

Willits Economic Localization Newsletter

The WELL Bucket

Volume 15, Issue 1

January/February, 2019

Community Events

Jan. & Feb. 2019

Jan. 8, 5:30-7pm – Avenues to Wellness (ATW) presents "Autism Basics," with speaker Michela Figini-Myers, M.Ed., BCBA, at Willits Center for the Arts (free)

Jan. 9, 7pm – Intentional Community meeting at Willits Hub, contact mendointentionalcommunity@gmail.com

Jan. 10, 6-8pm – Sherwood Firesafe Council at Brooktrails Community Center, see page 9 Jan. 12, 8pm – Shanachie Pub features "Resilience IPA" beer, a fundraiser for Camp Fire victims, with bands Schindig and Fruit Leather Jacket

Jan. 19, 1-4pm – Cannabis Medicinals class, contact Annie Waters, 459-6362 or 889-2449

Jan. 21, 6:30 - WELL CoCommeeting at Willits Hub

Jan. 27, 8-11am – Pancake Breakfast at LL Grange

Jan. 31, noon-4:30 – EDFC Economic Summit at Willits City Hall, see page 9

Feb. 5, 5:30-7pm – ATW presents"Cultivating Positivity in Relationships" by Doris Weir, *ORSCC* at Willits Center for the Arts (free)

Feb. 9, 9am-4pm – Winter Abundance Workshop, at Boonville Fairgrounds (free), : hands-on workshops, free seeds & scions, & more

Feb. 11, 6:30 - WELL CoCommeeting at Willits Hub

Feb. 21, 7pm - Now & Then Film, "Signs of Resilience" (Eel

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PAINT THE TOWN – Winter Update - by Paul Jacobson

November and December have been very active for WELL's Paint the Town Project. Twenty fire hydrants have popped up around town with new, brightly colored designs, in some degree of completion. As we go to press, 18 more have been reserved by community members to paint when time and weather avails. There are four more trash bins reserved to be painted, and several artists have expressed interest in submitting more designs. The Willits High School art class led by Carolyn Bakewell joined Rebecca Daun-Widner and Ileya Stewart in creating murals on the concrete K-rails.



Detail from K-Rail Murals by Willits High School Art Class







More hydrants - these are by artists Aura Whitaker & daughters , Ashley Rodriguez , Julia Sotomayor. Look for more around town, many more coming soon!

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On every occasion while volunteers are painting, people driving by have honked, given thumbs up, and smiled, while walkers have complemented or expressed gratitude. Many others have emailed to express much the same. From this personal standpoint alone, the Paint the Town Project has been a success.

This popularity was also embodied by the standing-room-only crowd at the Willits Environmental Hub on Sunday, December 2, when WELL members and interested community members wedged into our office space at the Willits Hub to view WELL's slide show presentation about the project. It seemed a hit to those attending, and several artists received well deserved honoraria as thanks for their great efforts. An updated presentation of the slideshow was also provided to

the Willits City Council on December 12. In addition, during December two meetings were held with the Willit's Center for the Arts Board to discuss combining forces in order to broaden the colorful reach of the painting project around our town. WELL can not do it alone, and we are a community organization welcoming others to participate.

If that wasn't enough WELL coordinating committee members have also completed and submitted a \$10,000 grant application for community enrichment to the Community Foundation of Mendocino County. It involved many hours and utilized letters of support from Willits High School, Little Lake Fire Dept, Chamber of Commerce, and City Hall. We are keeping our fingers crossed for this one! Stay tuned



The crowd at WELL's Dec. 2 Open House celebrated Paint the Town with music, food and slide show. Photo by Mathew Caine.

for more Paint the Town developments in 2019. To reserve a hydrant or design a trash bin, contact <u>4paulj@gmail.com</u>.

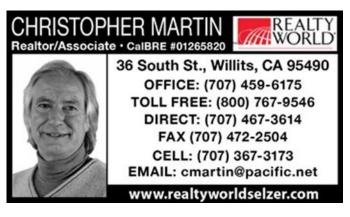


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Christopher J. Neary / Jennifer M. O'Brien





CITY OF WILLITS - 2018 in Review by Madge Strong

The City of Willits accomplished a lot in 2018, in addition to filling key staff vacancies and 'getting our house in order'. Here are some highlights:

Staffing: Most important, we hired Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra as our new City Manager beginning in March 2018, replacing Adrienne Moore and interim Manager Bob Perrault. During the year we hired a new planning staff person, a new building official, a grant writer, and a new Finance Director, as well as police officers and clerical support.

CalTrans/Main Street: City Manager, Council representatives, and Planning and Engineering Departments all coordinated extensively with Caltrans during the reconstruction of Main Street, including trying to minimize loss of trees, improving pedestrian walkways, and making sure the final product met our design goals. Caltrans is still working on the major realignment of Sherwood Road, expected to be completed by about June 2019. Once all Caltrans work is done, Main Street north of Hwy. 20 will be relinquished to the City, and we'll be budgeting for more street trees and additional amenities in 2019 and 2020.

Planning: Community Development Director Dusty Duley, now with an assistant, has guided implementation of our new cannabis ordinance, approval of our overdue Housing Element, and passage of a new ordinance on vacant commercial buildings. We will be looking at the City's 'Sphere of Influence' and potential annexations, a new General Plan and possible development impact fees in the near future. Two dozen commercial cannabis business licenses have been processed to date, six of them now in operation, with few or no problems with compliance.



Back row: Karen Stevenson, Michelle Johnson, Chris Wilkes, Cathy Moorhead. Front row: Scott Herman, Kenan O'Shea, Jeremy Ronco, Scott Warnock, Christopher Morgan, Jim Robbins

In early 2019 the City will be reviewing permits for potential dispensaries (none approved so far). The new vacancy ordinance requires long-vacant commercial properties to register with the City, have a local contact person, and be inspected to avoid hazards or illegal occupancy. Initial fees will be minimal but escalate annually. Implementation is beginning in early 2019.

Building: Building Official John Sherman worked hard bringing City facilities up to ADA (accessibility) compliance; successfully negotiated with FEMA on realistic flood mapping; meanwhile overseeing all building permits and code enforcement in the City. With John's retirement, Christopher Morgan is now filling those big shoes!

Engineering-Public Works: The City also had several of its own improvement projects underway in 2018, using matching funds to improve road paving, moving the City's water main to a new bridge on East Hill Road, procuring a new street sweeper, planting trees at parks, providing loans for sewer lateral hook-ups, and the never-ending work of fixing streets and keeping water and sewer plants operating effectively.

Watershed Restoration: A significant portion of the City-owned watershed above our reservoirs was damaged in the Redwood Complex fire of October 2017. We contracted with NCRM to log and sell much of the damaged timber during 2018, netting funds for restoration planting which will be underway for 2019.

Mental Health Facility: Under Measure B enacted by County voters in late 2016, funds are now being collected to provide mental health facilities in the county. In mid-2018, it appeared that revamping old Howard Hospital for this purpose might be "fast-tracked." The City requested it be involved in such plans, and meanwhile the Kemper report com-

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(City of Willits Continued from page 3)

missioned by the County outlined a number of other issues. So far the Measure B Committee has not made a recommendation for either the type or location of such facilities.

City Finance/Budget: Sales tax revenues have not been as adversely impacted as projected and other revenues are healthy. Over the years the City has amassed a sizable reserve. In the FY 2018-19 budget, City Manager Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra proposed potentially dipping into reserves, with a general fund deficit of up to \$750,000. She noted that most of the added expenses are for one-time, long-term projects, and that we need to invest now for opportunities in the future. The Council approved the budget in September, with a proviso to track performance during the year. Stephanie and Karen Stevenson also successfully negotiated 3-year contracts with police and other staff. New Finance Director Yujun Du came on board December 2018.

The passage of Measure I in November 2018 for an excise tax on cannabis businesses will help fund needed enforcement as well as long-range land use and energy planning, economic development, and other City projects going forward. The tax amounts will be set at an upcoming City Council hearing. This potential revenue was not included in the adopted budget.

Emergency Planning: City staff has been working closely with the County and other agencies to prepare for future emergencies. The passage of Measure J will help our Little Lake Fire Department build a much-needed new station on E. Commercial Street.

Fun Stuff:

- With help from a generous donor, the City initiated free 'Music in the Park' concerts for four weeks in the Fall. This series will likely be renewed in Spring.
- The new Visit Willits Board held a successful 'Wild Willits Fest' featuring 5K and 10K runs, local food, health information and more.
- Chamber of Commerce has held many 'mixers' featuring local businesses, and a forum on economic opportunities.
- The City's Revit-ED Committee has looked into a potential civic billboard for Willits on the Bypass, as well as other plans for signage and beautification. And of course WELL, with help from the City, Fire Department, High School and dozens of volunteers and donors, has been 'Painting the Town.'

 Some items still on my own wish list:
- "Greening" the City: Goals might include solarizing power at the sewage treatment plant, improving water and energy conservation, a possible heritage tree ordinance, revisiting the plastic bag ordinance, banning Styrofoam containers, banning herbicide use, and overall making our streams salmon- and people-friendly.
- "Go & Grow Local": Seek more ways to support local food (e.g. farmers market), business enterprises, and our cultural & artisan communities.
- Transportation: We should continue seeking funds for better pedestrian & bike ways and, long-range, better north-south connections such as the Baechtel-Railroad Avenue corridor and Locust to Hwy 20.

I enjoyed being Mayor for the past year, but am happy to have Gerry Gonzales again take on that role, giving me more time for other projects. I'm also very pleased to welcome Greta Kanne to the Council. To find out more, come to City Council meetings, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month at 6:30, call us, or check the City website: www.cityofwillits.org.





LITTLE LAKE VALLEY RESTORATION

When CalTrans built the 101 Freeway Bypass, they were required to undertake mitigation measures and set aside funds for permanent restoration of wetlands and other habitats in our beautiful, resource-rich Little Lake Valley. The job of managing these lands in perpetuity is being undertaken by the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District.

Some of us were blessed with a WELL-sponsored tour of the mitigation lands last summer, led by naturalist Marisela de Santa Ana of the MCRCD staff.

In mid-December, Marisela reported that nearly 2 million plants have been planted in the mitigation lands (still owned by Caltrans but managed by MCRCD). The management team is now planting for diversity and shade in some of our open grazing areas. Using local native plants propagated on-site, they are enhancing pastures with ash trees, coyote bush, and valley oaks.

As an example of MCRCD's work supplementing the CalTrans mitigation project, about 100 ash trees 5 to 8 feet tall were planted after this year's rain moistened the ground. "It was amazing to put them in the ground where there were no other trees. Standing back, they looked like a small forest in a vast open pasture," says Marisela. In another pasture northeast of town, they've begun planting clusters of 14 valley oaks (eventually a total of 300), grown from acorns collected on-site. Each tree needs to be protected from deer, rodents, and competing vegetation. "As each group of 14 is planted, we are hopeful to have a few make it and become majestic, shade-providing and wildlife-enhancing Valley oaks. It is a labor of hope and love."

Marisela maintains a weekly blog of their management activities, available at <u>www.mcrcd.org</u>. WELL hopes to sponsor another tour this summer.



Caltrans contractor planting in the northeast valley mitigation lands.

The Brooktrails Community Garden - A valuable resource for ALL the residents of Brooktrails. Join us for an organic gardening experience—by Freddie Long

GOOD NEWS! Garden space is available. If you live in Brooktrails and would like to have your own plot please contact Freddie at 459-5267. For more information visit our facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/brooktrailscommunitygarden

News from the Community Garden:

The Spring Equinox meeting will be held at the Community Center at 6 pm on March 25, 2019. We meet twice a year to discuss the future of the garden and make plans for the coming season. It is a potluck so bring your own place setting and a dish to share. Cathie will be leading a group for **strawberry planting in February**. If anyone wishes to help out please contact <u>cathnicola@hotmail.com</u>.

We hope to hold a **February group effort chipping party** at the garden. We can get a lot done in a few hours. **Wishing you all the best during the Winter Season!**

FARM SCHOOL SEEKS DONATIONS & STUDENTS - by Ruthie King

Our nation is facing a shortage of young farmers. The average age for a farmer is now 58 and has been rising for 30 years. There are now six times more farmers 65 and older than there are farmers 34 and under. The US is facing a shortage of folks to take over the important work of growing the food we eat.

Our mission here at the School of Adaptive Agriculture (formerly Grange Farm School) is to equip the current and next generation of farmers with the essential skills in the science, art and business of food production.

The School relies on our community for support to replenish our scholarships and for funds needed to run the high quality, holistic educational program we are known for. Your support is vital to our success in 2019. Please make a tax-deductible contribution at our website, http://www.school-of-adaptive-agriculture.org/season-of-giving/. Together we can train the next generation of farmers and have a greater impact on our local food system and economy in the years to come.

Do you know someone who wants to be among the new farmers, ranchers, and small business leaders this country needs? We are looking for people who are determined, creative and have a desire to enter into a career in the new sustainable food system.

Our residential Practicum Program is a 13 week intensive, from April 1 to June 28, 2019, focused on the foundations of food production. Students will be fully immersed in the daily life of a 5,000 acre working ranch in Mendocino County. Our curriculum is comprehensive as well as adaptive to individual interests, ranging from engine repair, carpentry, animal husbandry, soil and ecology, and crop production to entrepreneurial skills, and much more.

For more info, go to our website or email office@adaptiveagriculture.org.





Eel River Recovery Project - Moving & Shaking In 2019 - by Pat Higgins

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) enjoyed two years sharing the Willits Hub with the Willits Environmental Center, WELL, and the Mendocino Wildlife Association, but we will be moving our office from Willits to Laytonville in the first quarter of 2019. Now we'll share space with the newly emerging Tenmile Creek Watershed Council and the well-known river restoration firm BioEngineering Associates. This year's Action Plan meeting will be in Laytonville on Sunday, January 28 beginning at 10 AM at our new location at 44935 Highway 101 next to Geiger's Market. A main reason for the move is that ERRP has a California State Coastal Conservancy grant for Tenmile Creek. Thus, our contractors will have a more active presence in Laytonville, with the office right on Highway 101.

We thank all who volunteered and participated in our events over the past two years, with Robin Leler meriting special

mention. Robin went that extra mile literally with her "Willits Goes Wild" van. Trips were to the Angelo Reserve, Emandal, the Red Mountain Wilderness, Cahto Peak, and the upper Eel River several times. Despite our move, Willits Goes Wild trips are planned for 2019, including several to the upper Eel River to explore the possibility of a salmon park there. The first trip will be to watch steelhead jump Elder Creek Falls around Valentines Day. Call Robin at (707) 459-0155.

ERRP will also continue to assist Friends of Outlet Creek (FOC) with monitoring. Thanks to Lyn Talkovsky and Kirk Lumpkin for being all-star partners and helping deploy more than 20 water temperature gauges for two years in a row. FOC have also been pitching in with salmon monitoring this fall – see the great late December footage of Chinook above town on our Facebook page. ERRP expects to still offer programs in Willits and is open to collaboration with all parties to make things happen. Salmon still run through Willits, but the town is far from Salmon Safe. Call Pat Higgins at (707) 223-7200.



Lyn Talkovsky smiles after finding Willits Creek temperature probe using a metal detector

CARING KITCHEN NEWS—by Tarney Sheldon

The Caring Kitchen is proud to announce that we will begin 2019 in our new kitchen located at Mendocino College's Ukiah campus! Over the past year, we've been working with a leadership team at Mendocino College to develop a partnership, and we're excited that this new partnership will:

- Double our capacity to serve nourishing meals to clients facing a cancer diagnosis
- Connect the Caring Kitchen with Mendocino College's workforce development programs
- Offer our teen volunteers college credit and work experience credits
- Connect with new potential teen volunteers from the Mendocino College, Ukiah High School, and the "Middle College" program.

The Caring Kitchen will continue to serve clients in Willits, Redwood Valley, and Ukiah, and our Willits-based teen and adult volunteers will remain part of our team.

Stay tuned for volunteer orientation dates during the week of January 22nd through 24th. If you'd like to be notified of the orientation dates and times, please contact Tarney at sheldont@ncoinc.org with your name, if you're a teen or adult, and your email address. We'll be sure to send you the schedule in the New Year.



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WELL CoCom Summary - Nov. 12, 2018

We thank Emily Rose Smith for her excellent work as our data manager, and introduce Lisa Montez, who is training to take on that role. Lisa also has skills and interest in website updates and newsletter layout (if needed).

Guest Debbie Fry has been cleaning up trash at the southern interchange and would like to do plantings of herbs and wildflowers. Madge will help coordinate with Caltrans.

We approve WELL being fiscal sponsor for a donation to Green Uprising Farm.

We decide to raise our newsletter ad fees effective 2019.

We discuss logistics for Dec. 2 Open House: posters, food, entertainment, slide show, etc. Honoraria to Paint the Town artists are approved for Brian, Rebecca, Aura D, Ileya, and Carolyn. The event will include re-election of Laura & Tim to CoCom. We will also present the slide show at City Council Dec. 12.

We hope to have a presentation on energy conservation by Keith Rutledge & Sonoma Clean Power sometime in Jan-Feb (date TBD).

We discuss what projects and budget to include in our request for a Comm'ty Foundation grant. This continued at a planning meeting on Dec. 10th, with Lyn coordinating the final application. We will continue Paint the Town projects in any case, but how much we can achieve in 2019 will depend on these additional funds. Grants will be announced in early April 2019. Meanwhile, Paul & Madge have met twice with Willits Center for the Arts on ways to collaborate on these projects. Paint the Town has been widely covered with enthusiastic responses on Facebook, thanks to Claudia. We hope the grant will enable adding PTT to our website.

Member renewal mailing work occurred Nov. 14 (prep), 19 and 20.

Next CoCom meetings: Jan. 21 and Feb. 11, 6:30 at the Willits Hub.

WELL FINANCE REVIEW & 2019 BUDGET – by Madge Strong & Lisa Montez

The chart shows WELL's general fund income & expenses for 2016 through 2018. We've continued to be in good shape on our almost exclusively volunteer budget. Income is almost entirely from memberships, donations, and ad sales. Main expenses are rent, newsletter, and data management.

The chart also proposes a 2019 budget (not yet adopted), projecting nearly equal income and expenses, at about \$5,000 for the year.

Added is a separate account for our Paint the Town projects in 2018. This fund received \$2,385 in income from individual donors and sponsors, offset by \$1,835 in expenses for artists' honoraria, painting supplies, and printing, for a net of \$550 carried forward to 2019. Depending on more sponsorships and possible grant funds, we hope Paint the Town will be greatly expanded in 2019.

WELL: Budget 2019 vis 201	.o 10 Actu	uiJ			DTT CLINE
GENERAL FUND	2016	2047	2010	2010	PTT FUND
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2018
INCOME	Yr-end	Yr-end	Yr-end	Budget	Yr-end
Ind. Donations	1349	635	660	650	2385
Memberships	3074	3935	3513	3500	
Sales/Sponsor fee	0	0			
Events	31	0	85	100	
Newsletter Ad Sales	720	600	965	800	
Total Income	5174	5171	5223	5050	2385
EXPENSE					
Contract - Data Mgmt	863	719	800	800	
Contract - Newsltr Ed	750	640	950	900	
Grants &Honorariums	100	0			1000
Website Mgt	155	155	149	155	
Postage/Delivery	241	76	201	200	
Office Rent	1400	1800	1800	1800	
Rent/Food for Events	0	0	0	0	
Printing/Posters/Ads	190	267	519	250	281
Newsletter Costs	458	511	465	500	
Equipment & Supplies	339	427	116	200	554
Liability Insurance	500	500	500	500	
Insur. Reimbursement	-400	-450	-450	-400	
Bank Charges	38	15			
Paypal/Lic/Fees/Taxes	34	87	101	100	
Total Expense	4668	4747	5151	5005	1835
Net Income/Expense	506	424	72	45	550

EDFC Economic Summit – Jan. 31

Economic Development and Financing Corporation is holding a Mendocino County Economic Summit - 'Charting a Path Forward' - on January 31, 2019, 12:00-4:30 PM at Willits City Hall, 111 E. Commercial St. This event will bring together the many resources and partners supporting economic development in our county, identify gaps, and begin charting a path for the future.

This will be the first step toward developing a strategic plan for Mendocino County's economic future. The plan will serve as a guiding document for economic development and drive collaborations and partnerships to improve our local economy.

Lunch and afternoon refreshments will be served. Breakout sessions may include:

- Entrepreneurship and "Access to Capital"
- Education, Workforce Development, and Employment
- Infrastructure and Broadband
- Poverty Alleviation
- Tourism & Arts
- Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Cannabis
- Workforce Housing

For questions please feel free to contact EDFC by email at info@edfc.org or by phone at 234-5705. Advance tickets are \$15 before Jan. 10th, then \$20, available at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mendocino-county-economic-summit-charting-a-path-forward-tickets-52619770149. Or \$25 at the door.

West Center Workshops!

Prepare your Business for 2019 with West Business Development Center Workshops

West Business Development Center (formally known as West Company) has a new array of low cost workshops designed to help you start a business, improve your profits, get organized or learn new digital skills. Check out their workshop line up at www.westcenter.org/live-workshops.

Maybe you have an exciting business idea but you don't know where to start or maybe you've been in business a while and are facing some new problems and need access to specific resources.

Either way, West Business Development Center can help. Their **no-cost**, **one-on-one confidential business advising** can assist you on a wide range of topics. Schedule a time to talk with on of our advisors at www.westcenter.org/getting-started

300-MILE REDWOOD RAIL TRAIL

The Great Redwood Trail is on fast track - which could mean it could be usable in two years. The trail will start in San Francisco Bay and wind through Napa's wine country. It will follow the Russian and Eel Rivers to Humboldt Bay. [Note: An important launching spot will be here in Willits.] State Senator Mike McGuire says it will take the 'crumbling rail line, managed by a functionally bankrupt public agency, and turn it into a world-wide wonder of a trail and economic driver for Northern California.' There are areas that people have barely seen for two decades.

McGuire hastens to add that there will be plenty of opportunities for the public to hear about the progress of the project, as well as to give input.

Community meetings will begin in early 2019 with several years of working and planning for what McGuire calls 'this incredible piece of earth.'

SHERWOOD FIREWISE COUNCIL MEETS JAN. 10th - by Keith Rutledge

Our first SFC meeting of the year is Thursday, Jan. 10th, 6 to 8pm at the Brooktrails Community Center. The focus of this meeting is to plan the 2019 calendar of meetings, events, fundraising and project development. In particular we want to hear ideas from each subdivision and the neighborhoods about what projects and programs you want to see in 2019.

Project Examples: (please bring your project/program ideas)

- Rainwater Storage Tank-Hydrants along the corridor near The Gates / Sylvandale, Sherwood School and Sherwood Ranch
- Temporary Refuge Areas along the corridor as well as within each subdivision area as option if Sherwood Road is not available
- Shelter in Place preparations at each home and / or neighborhood in the event of no other escape possible Home Hardening and Defensible Space "work parties" for neighbors helping neighbors to prepare for the next season

SFC has several active committees, including: Emergency Preparation Group; Planning & Funding Group; and Communications Group. More details available at the meeting or contact Keith Rutledge at keithr@pacific.net.

Looking forward to a safe and productive 2019. See you Thursday.

(Continued from page 1)

River salmon movie by Pat Higgins), followed by panel discussion, at LL Grange Feb. 24, 8-11am – Pancake Breakfast at LL Grange

Mar. 1-3 - Three-day Grow Biointensive Sustainable Mini-Farm Workshops in Willits. To register, go to http:// www.growbiointensive.org/events.

On-going Events ->

WELL Coordinating Committee 2018

Paul Jacobson, 459-1418,
4paul@gmail.com TimRice,
456-1146,
tim@multitalents.net Laura
Toomey Rowland, 354-3410,
lauratoomey@comcast.net
Madge Strong, 459-1493,
mstrong@willitsonline.com Lyn
Talkovsky, 621-3215,
lyn@twinberry.net

Thursdays, 3-5:30pm – Farmers Market at LL Grange

2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 6:30pm – Willits City Council at City Hall



Available around town!

WHAT IS WELL?

Willits Economic Localization is a 501(c)3 non-profit, membership organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

Our Vision: An enduring local economy that provides health and security for our community.

Our Mission: To foster the creation of a local, sustainable economy in the Willits area by helping residents to learn valuable skills and take action, and by partnering with other organizations to share knowledge and support projects that build a thriving community



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