

Evergreen Federal Bank's popular clothing fair benefits highly regarded nonprofit



The Grants Pass, Ore., bank will host the swap in its Bear Hotel, a 23,000 square-foot facility that was built as part of the bank's community reinvestment plan.

On Saturday, October 24, Evergreen Federal Bank, Grants Pass, Ore., will host its Fall Clothing Fair to benefit the Women's Crisis Support Team (WCST), a nonprofit organization which provides support and shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Starting out as a volunteer program in 1977, WCST incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit in 1980 and expanded its services to become one of the most recognized and respected nonprofit organizations in the area.

Established in 2011, Evergreen Federal Bank's biannual Clothing Fair began when a group of nonprofit volunteers approached the \$392 million bank with a request to help them provide a resource for men and women in need of career clothing. The bank offered to host a clothing event at no charge and soon adopted it into a community event that is now held every spring and fall.

"The Clothing Fair grew beyond what we had imagined," said Jeff Hyde, president of Evergreen Federal Bank. "Ten truck loads of donated clothing grew into 50. Over 2,000 people showed up to buy clothing at \$1 per item and left with bags full of clothes. With this volume, the event became a fundraiser. In 2014, the Women's Crisis Support Team was chosen as the benefactor. Clothes are still offered at \$1 per item. Vouchers are given to high school students and shelters who can shop at no cost. In 2015, the spring event raised over \$5,000. We anticipate raising another \$5,000 for the Women's Crisis Support Team this fall."

The Fall Clothing Fair will be held at Evergreen Federal Bank's Bear Hotel, a 23,000 square-foot facility that was built as part of the bank's community reinvestment plan.

The facility got its name from local artists who began to utilize the space as a workshop to create the larger-than-life bear sculptures for the famous Grants Pass BearFest. Put on display throughout the town from the month of May through Labor Day, many of the bears are put on permanent display at the Bear Hotel after the event.

"The workshop became known as the place where the BearFest bears reside," Hyde said. "Today, Evergreen's Bear Hotel serves the location of our marketing department, an artworks museum, and as a facility where Evergreen hosts customer and nonprofit fundraising events. Evergreen's Bear Hotel provides a unique backdrop for community events. Visitors can enjoy shopping among Evergreen's BearFest bear art collection and even get a sneak-peek at Evergreen's upcoming art projects."

Chartered as a mutual bank in 1934, Evergreen Federal Bank was created to serve the community with thrift and home ownership needs. Today it operates six locations throughout Southern Oregon and remains a central part of life in Grants Pass where the bank was established.

"While we take pride in the strength and stability of our institution, the ability to serve our customers locally and make a difference in the community where they live is core to the values of Evergreen Federal Bank," Hyde said. "Our mission statement includes the words: 'Evergreen Federal Bank is a community asset.' These are not just words on paper; they are at the heart of what we do."