



A CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

It was 20 years ago on July 22, 1996, when I showed up for my first day of work at the Florence Events Center (FEC). Moving up from Southern California to a small town was the beginning of a new adventure, and an adventure it was!

Originally hired as the FEC Operations Manager, I had six weeks until our grand opening was scheduled and was literally given pages of projects that needed to be completed prior to the ribbon cutting. With few tools, a tight budget and an ominous deadline, the challenge was set and we were off and running with 303 events scheduled for our first full year.

Now as I think back over the past 20 years on the history of the FEC, many memories come to mind, beginning with the vast variety of events we have hosted. This includes theater productions, concerts, festivals, banquets, weddings and even celebrations of life.

I've had the pleasure of working with many wonderful people from our community on thousands of events — in fact nearly 8,000 by the end of 2016. With an average of 400 events per year, our small staff manages to stay extremely busy.

Next among the memories are the numerous

volunteers that have played such a huge role in sustaining our facility. New volunteers continue to come through our doors as some have passed away or moved on, while a few are still with us since prior to our grand opening.

We have also been extremely fortunate to have the volunteer and financial support of the Friends of the FEC, a 501(c)3 organization that has been instrumental in raising funds to support the Events Center by providing much needed equipment upgrades. Much to the Friends' credit, we continue to receive compliments on how well our facility is maintained. I am continually amazed at the amount of volunteerism — not only at the FEC but community wide, which clearly displays the awesome character and culture of this community.

Although every job has its challenges, I thoroughly enjoy being an employee at the FEC for the City of Florence. I consider it a privilege and an honor to work with a professional staff and am very appreciative of the tremendous support our facility receives from both the City of Florence and our wonderful community.

Kevin Rhodes
Florence Events Center Director

Community Spotlights — Florence Events Center Staff

An amazing future ahead

Six years ago when I moved to Florence, I quickly became involved backstage at the Florence Events Center and volunteered with the Last Resort Players theater company. I eventually became a volunteer in the office and assisted with ticket sales.

Over two years ago, I was excited to take on the marketing tasks in the office and started part time. Very quickly, there were more projects and tasks to take on, and soon I was actively involved with several Friends of the FEC events: Florence Festival of Books, the art gallery committee and the Winter Music Festival. I became a full time employee and have enjoyed every minute of promoting the FEC and all the various activities.

The tag line “Always Something



Happening” was already an active slogan for the FEC, and under Jon Thompson's direction, we created the “Always Something Happening” jingle that you now hear on KCST Coast Radio. It runs 5 days a week, along with the weekly calendar of events. We also have a live staff interview on Tuesday mornings with Wayne Sharpe.

Calista Cates and the rest of the crew

at Coast Radio have been great partners in promoting local events.

The Siuslaw News has always been a hand-in-hand partner with the FEC and publishes the monthly “Center Stage.” Many people help with the content of the “Center Stage,” but it is primarily written with Editor Ned Hickson. For this 20-year anniversary, we decided to give “Center Stage” a new, updated look.

I continue to see an amazing future for the Florence Events Center and the many amazing, talented people that use the FEC community space.

I am proud to be a part of the team at the FEC.

Jennifer Connor
*Marketing Specialist and
Event Coordinator
Florence Events Center*

Model for excellence

I am so grateful for my time at the Florence Events Center. To work in such a creative and dedicated atmosphere



for over two years has been a true gift both personally and professionally.

Congratulations on this 20th anniversary!

May the FEC continue to provide for our community the model for excellence in the visual and performing arts!

Sandi Anderson
FEC Office Coordinator