

# Chamber seeks theme for 2020 Rhododendron Festival

The 113th annual Florence Rhododendron Festival is still months away — May 15 to 17, 2020 — but planning is already underway in earnest. Part of that planning involves seeking the public's input on a theme for the big event.

The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce is asking people to exert their creativity and submit ideas for a fun theme that represents the festival and our area, and entices people to come from out of town to enjoy the festivities.

A \$50 prize is up for grabs for the winning suggestion.

To submit your idea email it to [info@FlorenceChamber.com](mailto:info@FlorenceChamber.com) or drop it off in person at the Florence Area Cham-



ber of Commerce's Visitors Center at 290 Highway 101. Members of the organizing committee will choose a winner and announce it on Dec. 20. In the case of duplicate ideas, the entry that arrived earliest will be declared the winner.

The chamber is also accepting applications for the Rhododendron Court scholarship pageant. The Royal Rhododendron Court will

represent Florence at civic events and promote participation in the Rhododendron Festival. Members of the court will sell commemorative event pins to help raise funds for future scholarships.

The Senior Court is for high school senior men and women who will vie for the titles of King of the Coast and Queen Rhododendra. The Junior Court is for elementary school young ladies. To learn more about the 113th annual Florence Rhododendron Festival and to volunteer for one of its committees, contact the chamber at 541-997-3128, [info@FlorenceChamber.com](mailto:info@FlorenceChamber.com) or drop by 290 Highway 101.

# Dazzling dogs and cunning cats return with Popovich Comedy Pet Theater

The World-Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theater will light up the stage of the Florence Events Center on Wednesday, Dec. 11, at 6:30 p.m. This all-star lineup of dogs, cats and other animals are ready to entertain and amaze the audience with their tricks and skills.

These ultra-intelligent animals — all rescues — have been trained by Gregory Popovich using positive reinforcement techniques to enhance their natural abilities. Alongside the furry superstars, their human companions will amaze and delight with European-style acrobatics, juggling and more.

The Popovich Comedy Pet Theater has been featured on stage with Jay Leno, David Letterman and Craig Ferguson; on the Discovery Channel's Animal Planet; and at multiple international festivals.

Popovich is a lifelong advocate of animal rights. He grew up as the child of circus performers, and the animals backstage were often his only playmates. This early bonding with pets led to a career of training and performing with them.

All pets performing in the Comedy Pet Theater are res-

cues, and serve as furry ambassadors for animals seeking homes. An important part of every performance includes the message that all shelter pets deserve loving, forever homes. In Florence, Oregon Coast Humane Society will be promoted alongside the show.

According to Popovich, "Dogs want to do things for you. But cats — yes — they are very independent animals. I have to look for a natural ability of whatever cats want to do themselves. I find out what they like to do, then create something based on their habits."

The Florence community is lucky to have these performers returning. Popovich said his show doesn't tour much, but when it does the pets travel in comfort, inside a special trailer with air conditioning, heating, water and other amenities.

"They have windows —



always looking out at what's outside," he said. "The dogs are so happy. It's fun for them."

Even if people have seen the Comedy Pet Theater before, you will want to check out the new material Popovich has added recently.

Popovich shares his training success with the world on stage and through two books, "You Can Train Your Cat" and "Doggy Gone Good," published by St. Martin's Press.

The event is produced by The Friends of the Florence Events Center, the nonprofit 501(c)3 group that provides financial and volunteer support for the FEC.

The evening begins with the Friends of the FEC's Gallery Committee Art Show, "Love of Animals," which includes a reception from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The reception is free and open to the public. Volunteers from the Oregon Coast Humane Society will be there to answer questions about adopting shelter pets from the Florence facility.

Popovich Comedy Pet Theater Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Children 3 and under are free if seated on parent's lap. Get tickets by stopping by the Florence Events Center Box Office, 715 Quince St., calling 541-997-1994 or going to [www.eventcenter.org](http://www.eventcenter.org).



Florence Food Share provides food to those who are hungry in our community. If you have four hours a week available, we are in need of volunteers to staff our Front Desk and also act as Guides as clients walk through the pantry. Please call our volunteer coordinator, Sarah Lovejoy, @ 541-997-9110 (Monday - Friday, before noon) to learn more about volunteering. [info@florencefoodshare.org](mailto:info@florencefoodshare.org) 2190 Spruce Street.



**Florence Habitat for Humanity®**

ReStore processing volunteer needed to help with donation sorting process. For more information contact Floyd at 541-997-5834

Assisting those in need in our Community.  
Free Hot Meals Mon-Wed-Fri  
12:00 PM - 1:30 PM



**HELPING HANDS COALITION**  
New Location: Community Baptist Church  
4590 Hwy. 101, Florence (Across from Fred Meyer)  
Call 541-997-5057 to Volunteer



relies heavily on volunteers.

There are many opportunities to volunteer and a variety of skills and talents are always in need. Volunteer interest forms may be found online, at the shelter and at our Thrift Shop on Bay Street.

[www.oregoncoasthumane.org/volunteer/](http://www.oregoncoasthumane.org/volunteer/)

## Memory Care Respite of Florence

Your Memory Care Respite Center needs you! Seeking volunteers for our Coffee Club: Conversation & companionship in a caring setting while providing respite for caregivers. Contact us at [memcarerespite@gmail.com](mailto:memcarerespite@gmail.com)



Join the Peace Harbor Hospital Volunteers.

You will find an area of interest in a caring organization.

**Peace Harbor Volunteers**

400 9th Street, Florence, OR 97439  
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[maribob@oregonfast.net](mailto:maribob@oregonfast.net)

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To include your organization in this directory, please call us

@ 541-997-3441

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# ANNUAL FLORENCE HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

**SATURDAY**  
**December 7, 2019**  
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm

**Historic Old Town Florence**

**FREE & OPEN TO EVERYONE**

Please join us in celebrating the holidays and supporting local merchants with holiday shopping!



Santa Arrives: 3:30 pm in Siuslaw Valley Fire Truck at Gazebo Park

Hayrides: 3:30 - 6:00 pm

Music at 3:30 pm  
Tree Lighting at 5:30 pm

**Presented by:**

**Florence Area Chamber of Commerce & City of Florence**

Connect with us  
#FlorenceOrHoliday



[florencechamber.com](http://florencechamber.com)



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**Get involved**

**Donate**

Do your part and volunteer today to help support these local non-profit organizations in our community!