

Festival of Trees raises cash, brings donors together

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Festival of Trees was different this year, but its spirit remained the same, according to event organizers.

The event, Saturday, Dec. 4, at the Hermiston Community Center, Hermiston, returned after a one-year hiatus due to COVID-19. Held as an annual dinner for the past 25 years up to 2019, it came back this year as an online and walk-through auction.

Auction items included Christmas tree sets, each of which was decorated with its own unique theme. Sets could include food; others had furniture. One set, which celebrated manhood, incorporated a kayak.

"It's a good way for the community to open up the holidays with an event that's beautiful," John Spomer, event co-chair, said.

Spomer, who has been involved in the event for around 15 years, added that Festival of Trees also is beneficial as a fundraiser. Every year, he said, the Hermis-



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

The Hermiston Holiday Giving Tree stands at the center of the Hermiston Community Center on Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021, during Hermiston's Festival of Trees.

ton Kiwanis Foundation and Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation event brings money for scholarships, youth programs and other local charities.

Liz Marvin, the other co-chair, said she also has been involved for several years. Typically, they said,

the festival nets more \$40,000 after expenses. This money is made through ticket sales and sponsorships, as well as the auction, they said.

Marvin pointed out the 2021 event did not have the expense of the usual dinner, but it did have a new cost.

"We are doing things we do not usually do," she said, such as additional social media advertising and technical support for the online auction. Next year's festival could include these new things, Marvin said, though she said she hopes the dinner can return.

"We really would like to have a dinner," she said. "It's such a social event in Hermiston."

Spomer added the dinner is a big draw. In a normal year, Festival of Trees tickets will sell quickly. In less than 10 days, he said, 350 tickets would be sold for the dinner. This year, without the dinner, around 240 tickets were sold prior to the event.

"Some people come just for the dinner and to be social," he said.

Like Marvin, Spomer also expressed hope for the dinner to return in 2022.

At the event, the organizers were optimistic, saying ticket sales would not necessarily paint a full picture about whether the festival was a success. They added, they would have a meeting on Dec. 7 to present total earnings.

DEATH NOTICES

Charles Ray Baker

July 9, 1958 — Dec. 5, 2021

Pendleton

Charles Ray Baker, 63, of Pendleton, died Dec. 5, 2021, at his home. He was born July 9, 1958. Arrangements are pending with Burns Mortuary of Pendleton.

Donald L. 'Don' Bennett

May 8, 1933 — Nov. 16, 2021

Echo

Donald L. "Don" Bennett, 88, of Echo, died Nov. 16, 2021, in Pasco. He was born May 8, 1933, in Winona, Washington. A private family burial was held at the Hermiston Cemetery. Arrangements are with Burns Mortuary of Hermiston. Share memories at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com.

Jerry G. Foley Sr.

April 17, 1943 — Dec. 1, 2021

Hermiston

Jerry G. Foley Sr., 78, of Hermiston, died Dec. 1, 2021, in Kennewick. He was born April 17, 1943, in McVelle, North Dakota. A private family burial will be held at the Hermiston Cemetery. Arrangements are with Burns Mortuary of Hermiston. Share memories at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com.

Charles E. Fowler III

May 8, 1993 — Dec. 2, 2021

Pilot Rock

Charles E. Fowler III, 28, of Pilot Rock, died Dec. 2, 2021, in Irrigon. He was born May 8, 1993, in Zephyrhills, Florida. At his request, there will be no service. Arrangements are with Burns Mortuary of Hermiston. Share memories at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com.

Joseph M. 'Joe' Tricker

July 24, 1955 — Dec. 1, 2021

Hermiston

Joseph M. "Joe" Tricker, 66, of Hermiston, died Dec. 1, 2021, at his home. He was born July 24, 1955, in Freeport, Illinois. A private family celebration will be held. Arrangements are with Burns Mortuary of Hermiston. Share memories at www.burnsmortuaryhermiston.com.

COMMUNITY BRIEF

The Arc unwraps Christmas party

HERMISTON — A festive event, which includes refreshments, bingo, caroling, crafts and a visit from Santa, is planned by The Arc Umatilla County.

Everyone is invited to the The Arc Christmas Party on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2-4 p.m. at The Arc Building, 215 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. A gift exchange (\$5 limit) will be held for those who would like to participate.

A nonprofit organization serving Umatilla County for more than 50 years, The Arc advocates for all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The organization strives to improve systems of support, connecting families and encouraging inclusion.

For more information, call 541-567-7615 or search The Arc's Facebook page.

—EO Media Group

St. Anthony Hospital Foundation hosts Festival of Trees



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

"Upside Down in Time" was among trees on display Saturday, Dec. 4, 2021, at the CHI St. Anthony Hospital Festival of Trees at the Pendleton Convention Center.

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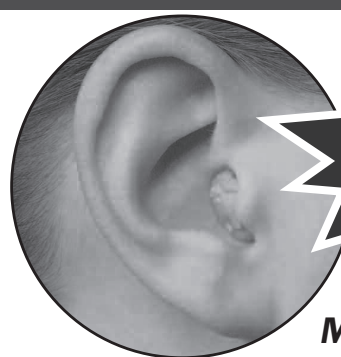
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