pernell said. The nonprofit organization is based in Sacramento. Its mission is to foster innovation in California's cities, counties and tribal governments in such areas as environmental sustainability, economic

Read the rest of **Main Street**
Over on Page 9

Council OKs police recruit raise

Damian Sebouhian
Reporter
damian@willitsweekly.com

Willits City Council discussed and voted on several agenda items during last week's December 9 meeting, approving them all.

The first item was a discussion and vote on adjusting entry level police recruit salaries to "a new salary range for the purpose of attracting more qualified applicants."

The council voted 4-0 (Councilwoman Holly Madrigal was absent from the proceedings) to approve a 2.5 percent salary increase to entry level police recruits'

Read the rest of **Raise**
Over on Page 9

WCS Winter Fund Drive report

Jennifer Poole
Editor & Reporter
jennifer@willitsweekly.com

Willits Community Services has launched its annual Winter Fund Drive, which helps provide essential human services to the Willits community. The "thermometer" at the corner of Highway 101 and East Commercial Street will show how much the drive has raised towards its \$32,000 goal. As of Tuesday, the drive has already raised \$7,825.

Donations can be mailed (checks made out to "Willits Community Services") to WCS, 229 East San Francisco

Read the rest of **WCS**
Over on Page 11



At top, from left: The red and green tags like these, that are hung on trees all around town, are desperately needed to be returned soon to get presents ready for Christmas Eve delivery. A number of new families were added to the Community Christmas Program at the last minute, adding to the need for cash donations and returned tags and gifts. Slowly, the numbered spots are being filled with toys and gifts to be delivered.

Above: Little Lake Fire Department firefighters pose with Willits Community Christmas Program helpers in front of the old Rexall building. LLFD always helps distribute toys for the program.

Below, left: Rick "Santa" Maddox helps wrap gifts. Below, right: Santa loads toys into a firetruck.

Tag Time is Here!

Willits Community Christmas Program readies for Christmas Eve deliveries

The Willits Rotary Club's Community Christmas Program is nearing its final – and crucial – days before the Christmas Eve delivery of gifts to families in need in the Willits area.

Each year, this volunteer program tries to ensure that every kid in the community has some festive presents to unwrap on Christmas morning.

Each family or child in the program fills out a tag with wants and needs for the

coming year, and the tags are hung on Christmas trees around town. Community members help provide these gifts by selecting a tag and purchasing some or all of the gifts listed, or can help with cash donations to allow program coordinator, Sandy Turner, and the rest of the program elves, a chance to shop for the goods.

As of this week, many of the allocated spots for each child's gifts sit empty at the program's headquarters, located at the old

Read the rest of **Tags**
Over on Page 4



Woodhouse's request for more budget input ricochets

A June 2015 vote by Third District Supervisor Tom Woodhouse against the recommended county budget and a comment that he wanted more input in the budget-making process may have ricocheted Tuesday when Assistant CEO Alan Flora proposed shortening the budget-making process and augmenting it with more workshops.

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
mike@willitsweekly.com

Flora explained the proposed changes by stating they were being offered in response to comments from several board members indicating they wanted more input in the budget-making process.

Flora suggested supervisors dispense with the current budget-making process and replace it with a streamlined version. Currently, the board reviews and adopts a recommended budget in June. In August and September, county staff incorporates final numbers from the close of the fiscal year on June 30 of each year, and the recommended budget is usually tweaked slightly. That tweaked budget becomes the final budget adopted in September.

Flora proposed the county dispense with the adoption of the final budget in September. Instead, he proposes supervisors adopt a final budget in June. The changes needed after ascertaining the final budget numbers at the close of the fiscal year would be worked into a revised budget in December, during the first-quarter budget review.

Flora said doing the budget this way would streamline the budget process. There would be

Read the rest of **Budget**
Over on Page 11

Supes seat six on tourism commission

The board of supervisors selected and unanimously approved six candidates for the board of directors of the Mendocino County Tourism Commission at its December 8 meeting.

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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The commission is the contractor hired to provide the tourist services desired by the county. The commission is also the governing body for the contractor, replacing an awkward governance structure that included five governing boards, consisting of 56 people, and four overlapping contracts.

Supervisors overhauled the Business Improvement District's governing structure during negotiations that took place from November 2014 to March 2015, and also during political maneuvers that took place from May to July of this year. As a result of those maneuvers, the BID's previous contractor, Visit Mendocino, Inc., agreed to reform itself into the Mendocino County Tourist Commission, and the five prior governing bodies of the BID agreed to accept a much-streamlined system of governance, with one BID governing body and one contractor, the Tourism Commission.

Scott Schneider, former CEO and president of Visit Mendocino, voluntarily stepped down in July and took an administrative job with the City of Fort Bragg.

Named to the new Tourism Commission were Sharon Davis, Marcus Magdalano, Bernadette Byrne, Debra deGraw, Jennifer Seward and John Kuhry.

Sharon Davis is CEO of the Mendocino Coast

Read the rest of **Tourism**
Over on Page 11

Supes' pot committee defends itself

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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Supervisors Tom Woodhouse and John McCowen, who together comprise the board of supervisors' ad hoc committee on marijuana, defended their work against criticism from members of the public at Tuesday's board meeting.

Woodhouse said the ad hoc committee has been receiving a lot of criticism from the public, but most of the critics are wrong.

"A lot of people in the community feel their livelihoods and their ability to farm and to stay on their land are threatened," Woodhouse said. "I can understand that. And

Read the rest of **Pot**
Over on Page 11

Supes distribute \$361,000 to community groups

Mike A'Dair
Reporter
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Near the end of their December 8 meeting, supervisors voted unanimously to distribute \$186,000 among 32 community organizations.

Director of Health and Human Services Agency Stacey Cryer offered to provide funding worth \$111,067 to 12 organizations. An unknown additional amount of dollars was promised to another five organizations to help them serve individual clients.

Read the rest of **Money**
Over on Page 11

MCERA: New officers, same problems

Ursula Partch
Contributing Reporter

New officers were elected at the Mendocino County Employees' Retirement Association Board of Trustees year-end meeting on December 2.

Trustee Randy Goodman replaced Shari Schapmire as chairman; Supervisor Dan Gjerde was elected vice chairman; Tim Knudsen remained secretary.

Goodman promised to follow Robert's Rules of Order more closely in the conduct of the monthly meetings, and appointed Ted Stephens as chairman

Read the rest of **MCERA**
Over on Page 11



Winter Weather

Impressive storm hits Willits last Thursday

Willits had a bout of wild weather this last week, with some serious thunder last Thursday, December 10, lots of rain, and some big hail, too, with some hailstones more than a ½ inch across. There was so much hail up in Brooktrails Thursday afternoon, it almost looked like snow had fallen.

Lucky Monkeys Ranch, two miles west of Willits, reports 3.4 inches of rain fell on December 10, with another 2 inches on December 13. That makes a total of 8.35 inches of rain at that location in December. The Mendocino College North County Center's weather station, on Commercial Street, reports a total of 8 inches of rain so far this month, with 11.45 inches since August 1 (yes, we did have a little rain this year in August, and in September, too).

With more rain in the forecast, it looks like total rain for fall 2015 in the Willits area might be a bit higher than average.

- Jennifer Poole



Photo by Elizabeth Hart



At top: Jade Luna and Danny Luckman built a sugar cube pyramid.

Above: Deegan Norton and Owen Nielsen stack sugar cubes to show how much sugar is in a can of peaches.

Warm hearts and sugar cubes

WECS students learn about giving – and math – during canned food drive

Becky Button
Contributing Writer

Students at Willits Elementary Charter School recently held a canned food drive to support the Willits Food Bank and donated 550 cans to a good cause. Along with experiencing the warm feelings you get from supporting your community and giving to those in need, students also learned useful life skills like how to read a nutrition label to determine if a food is healthy choice or not.

"During our canned food drive in November each year, I plan a lot of math exercises around the cans the students donate," said Christine Felton, second-grade teacher at WECS. "We make graphs, and tally up all the donations as they come in."

Read the rest of **Sugar**
Over on Page B2

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<p>16</p> <p>30% OFF HATS, GLOVES & SCARVES</p> <p>Wednesday</p>	<p>17</p> <p>30% OFF ALL KIDS TOYS & GAMES</p> <p>Thursday</p>	<p>18</p> <p>40% OFF ALL CLOTHING</p> <p>Friday</p>	<p>19</p> <p>40% OFF ALL FOOTWEAR</p> <p>Saturday</p>
<p>20</p> <p>30% OFF PURSES & WALLETS</p> <p>Sunday</p>	<p>21</p> <p>30% OFF LODGE COOK WEAR</p> <p>Monday</p>	<p>22</p> <p>30% OFF FLASHLIGHTS LIGHTERS & KNIVES</p> <p>Tuesday</p>	<p>23</p> <p>30% OFF WIND CHIMES & BIRDHOUSES</p> <p>Wednesday</p>

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Santa Photo Fundraisers

\$625 raised and donated to four local groups

Over the last two weekends, Santa made four special appearances in Willits, allowing the community holiday photo ops and a chance to raise money for local groups. Each event was held as a 50/50 fundraiser, and when all was tallied, local photographer Maureen Moore was able to donate \$625 this year. The Willits Junior Horsemen received \$267.50; Willits Elementary Charter School received \$165; Rascal's Rescue received \$40; and the Little Lake Fire Department received \$152.50. Thanks to J.D. Redhouse, Willits Power and Hardware, and Little Lake Fire Department for hosting and to all of the Santas, including Kevin Reedy and Rocky Stansberry, and of course thanks to all who came out to support the causes. Download your photo here: <http://photographress.zenfolio.com/pixwithsanta>.



Danielle Barry and Samantha Arms of the Willits Junior Horsemen with their check.



Misty Gonzalez and Rascal of Rascal's Rescue with their check.



December 18

December 19

December 20



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December 24



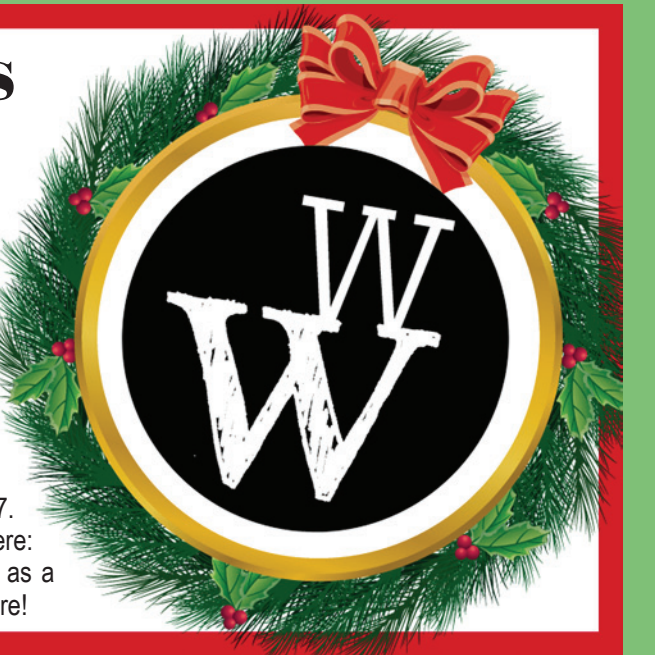
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Willits Weekly's Cookie Party

5 to 7 pm on Friday, December 18

It's time for Willits Weekly's annual Cookie Party! We invite the community to come to Ardella's Downtown Diner on Friday, December 18 from 5 to 7 pm to taste cookies, swap recipes, listen to Christmas carols sung by Nancy New and Devon Jones, and celebrate the holiday with us! IF YOU'D LIKE TO ENTER THE COOKIE CONTEST: Send an email to willitsweekly@gmail.com or call 972-7047. You can also download the baker's entry form here: www.willitsweekly.com/WW-Cookie-Entry.docx. Enter as a business, or as an individual! We hope to see you there!



This year classes participated in a "Sugar Stacking" lesson that allowed students to see the actual number of sugar cubes in each can of food. Students learned how to find the number of servings in a can and to use math skills like addition and multiplication to determine the total grams of sugar. Then, students used division to convert those grams into sugar cubes, and they built towers and pyramids to create a clear picture of the sugar content in each can.

The World Health Organization recommends adults limit their sugar intake to 25 grams per day, or six teaspoons. The students at WECS quickly realized that many of their cans had far more than six sugar cubes, with cranberry sauce and peaches in syrup ranking as the worst offenders.

Students were cautioned to avoid "sneaky sugars" and to opt for fresh fruit, or canned fruit in juice, instead of fruit packed in syrup that contains excess sugar.

"The sugar cube activity was their favorite so far," said Felton. "We generally don't allow sugar at school, so they loved getting to stack the cubes. It's a sneaky way of teaching them math skills, label-reading, and making good food choices all at once!"

A parent of a third-grader echoed Felton's thoughts: "I love that my son is reading the labels on our food, and he can tell me how many sugar cubes are in each serving. It really helps him make better choices about what he eats when he visualizes a pyramid of sugar cubes stacked next to a tube of Go-Gurt."

The Willits Food Bank reported that WECS students donated 667.5 pounds of canned food this year. Multiply that by the total number of good wishes, hearts warmed, and bellies filled, and you will get a result even sweeter than a stack of sugar cubes!



Above: Willits Junior Horsemen Danielle Barry, standing, and Samantha Arms wrap presents last weekend for the Community Christmas Program. Below, left: Part of the donation made by Willits Frontier Days. Below, right: Items purchased for the program by the Willits Junior Horsemen.



A Helping Hand for Santa

Members of the Willits Junior Horsemen and Willits Frontier Days groups donated toys and wrapping hours to the Willits Rotary Club's Community Christmas Program again this year to help ensure everyone has a festive holiday. Money used by the Junior Horsemen to buy the presents was raised during a recent bake sale and totaled \$400. Willits Frontier Days proudly allocates a donation in their budget every year to help fund the program.



Doll Raffle Winner

The Stylist owner Nicole Suttles, at left, and raffle winner Lana Vlastelica hold the beautiful Roxanne

Photo by Jennifer Poole

Lana Vlastelica of Willits is the winner of "Roxanne," a beautiful contemporary doll dressed in luxurious historic costume, thanks to a raffle organized by a group working on "opening Ruthie's Doll Museum & Tea House" in Willits next year.

Nicole Suttles of The Stylist Hair Salon had displayed Roxanne and sold raffle tickets in her salon, and the winning ticket was drawn on December 10.

Vlastelica says she is thinking about donating Roxanne back to the Doll Museum, but says she will be happy to have the festively dressed doll around for the Christmas season.

"Lana says she never wins anything," laughed Suttles. "Well, she won something quite spectacular this time, and she supported a great cause." The raffle raised \$350 towards medical bills for 88-year-old Bea Wurzberger, a Santa Rosa dollmaker and doll collector.

For more information about the doll museum project, call Cat Lober at 510-472-4948.

- Jennifer Poole

Furry Friends Hoping for a Home Shy Hershey

Hershey is a 3-year-old female boxer mix who currently weighs 45 pounds. Hershey is as sweet as her name! And adorable! Just look at those sweet eyes and droopy cheeks! She is a bit shy here at the shelter, but we are certain that once she knows she is home, loved and safe, she will blossom into her best self.

Hershey needs a patient and loving guardian who will devote lots of time and energy to ensuring that she feels safe and confident. Hershey would be fine with another friendly dog or kids.

Don't miss out on our "Twelve Strays of Christmas" Special, where all our spayed and neutered dogs can be adopted for \$50 or \$75 for Mendocino County residents (which includes the required dog license). This special started December 12, and ends December 23.

The Ukiah Animal Shelter is located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, and our adoption hours are Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and Wednesday from 10 am to 6 pm. We have many wonderful dogs and cats, awaiting their forever homes here. To view photos and bios of more of our wonderful adoptable animals, please visit our website: www.mendoshelterpets.com or visit our shelter during shelter hours. More info about adoptions: 467-6453.

Photo by Sage Mountainfire

of Marcia Tichenor who will be showing until the end of the year. Future slots remain open.

For anyone who remembers and misses the beautiful paintings of Sheri Howe (who moved to North Carolina a few years ago), Re-Evolution is selling her work.

"We're friends with Sheri Howe, and we've kept in touch with her," said Melissa. "We're offering her art work, postcards, prints and any of the paintings that people have seen."

A brand-new batch of Howe's woodwork will be arriving in the near future. (You can check "Sheri Howe Gallery" on Facebook for more info.)

Another local artist whose work can be found on the shelves of Re-Evolution is Erik Kristiansen, who specializes in blown glass.

"I'm just trying to fill in the pieces with what I thought was missing in town," Melissa said, regarding the emergence of Re-Evolution. "For me being organic and fair trade is very important. Those are the kinds of products I buy, and I feel like [a lot of] people around here have a similar mindset."

Re-Evolution, located at 15 West Mendocino Avenue, is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 11 am to 6 pm. To contact Re-Evolution, call 707-234-0607.

At right: Goods at Re-Evolution. Far right: A painting by Sheri Howe.

At right, below: Window of Re-Evolution. Far right, below: Chakra Crystal Light room with artwork by Sheri Howe.

Photos by Damian Sebouhian



Above, left: Attendees applaud as the Christmas tree lights come on.

Above: Willits City Mayor Bruce Burton addresses the gathered crowd.

At left: Two giggly girls, Shyanne Barney, left, and Cadence Zanolta smile for a quick photo on one of the pieces of equipment in the engine house.

Photos by Maureen Moore

The crowd counted down from "10" to "1," and the pretty white lights draped gracefully around the tree switched on with a lovely glow - thanks to the City of Willits public works department crew.

Roots volunteer Bobbie Yokum and helpers also put out luminarias along the sidewalk, which added to the holiday spirit.

About 25 members of the Emandal Choir started out the musical program with "Alleluia," a classical round with words by Maureen Robson. After the tree was lit, the choir sang "This Little Light of Mine, I'm Gonna Let It Shine," arranged by the Mwangaza Children's Choir of Uganda, and finished up with a few rounds of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."

Both the museum and the Engine Room were open into the evening for a Willits Chamber of Commerce mixer. Roots ran their model train, put up three beautiful Christmas trees decorated with train ornaments, and had the Murray Corliss steam engine operating in the middle of the room, with the Northwestern Pacific Railroad caboose #13 and the Mining and Smelting Heister #1 steam locomotive also on display. The museum offered hot cider and hot chocolate and cookies, and the "Vintage Toy Display" in the long hall of the museum, which has dolls, toys and games, and will run through January.

- Jennifer Poole

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Kids Holiday Craft Fair

The talents of local youth were on display Saturday morning, as the Willits Craft Fair played host to the Kids Craft Fair. The children's craft skills were impressive, and the baking skills of their parents were phenomenal.

The Sober Grad booth was full of alluring sweet treats with all proceeds going toward the annual Sober Grad graduation night party. One could have mistaken the table for a booth from a professional bakery, but all of the tantalizing treats were donated by parents. Rachel Cash and Kari Rescina were the volunteers staffing the booth, and it was a very popular destination with craft fair patrons.

The Community Learning Center's Special Education program had a Kids Craft Fair booth featuring decorative stepping stones, plants, tie dye, jewelry and other crafty gift ideas. The students made everything themselves, and instructor Sue James was there to help her student, Alana,

Doris Wier from Embrace Conflicts
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with the booth. James said there are many things students can learn from this process and added that plant propagation was always a favorite activity with her students. The proceeds from the booth go towards field trips that the students themselves chose: Alana was thinking a wax museum would be a fun trip.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts had three separate booths at the fair. The Boy Scouts made an impressive array of ornaments, seasonal decorations and jewelry. The Girl Scouts had candles, galaxy jars and other decorative items for the holidays. The Girl Scouts took turns working at the booth, and the money raised will be used for trips this summer and working to earn new badges. Jenna Wells was staffing another Girl Scout booth with her mother, and she had homemade snow globes and lava lamp decorations along with other interesting seasonal crafts.

The schools were also heavily represented at the Kids Craft Fair. The Charter School's sixth-grade class had two tables full of beautiful jewelry and origami. Students practiced their math skills, while raising money for their class.



IN THE HEART OF THE SEA



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS 3D



Business was brisk Friday at the 29th annual Holiday Craft Fair, as shoppers browsed the wares of local artisans at the Willits Community Center.

"We were really busy on Friday and Saturday," said artist Ann Maglente, who helps coordinate the Craft Fair, a fundraiser for the Willits Center for the Arts. "Sunday was a little slower, but it was still really nice. It turned out to be a very good fair, and profitable for a lot of people."

WCA and fair volunteer Nancy Reed agreed: "The vendors all said this was a better year than last year. People seemed to be spending more money this year... Maybe the economy is better."

The raffle fundraiser was also very successful, raising \$1,300 for the Arts Center. "We did better this year than we've ever done," Maglente said. Thirty-five raffle tickets

Holiday Craft Fair

Read the rest of **Craft** Over on Page B9

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