

Festival of Trees spruces up holiday season

By **Tammy Malgesini**
Go! Magazine

HERMISTON — A reimagined Festival of Trees 2021 is planned for Saturday, Dec. 4, at the Hermiston Community Center, 415 S. Highway 395.

"I'm excited about it because we're finding a way to have Festival of Trees this year where we couldn't have it last year," said Liz Marvin, event co-chair.

Festival organizers were riding high in 2019 — tickets for the 25th annual gala dinner and auction sold out within three days. And then things went dark in 2020 because of COVID-19 restrictions. As plans were pondered for the 2021 event, thoughts turned to providing a safe event for many to enjoy.

Julie Puzey, publicity chair, said overall attendance in previous years was limited due to the number of tables available. This year, with time slots for the viewing of holiday items, shopping and placing bids, more

people can attend. In addition, lower ticket prices makes it more affordable.

Ticket costs and time slots are: 2-3 p.m., family hour, \$25 per family; 3-4 p.m., individuals, \$20 per person; and 4-5 p.m., 5-6 p.m. or 6-7 p.m., adults 21 and older, \$20 per person (includes wine tasting). Tickets are available at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, 630 S. Highway 395, or by calling 541-567-6151.

Puzey is especially optimistic about this year's festival. While it's different, she said it's exciting that more people will be able to enjoy the festive holiday event. Those in attendance, she said, will be amazed.

"The trees and wreaths and stockings are exquisite, creative and fun," Puzey said. "There is so much creativity and imagination and artistic skill, plus the generosity of the sponsors and those in the community who donate stuff that goes under the trees."

Cathy Wamsley, who coordinates large trees for the event, said the trees will appeal to a wide audience. Men, women and children will be drawn in with such themes as the



Tammy Malgesini/EO Media Group, File
A family visits with Santa Claus during a past Festival of Trees at the Hermiston Community Center. Tickets with designated time slots are available for purchase for this year's Dec. 4 event.

outdoors, fishing, Christmas at home and "Bohemian Rhapsody." In addition, there will be smaller table-top trees as well as wreaths, stockings and holiday gift baskets.

Also, guests can win during the Day of 100 Gifts. Every 15 minutes, winners will be announced — examples of gifts are coffee from Honduras, wine, See's Candies and Christmas decor.

"We want people to come

and see all the hard work of the decorators and sponsors, but people can bid without attending the event," Marvin said.

Items can be purchased with either an online winning bid or with the "buy it now" feature. A computer link will be available on the event's Facebook page, or text "Joy" to 71760.

While this year's event won't include a catered meal, many area restaurants will offer Festival of Trees discounts. Informa-

tion about participating eateries will be posted on the event's social media.

Festival organizers — Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation and the Hermiston Kiwanis Club — have provided funding support to more than 150 programs and projects in the community. For more information, search Instagram @festivaloftreeshermiston or visit www.facebook.com/HermistonFestivalofTrees.

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