

Discover



Willits

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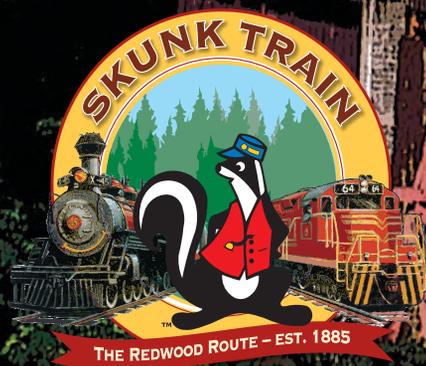
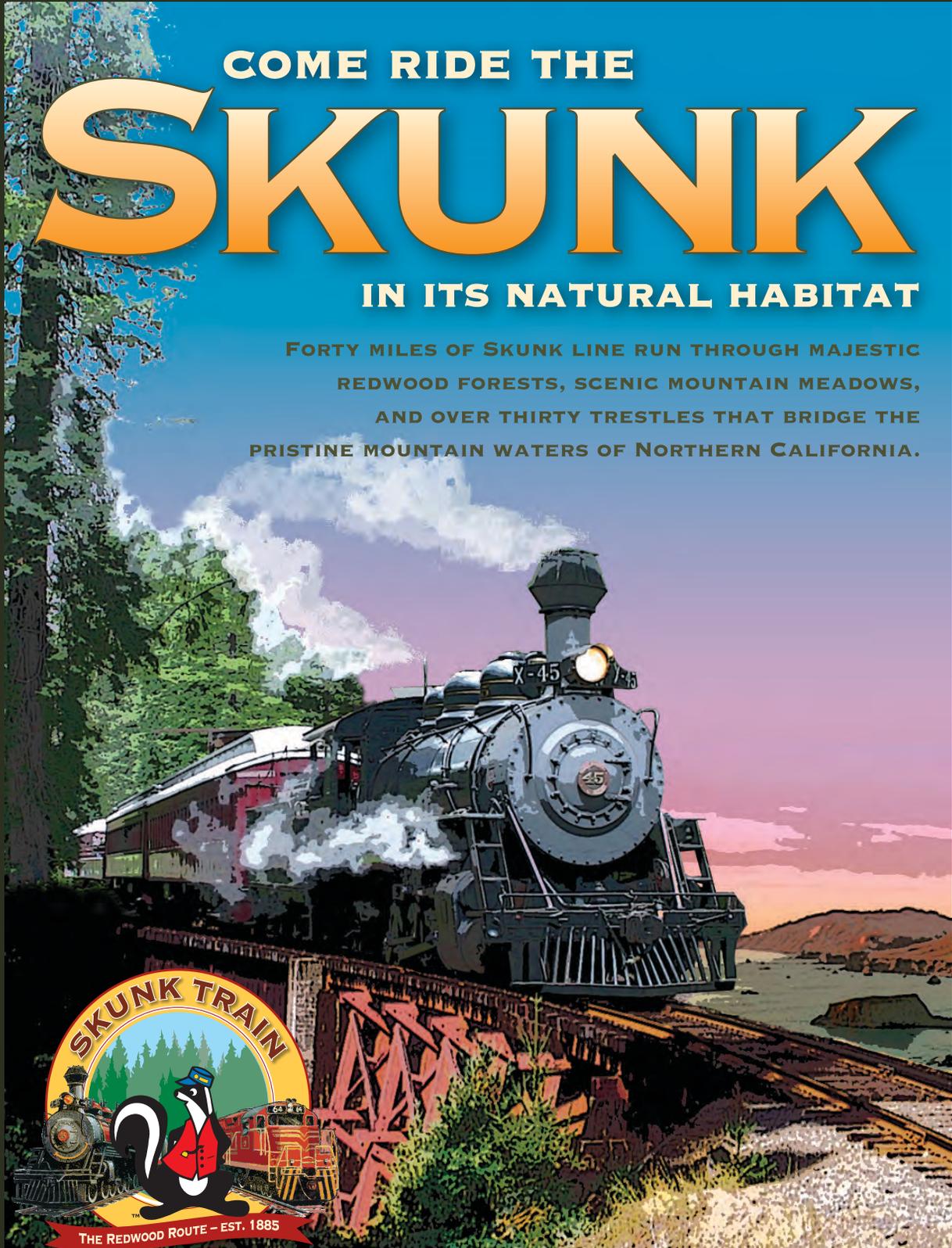


The Willits News 2015-2016

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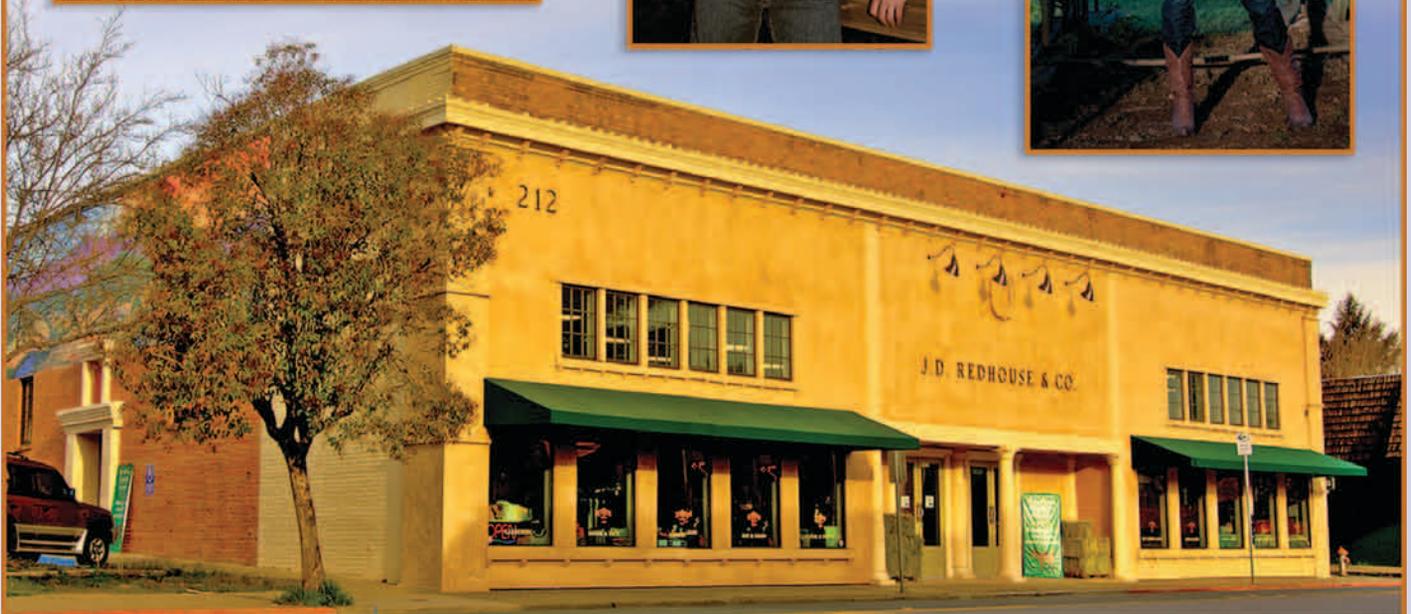
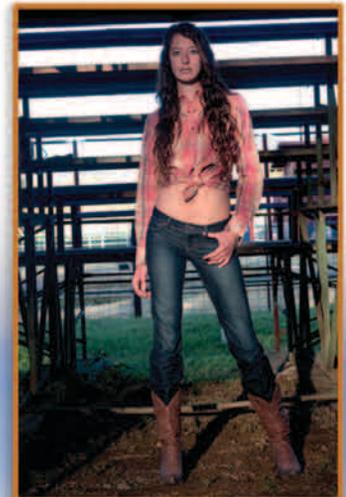
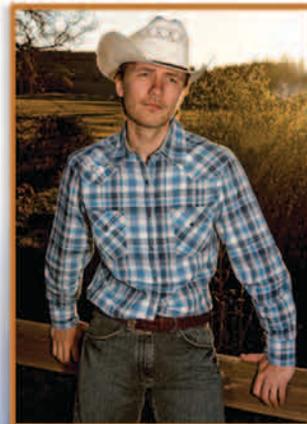
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The Mendocino County Museum is not just about exhibits, it chronicles the lives of area residents too.

Photo by Steve Eberhard.

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The Willits News publishes Discover Willits annually as a joint effort with the Willits Chamber of Commerce. Discover Willits is aimed at reminding those who live here, as well as visitors, that Willits is a uniquely diverse area.

This year we chose to spotlight the Mendocino County Museum, which is housed in Willits. In past editions we have featured Seabiscuit, Roots

of Motive Power, ranching, the Skunk Train and our role as the Gateway to the Redwoods. We are always grateful for the tremendous help provided by local photographers willing to share their photos with the community. We hope you enjoy this publication.

Linda Williams
Editor, The Willits News

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Welcome

The Willits Arch, located on Main Street near the city center, heralds the town's role as "Gateway to the Redwoods." Willits serves as the hub of Mendocino County, located within easy driving distance of redwood groves, the North Coast, wild rivers, wilderness areas as well as world renowned wineries.

In this travel guide to the region, "The Willits News" invites you to "Discover Willits" and the surrounding area. The region's diversity offers everything from unique wilderness and rural adventures to cultural treasures, cuisine, wines and brews.

Visitors will find much to enjoy during each season, especially for those willing to venture off the beaten path. Willits is a prime full-service home base for regional exploration.

Several exciting changes are impacting the Willits community. We have a new college campus and our new state-of-the-art hospital is scheduled to open this summer. A new highway bypass around the city is also in the works.

Downtown Willits houses much of the regions' cultural, recreational, entertainment, shopping and spiritual opportunities.

Willits is a haven for artists. Many world class artists call Willits home. The Willits Center for the Arts provides a venue for local artists to share works of all styles and media from paintings and sculpture to fabric, ceramics and photography.

The Willits Community Theatre produces a number of stage plays each year. The Theatre brings performers from outside the region to Willits throughout the year.

Area stores stock most anything needed to sustain 21st century life. Check out our shopping options. Our friendly residents will go out of their way to help. Most Willits shops include nontraditional offerings to supply community needs, so don't be surprised you can adopt a shelter kitten in a hardware store that also offers picnic and fishing supplies.

Ells Field, Willits' municipal public airport has two runways located three air miles northwest of Willits. The airport offers a comprehensive array of aircraft services.

We have a dog park, a skate park and a baseball, softball and soccer field complex. The two main parks have playgrounds and are heavily shaded, providing a cool oasis from the summer warmth.

The Willits Farmers Market brings local produce and goods to the public every Thursday. In Bud Snider Park off E. Commercial Street from May to October and at the Little Lake Grange on School Street in the winter months.

Several times each year the Chamber of Commerce sponsors an afternoon Hometown Celebration which gives us all an excuse to walk around downtown, shop, eat and visit with our neighbors.

Find out about local happenings, entertainment and events in "The Willits News," which publishes Wednesday and Friday each week and provides daily updates online at www.willitsnews.com and www.facebook.com/WillitsNews.

The sun setting over the ocean viewed from a ridge just outside of Willits.
Photo by Steve Eberhard



to Willits

Willits

Heart of Mendocino County & Gateway to the Redwoods!

A Message from the Willits Chamber of Commerce President

Welcome to Willits! We hope you brought the kids, the bikes, and the canoe, because there is a lot to do!

Nestled at the western edge of the Little Lake Valley and surrounded by the forested mountains of the coastal range, visitors to Willits are charmed by the friendly atmosphere and flourishing arts community in northern Mendocino County.

Willits is a friendly, family-oriented community on US 101 just 140 miles north of San Francisco – halfway between San Francisco and Eureka. Willits offers the warmth and charm of small town America and our quality of life is completely different from the hurried and busy lifestyle of our neighbors in the Bay Area.

And with its year round moderate weather and beautiful scenery, Willits is the perfect spot to stay, dine, shop and play while exploring Mendocino County's stunning natural beauty.

Founded by Hiram Willits, Willits was settled in the 1850's by pioneering ranchers when Sam and Harry Baechtel drove a herd of cattle up from Marin County in search of permanent grazing land and found a beautiful little valley that fulfilled their needs. They were the first non-Native American settlers in Willits. According to Sam Baechtel's notebook: "The valley has a large watershed and during our rainy

seasons the water collects more rapidly than the outlet can carry it off; consequently, it forms a lake in its northern end which is usually all drained off by May." That's one version of how the valley was called the Little Lake Valley.

In 1888, with the advent of the railroad, Willitsville incorporated with a population of 720 and called itself Willits. Lumbering had joined farming as a part of the local economy, and the tanbark industry flourished. Northwestern Railroad reached Willits in 1901 followed by the California Western "Skunk Train" 10 years later. Northwestern completed the line to Eureka in 1914 making Willits the center of the line stretching from San Francisco to Eureka.

There is a lot of culture, arts, education, shopping and adventure packed into our town. If its culture, arts and education you're after, plan to see a show at the Willits Community Theater, check out the Mendocino County Museum and Roots of Motive Power, The Willits Center for the Arts, the Willits Library and our very own Community Maker's Space, Wowser.

Willits boasts a brand new, beautiful campus of Mendocino College as well as the new Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, opening in 2015, a state of the art teaching hospital with a very nice display of local artists work.

You can also browse our year-round

Willits Farmers' Market, eat at our many delicious and unique family owned restaurants, and plan to lodge at one of our delightful inns or camp and play at the very popular KOA Kampground.

Browse our unique shops to find a new outfit, one-of-kind treasures, fantastic deals and special gifts.

If it is adventure you seek, you can play with the dog at the dog park, enjoy the skate park, explore beautiful forests, hiking trails, beachcombing and white water rafting - all just a short drive away.

Residents and visitors enjoy a variety of annual events including the Willits Community Festival and Car Show at the end of May, Willits Frontier Days Celebration with California's oldest continuous rodeo, kicked off by the very popular Hometown Celebration at the end of June, the one-of-a-kind Kinetic Carnivale, and the Harvest Moon Hometown Celebration in the fall.

For more information I invite you to continue reading about many of these and other exciting events in Willits, visit the Chamber's website at www.willits.org, or contact our office for personalized assistance with your vacation or relocation needs at [707] 459-7910. Our office is located in the historic Skunk Train depot at 299 E. Commercial Street.

Lisa Epstein



Willits Farmers Market

From May to October the Willits Farmers Market offers local produce, flowers, meats, fish, and entertainments in Bud Snider Park, across from City Hall.

The market is open from 3 to 6 p.m. each Thursday. During the winter month the market moves indoors at the Little Lake Grange on School Street.

Sit on the grass, under the cool trees and listening to the Farmers Market Band, while eating luscious strawberries or other seasonal fruit. the market is definitely kid friendly.



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Hometown Celebrations

The Willits Chamber of Commerce hosts Hometown Celebrations several times a year when the side streets are closed off and Willits area businesses and service groups set up booths, offer specials and prizes to the community.

The eclectic Willits musical and artistic community are also very well represented at each celebration. At different places along Main Street you might hear anything from a string quartet, brass band, to African drummers.

These celebrations offer a unique chance to purchase high-end arts and crafts directly from area artisans.

There is always plenty of kid-friendly entertainment from face painting and jump houses to climbing walls.

Each Hometown Celebration has been well attended, with a steady flow of neighbors and families strolling up and down the sidewalks on Main Street. Many of the stores offer appetizers or beverages and plenty of Hometown Celebration discounts.

Call the Chamber at 707-459-7910 or check willits.org for the latest schedule.



Youngsters enjoy taking part in each Hometown Celebration.
Photo By Debbie Clark.



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The new Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital

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Willits new state-of-the-art hospital and medical campus is opening this summer, offering The new 25-bed hospital, at 74,000 square feet and two-stories, more than doubles the size of the existing 30,000 square foot hospital.

The new hospital is located on E. Hill Road and features an organic garden as well as all the most modern medical equipment.

Construction began in 2012, the culmination of nearly 10 years of community fundraising.



The Frank R. Howard Foundation was established in 1966 with the objective of guaranteeing high-quality hospital services for Willits and Northern Mendocino County. In 2005, a new public foundation, the Howard Community Healthcare Foundation, was established to benefit those donating to the new medical campus. The mission of the Howard Community Healthcare Foundation is to advance excellence in healthcare, education, and research through philanthropy. Its primary focus is the receiving of funds raised for the new medical campus.

Funding of the new hospital by Adventist Health will allow the Foundation to concentrate its efforts on the remaining development of the new Medical Campus.

- A Medical Offices Building (MOB) for area physicians.
- COMMONWEALTH Gardens, a 5-acre organic garden, to provide food for patients, visitors and staff.
- A Health & Wellness Center, Auditorium, and Campus Housing to complete the campus.

For additional information or to make a donation to the Frank R. Howard Foundation Medical Campus, please call (707) 459-2777 or visit www.HowardFoundation.org



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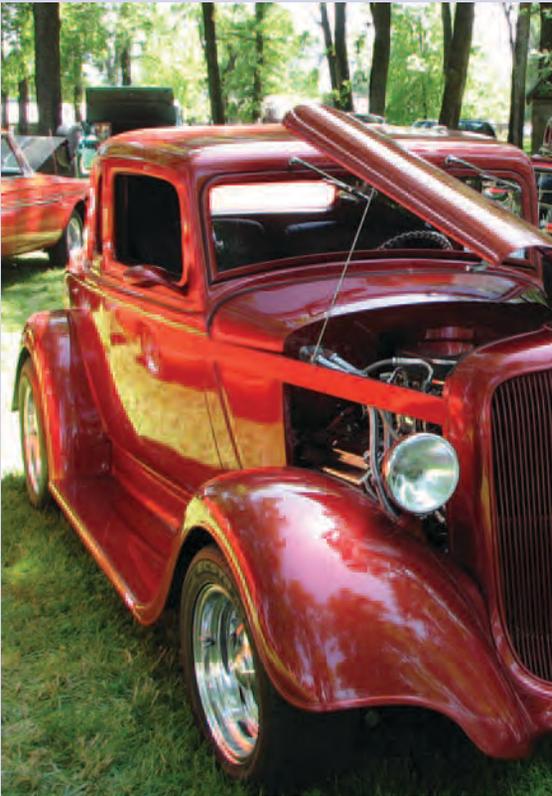
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The Willits Community Festival & Car Show is the official Willits summer kick-off event on May 23 and 24.

Saturday, May 23, the world famous Skunk Train rolls out of the Willits depot at 9:45 a.m. for a ride through the majestic redwoods. The train ride is scheduled to get you back in plenty of time to take a leisurely stroll through Willits' historic downtown to check out the unique shops and eateries lining Main Street before the afternoon festivities get underway.

Many of the car show vehicles will be available for a preview from 5:30 to 7 p.m. during the Classic Metal Mixer at Baechtel Creek Inn & Spa. The mixer is open to the public and provides an opportunity to mingle with the car owners and locals while admiring the top notch classic cars on display. There will be award winning Mendocino County wines and local appetizers to taste.

An inexpensive pancake breakfast, served 7-10 a.m. by the Willits Lions Club,

starts off Sunday's activities under the trees at Recreation Grove Park. While eating breakfast you are in a great spot to watch the parade of nearly 100 vintage automobiles expected to gather from all over California, Oregon and Nevada vying for best of show.

The Community Festival & Car Show opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m. The show includes vendor booths and food stands. Car owners compete throughout the day at a variety of contests such as the Fan Belt Toss, Spark Plug Change, plus old fashioned Arm Wrestling.

Across the street, the Mendocino County Museum and Roots of Motive Power will be open for the convenience of festival attendees.

Roots volunteers will crank up rail equipment to take visitors on free rides around it loop track. This is always a favorite for children and adults alike.

At noon, a Memorial Day presentation of the colors by American Legion Post 174 will honor those who died in the nation's service.

Left: Youngsters 'drive' a vintage car
Above & Below: Vintage cars in many makes and models attend the Car Show.
Photos by Steve Eberhard.



Frontier Days



Bull riding is a definite crowd pleaser.
Photo by Steve Eberhard.



89th Willits Frontier Days

The festival has something for all ages, from the excitement of professional bull riders matching skills against the meanest and toughest bulls to a youngster entering his or her first junior rodeo competition.

There are free dances, a carnival with rides and an arcade, a free parade, an old-fashioned barbecue and even free gunfights—where the good guys always win. There are heart-pounding high-horsepower truck pulls featuring everything from colorful high-octane professional rigs to local cowboys and cowgirls showing off their souped-up trucks.

Most of the action takes place at or near the Rodeo Grounds on 451 East Commercial Street. Check out the schedule of events in this magazine to make sure you don't miss a minute of this unique and heartwarming small-town festival.

Frontier Days kicks off June 25 with the Hometown Celebration. Willits' downtown transforms into a western-themed street fair; with streets closed for booths and a variety of entertainment and music for all ages. The downtown stores

and restaurants pull out all the stops to join in the fun, offering food and specials galore.

The truck pulls are Friday night, June 26, at the Frontier Days Arena followed by the first free dance. The Carnival also kicks off on June 26.

Local volunteers will work late into the night transforming the arena from a Friday night race track into a suitable venue for the Gymkhana to begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, June 27. The Horseshoe follows on Sunday, June 28.

Willits boasts the oldest continuous rodeo in California. The first of two CCPRA professional rodeos kicks off Friday evening, July 3. A free western dance immediately follows the rodeo.

Early on the 4th of July, parade participants begin to gather and the volunteers manning the barbecue pits under the trees at Recreation Grove Park spring into action. While waiting for the parade to start, a spirited horseshoe tossing contest will take place nearby—with the public invited to sign up.

Crowds begin lining Main Street early on Independence Day, reserving their favorite places to watch the parade, with most in place long before the parade starts at 11 a.m. At 11 a.m. cars are detoured off Highway 101 between Commercial Street

and Valley Street for the duration of the parade, about an hour.

More than 100 entries—featuring vintage cars and tractors, horse groups, musicians, floats, gunfighters and more—walk, rumble, or clip-clop down Main Street. Parade participants offer small flags and souvenirs to the crowds gathered along the route.

After the parade, the crowds stroll the few blocks from Main Street to Recreation Grove Park (next to the rodeo grounds) for an Old West beef barbecue with all the fixin's. Under the cool shade of the park's trees, volunteers serve an inexpensive full-course barbecue meal to nearly 4,000 hungry buckaroos.

Just as the crowd starts to get restless for the rodeo to start, the Black Bart Gunfighters spring into action—hosting a wild-west gunfight.

Then the hooves start drumming and the cowboys start flying when the Independence Day CCPRA rodeo starts at 4 p.m. at the Frontier Days Rodeo Grounds.

Frontier Days closes this year with the Lions Pancake Breakfast, the Junior Rodeo and some Cowboy Poetry on Sunday, July 5.

This annual festival is year-round project of a local all-volunteer group.



The truck pulls are an exciting part of Willits Frontier Days. From this high end tractor to local cowboy & cowgirls revved up pickups. Photo by Steve Eberhard



Willits Frontier Days has 2 days of professional Rodeo as well as a Junior Rodeo each year. Photo by Steve Eberhard.

WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS

2015 Schedule of Events

Get entries & more info online: www.WillitsFrontierDays.com

DATE	DAY	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	COST
June 25	Thursday	5 pm	Hometown Celebration	Downtown Willits	Free to attend
		5 pm	Community Proj. Judging	Downtown Willits	Free to attend
June 26	Friday	6 pm	Truck Pulls	Jack Tharp Arena	\$14/Adult, \$5/Child
		9 pm	Street Dance	Rodeo Grounds	Free to attend
		6 pm	Carnival opens	Old Ball Fields	Tickets & Wristbands
June 27	Saturday	9 am	Gymkhana	Jack Tharp Arena	Free to attend
		10 am	National Anthem	Rodeo Grounds	Free to attend
June 28	Sunday	8 am	Horse Show	Jack Tharp Arena	Free to attend
		~	Sweetheart Judging	Jack Tharp Arena	Free to attend
July 3	Friday	7 pm	CCPRA Rodeo	Jack Tharp Arena	\$15/Box, \$12/Adult, \$5 Child
		9 pm	Western Dance	Rodeo Grounds	Free to attend
July 4	Saturday	9 am	Horseshoe Competition	Rec Grove	Free to attend
		11 am	Parade	Downtown Willits	Free to attend
		12 pm	Barbecue	Rec Grove	\$15/Adult, \$8 Child
		3 pm	Black Bart Gunfighters	Rec Grove	Free to attend
		4 pm	CCPRA Rodeo	Jack Tharp Arena	\$15/Box, \$12/Adult, \$5 Child
July 5	Sunday	7 am	Lions Pancake Breakfast	Rec Grove	\$8/Adult, \$5 Child
		10 am	Junior Rodeo	Jack Tharp Arena	\$5/Adult, Free/Child
		3 pm	Cowboy Poetry	Community Center	\$20/Adult, \$12 Child, 6-12





The Frontier Days Parade is a fun time for kids and adults alike.

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Except for the passengers' high-tech cameras and modern garb, a time traveler from the last century would feel quite at home riding on the Skunk Train today.

Once you get out of Willits, the view from the restored rail cars is pretty much unchanged since the railroad began as the train zig zags up from the Willits valley to the 1,800 foot high Coastal Range, rumbles through a 791-foot-long narrow tunnel before dropping down toward the Noyo River Canyon at only a few feet above sea level. Outdoor observation cars allow visitors to maximize their train and redwood experience.

Tickets are available on line at <http://www.skunktrain.com>. The depot is on E. Commercial Street and shares a venue with the Willits Chamber of Commerce.



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Left: Christmas is a great time for riding the Skunk train as a family. Pajamas are the recommended garb, Santa and Mrs. Claus greet the youngsters and hot chocolate and cookies are the treats for the day. Above: The steam engine operates on special runs and on some holidays, check to book your ride. Below: Train Singer Greg Schindel rides the rails out of Willits and entertains the crowd whenever he does. Photo by Steve Eberhard.

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Mendocino County Museum

The Mendocino County Museum, located in Willits at 400 E. Commercial St., collects, conserves and celebrates the stories, artifacts, archives, and lives of the people and places of Mendocino County.

The Seabiscuit collection is one of many crowd pleasers, complete with a chance to watch Seabiscuit defeat the favored War Admiral in the race of the century.

For those interested in Native American basketry, the Museum has a top notch collection of Pomo Indian baskets. It has also published a collection of books chronicling the history of local peoples.

Rickety stagecoaches, and other horse powered wagons and buggies allow the public to view earlier forms of mass transit.

The Museum maintains an evolving series of exhibits from those honoring area veterans, preserving the artifacts from a mysterious and forgotten 1850 shipwreck to a 1960s era “hippie” van. The 2015 exhibit, opening in May, features a nationally touring exhibit about Lincoln and the Constitution plus a local exhibit about Mendocino County home front during the Civil War.

The Museum also hosts a series of special events throughout the year including a traveling troupe of performers bringing early county pioneers to life, a typically sold out fall wine and mushroom train; the chaos of a Kinetic Carnivale; and a mini-Maker Faire.

The 2015 Kinetic Carnivale is on Aug. 22-23 in Recreation Grove Park, the museum and the rail tracks. The Carnivale is kid friendly and Steam-Punk crazy, between the zany hand car races, variety shows, a fiery Grande Ball and a whole lot more.





Photo of a Mendocino County Museum exhibit.
Photo by Steve Eberhard.

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Two of the colorful handcars during the 2014 races associated with the Mendocino County Museum's Kinetic Carnivale. Photo by Steve Eberhard.





Youngsters at play at the 2014 Kinetic Carnivale. Photo by Steve Eberhard.

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One of the fire dancers at the Kinetic Carnivale's Grand Ball. Photo by Josh Bowers.

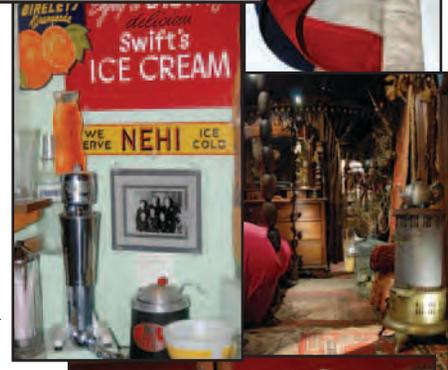
Mendocino County Museum

Discover Our History!



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www.MendocinoMuseum.org

Info@MendocinoMuseum.org



Coming Soon

Special Exhibits on Mendocino County during the Civil War opening May 2015

Photographs by Ben Rosales, Janet Rayner, Nathan DeHart

Gateway to the Redwoods

Willits is so proud of its place as the “Gateway to the Redwoods,” it had it emblazoned on the arch in the middle of town. For much of Willits’ past, redwood lumber was the economic engine powering the region. Now much of the Willits economy relies on visitors to the redwood forests to the north and west.

Willits is on the front steps of a wilderness experience for travelers willing to leave the paved world. Dirt and gravel roads are still the norm for many of the outlying areas. Minutes after leaving the streets of Willits, visitors can step into a region seemingly little changed in the past 100 years.

Those desiring a quick picnic in the redwoods or an easy stroll can visit the Ohl Grove or walk among the redwoods along Willits Creek in Brooktrails only minutes from downtown Willits. Brooktrails Golf Course provides a unique redwood golfing experience.

Jackson Demonstration State Forest, located west of Willits on Highway 20, contains the largest state forest, some 50,000 acres of the Big River and Noyo River watersheds. Cool fog and mild temperatures promote the growth of redwoods and Douglas fir. This state forest has campgrounds and nearly 1,000 miles of roads and trails. One easy day trip is the trail to 50-foot-tall Chamberlain Falls.

Visitors who wish to explore one of the state’s least-crowded redwood preserves can travel south of Willits to Montgomery Woods State Reserve. The Reserve has a tranquil two-mile loop trail connecting five separate groves of virgin redwood forest along a verdant fern understory. Burbling Montgomery Creek provides a suitable backdrop to the stroll.

The Admiral William Standley State Recreation Area is north and west of Willits off Branscomb Road. The 45-acre redwood reserve is located at 1,700-foot elevation along the headwaters of the South Fork of the Eel River.

Further north of Willits along Highway 101 in Leggett is the 315-foot-tall drive-through Chandelier Tree. The privately run park charges a small fee and has a picnicking area in a redwood grove beside a small lake. The tree has been a popular feature since the drive-through hole was cut in the 1930s.

Standish Hickey State Recreation Area and Smith Redwoods National Reserve are located a few miles north of Leggett on the South Fork of the Eel River. This area has campgrounds, picnicking and access to a virgin grove of redwoods. A short hike will take visitors to the Captain Miles Standish Tree, a scarred 225-foot-tall, 13-foot-diameter giant estimated to be 1,200 years old. Most of the trails are only accessible during the summer season.

Mendocino’s Lost Coast is one of the few truly remote places one can access in a vehicle. The Lost Coast has some of the most dramatic ocean views and unique natural features in the world. Access to the area requires a sense of adventure and a high-clearance vehicle. It is home to Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. Usal Beach, six miles off Highway 1, offers camping, hiking, picnicking and horseback riding.

It is also home to the Shady Dell “Enchanted Forest” a spectacular grove of 500 year old redwood trees deformed to resemble candelabras due to the wind and weather conditions. This unique grove of trees is being preserved through the action of the Save the Redwoods League.





Montgomery Woods State Park has hiking trails and a chance for some alone time with the redwoods. Photo by June Ruckman.



Left: an ancient stump at Brooktrails. Brooktrails still has a healthy stand of second growth redwoods. Photo by Bruce Haanstra.
 Right: Falls in the redwoods. Photo by June Ruckman.

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Photos by June Ruckman.



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The home of the 'little horse that could' draws thousands of visitors each year. Ridgewood Ranch, off Highway 101 about seven miles south of Willits, was the home and final resting place of the great racing legend, Seabiscuit.

The story of Seabiscuit, the small bay horse who rose from obscurity and fought through adversity to triumph over racing's East Coast royalty, has inspired generations. The spunky racehorse gave America hope and inspiration during the darkest days of the Great Depression.

The epic story was reintroduced to a new generation in 2001, with the popular, award-winning novel, "Seabiscuit: An American Legend" by Laura Hillenbrand.

The 2003 movie "Seabiscuit," inspired by Hillenbrand's book, starred Tobey Maguire and Jeff Bridges. Willits hosted the movie's world premiere as an acknowledgement of the special relationship between Seabiscuit and Willits.

Visitors can tour the working ranch Seabiscuit called home and experience the spine-tingling excitement of his triumph over War Admiral in the race known as the "match of the century."

In 2009, the US Postal Service issued a Seabiscuit stamp depicting his legendary win against all odds.

Seabiscuit's descendants, affectionately dubbed Lil' Biscuits, are being reared at the ranch and can typically be seen around the ranch during a tour.

The ranch has been preserved through a series of grants, donations and volunteer efforts. In January 2014, Seabiscuit's barn was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Tour details are available at www.seabiscuitheritage.org or by calling (707) 459-5992.

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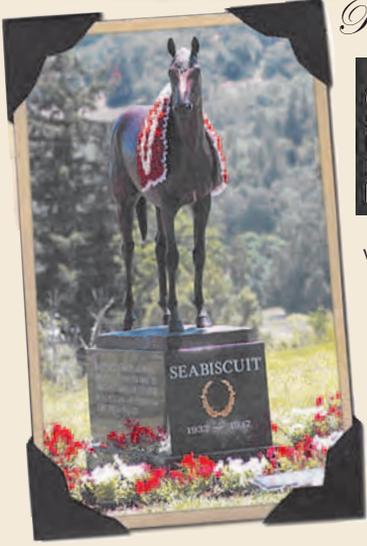
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- View Seabiscuit memorabilia: hear historical fun stories and poignant memories.
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TOUR INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS: SEABISCUITHERITAGE.ORG

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Roots of Motive Power





For more than 30 years an enthusiastic group of Roots of Motive Power volunteers have been busy collecting and preserving the North Coast's rail heritage for future generations; creating, maintaining and operating a working steam museum of vintage railroad and logging equipment.

The large oval rail track, engine house and equipment yard are hard to miss next to the museum at 420 E. Commercial Street.

At select times each year, the Roots crew invites the public to join them as they stoke the fires and operate their vast array of vintage equipment.

During these steam-ups, visitors can marvel at an operating five-story 750-ton steam shovel, scooping dirt and creating piles that dwarf the operators; a chrome-plated, wood-fired steam roller; or a "donkey engine" once used in the deep woods to move logs before the start of the last century.

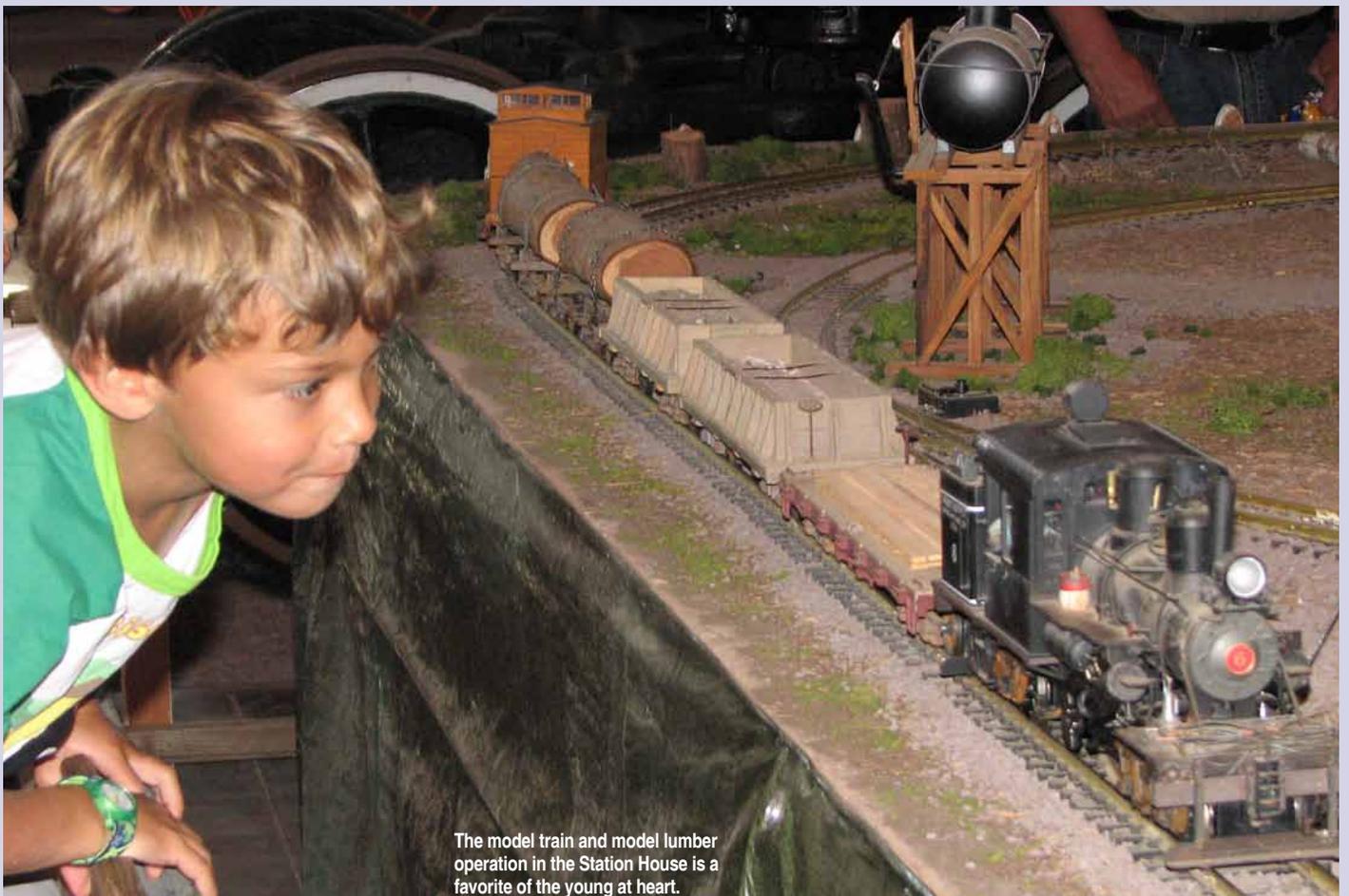
Kids of all ages can take part in the fun, riding around the Roots full-sized oval track in a vintage caboose towed by a huge steam engine or enjoying the collection of model trains racing around a miniature track complete with a model lumber mill.

The three main steam-up events Roots volunteers put on for the public are the Frontier Days Celebration on July 4 & 5; the September 12 and 13 Power Festival and the December 5 Holiday Express. All Roots steam-ups are free to the community although donations are welcome. For more information visit www.rootsofmotivepower.com.

Roots Holiday Express pulls into the station house. Photo by Steve Eberhard.



Roots volunteers operate 5 story steam shovels and tiny model trains. Anything with a train, logging or steam history and they collect it. Photo by Steve Eberhard.



The model train and model lumber operation in the Station House is a favorite of the young at heart.



Willits is home to Roots of Motive Power, an organization founded to preserve and restore historical steam & diesel powered equipment used in the north coast logging industry from the 1850's to the 1950's.

Their collection includes locomotives, donkeys, steam rollers, steam shovels, cranes, a track layer, and much more.

A few times a year Roots steams up & runs key pieces of equipment from their lovingly restored collection for the enjoyment of the public. Unlike many organizations that run their equipment on air, Roots runs on real steam giving visitors a unique experience.

The list of events for 2015

Memorial Day Diesel Train Rides, May 24th – Free

July 4th Steam-Up Event, July 4th & 5th – Free

Paul Bunyan Day's Mini-Steam-Up, Fort Bragg, August 5th & 6th – Free

Roots Steam Festival, September 12th and 13th – Free

A non-profit organization, Roots of Motive Power relies on donations & volunteers to save & share our unique history.

For more information, call: (707) 354-1918 or

visit www.rootsofmotivepower.com

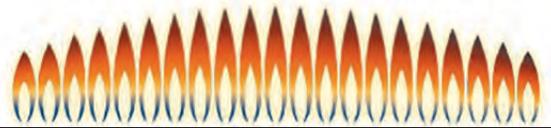


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Wines, beer and mushrooms



Some of Mendocino County's
ancient grape vines.
Photo by Bob Wilkinson.

For those wishing to combine wine and beer tasting, touring the redwoods and beachcombing in a single weekend, Mendocino County is the place to come.

The area has more than 150 years of winemaking history. Many wineries within a short drive from Willits are open daily for tasting; others open their doors during festivals or by appointment. Many are off the beaten path and require a little navigation to enjoy properly. Most are quite dog-friendly. See the map on page 46.

During festivals, check for package deals with local motels which combine with special access to festival events, outings on the Skunk Train, and tours of Seabiscuit's Willits area ranch.

The Willits area is home to some of the most sought after wild mushrooms. Wild mushrooms are celebrated each November with the Mendocino Wine, Beer and Mushroom Fest.

Fresh caught Dungeness crab reigns supreme each January during Mendocino Crab and Wine and Beer Days. Old fashioned crab feeds, crab dish showdowns and other festivities abound throughout the county during this celebration of the fruits of the sea.

Mendocino County had early roots in beer making, supplying much of California's hops until Prohibition cratered the demand for the pungent mainstay in beer production. The Mendocino Brewing Company was the first brewpub in California to open since Prohibition. Microbreweries have now opened in Boonville, Fort Bragg and Ukiah.

Mendocino County is gaining worldwide renown for its fine distilled spirits from area micro-distilleries.

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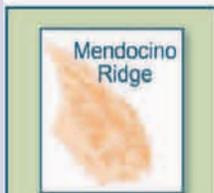
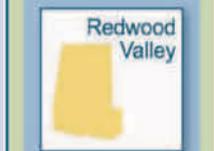
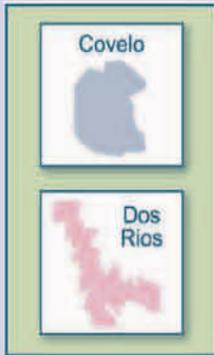
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Wild adventures

Willits is a small enclave of 21st Century life surrounded by vast miles of wild country. Once you leave the main highway, the world slows down and visitors will find themselves slowing down to the pace of nature.

Willits is only a few minutes from the Eel River and in many tracts surrounding the city, spotting another person can be pretty rare. It is common to see more deer than cars in the back country.

Fishing and hunting are still mainstays of life within the surrounding region. Turkeys, deer, bear, bobcats and other wildlife are pretty active.

Kayaking down the Eel River and its tributaries—especially from March to June—has earned a worldwide reputation with its class II to V rapids. Several outfitters can arrange trips, but the outings are only recommended for the hearty and adventurous accompanied by a knowledgeable guide. The Middle Fork of the Eel River is considered one of the best, long, true wilderness runs remaining in California. Several amateur kayaking groups also organize annual trips down the river for interested participants.

Mendocino National Forest to the east is a vast public area only a few miles from Willits. This 913,306 acre forestland contains wilderness areas as well as lakes and campgrounds. It was established in 1907 and is the only national forest in California not crossed by a paved road.

Frog Woman Rock is a distinctive volcanic formation adjacent to the Russian River south of Hopland along Highway 101. It was named a California Historic Landmark in 1956. Early folk tales persist about a despondent lover jumping to her death from the rock. The name was changed to Frog Woman Rock in 2011 to reflect native Pomo legends about the location.

Photo by Steve Eberhard.





Tule Elk are making a comeback in the area. Photo by Steve Eberhard

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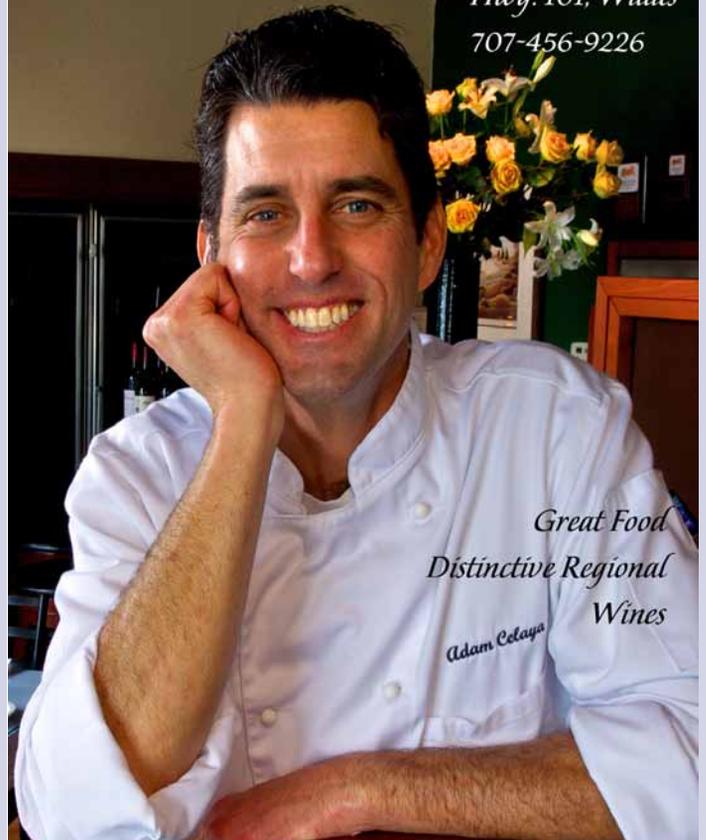
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A white-tailed kite.
Photo by Ree Slocum.



Lightning is a rare sight in Willits, but when it does happen it can be spectacular. Photo by Josh Bowers.



Turkeys are plentiful in the region. Photo by Steve Eberhard.

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The California fuchsia is one of the areas late blooming flowers. Photo by Ree Slocum.



This wobbly youngster seems pretty curious about the photographer, Steve Eberhard.

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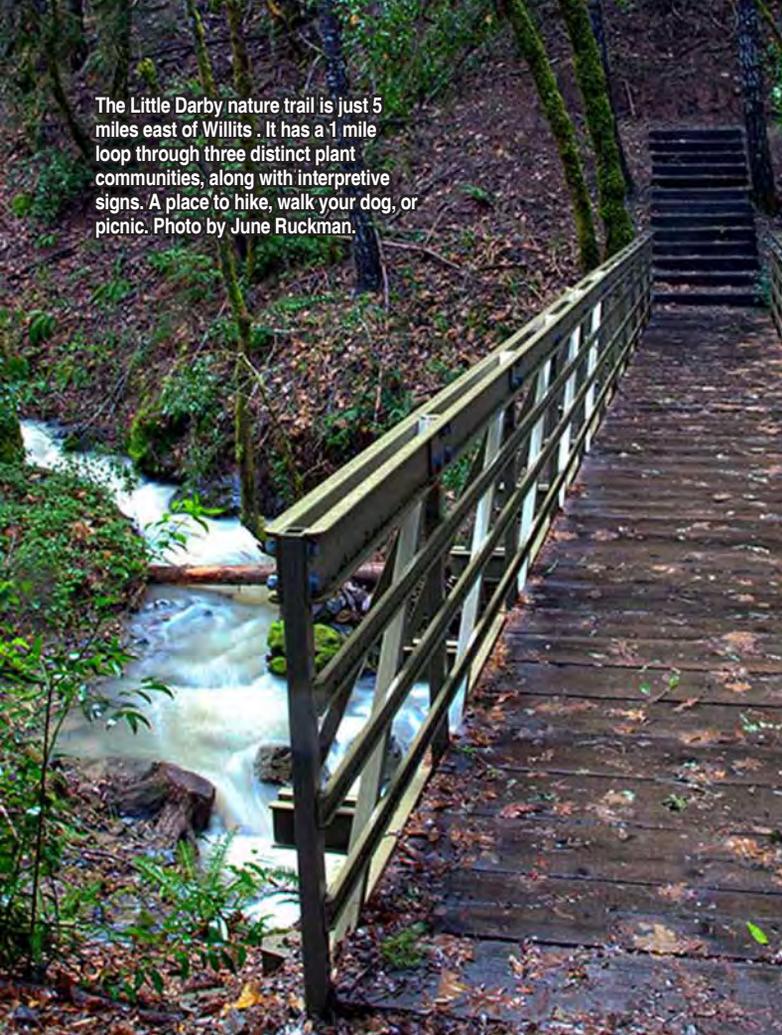
Willits outdoor adventures can be as tame as a walk along the Haehli Creek trail. Photo by Steve Eberhard.



photocogitator.com

photography by steve eberhard
one neighbor's perspective of mendo county

The Little Darby nature trail is just 5 miles east of Willits. It has a 1 mile loop through three distinct plant communities, along with interpretive signs. A place to hike, walk your dog, or picnic. Photo by June Ruckman.



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Summer time on the Eel River offers a respite from the heat. The Eel River serves as nature's swimming pool for most of the area residents. Photo by June Ruckman.



Redwood Meadows

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Redwood Meadows is located in a park-like setting with meandering walkways and surrounded by an abundance of shrubs, trees and annual color beds.

Designed for active, independent seniors over 55 who are looking for an environment that provides friendship and convenience.

Offering spacious one and two bedroom units, each with A/C units, full-sized kitchens and more.

Redwood Meadows also houses a charming community center with a game room, video center and lounge. The clubhouse is great for parties, movies, games and social gatherings.



Call (707) 459-1616 for more information

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Springtime on the Eel River is an exciting time.
Photo by June Ruckman.

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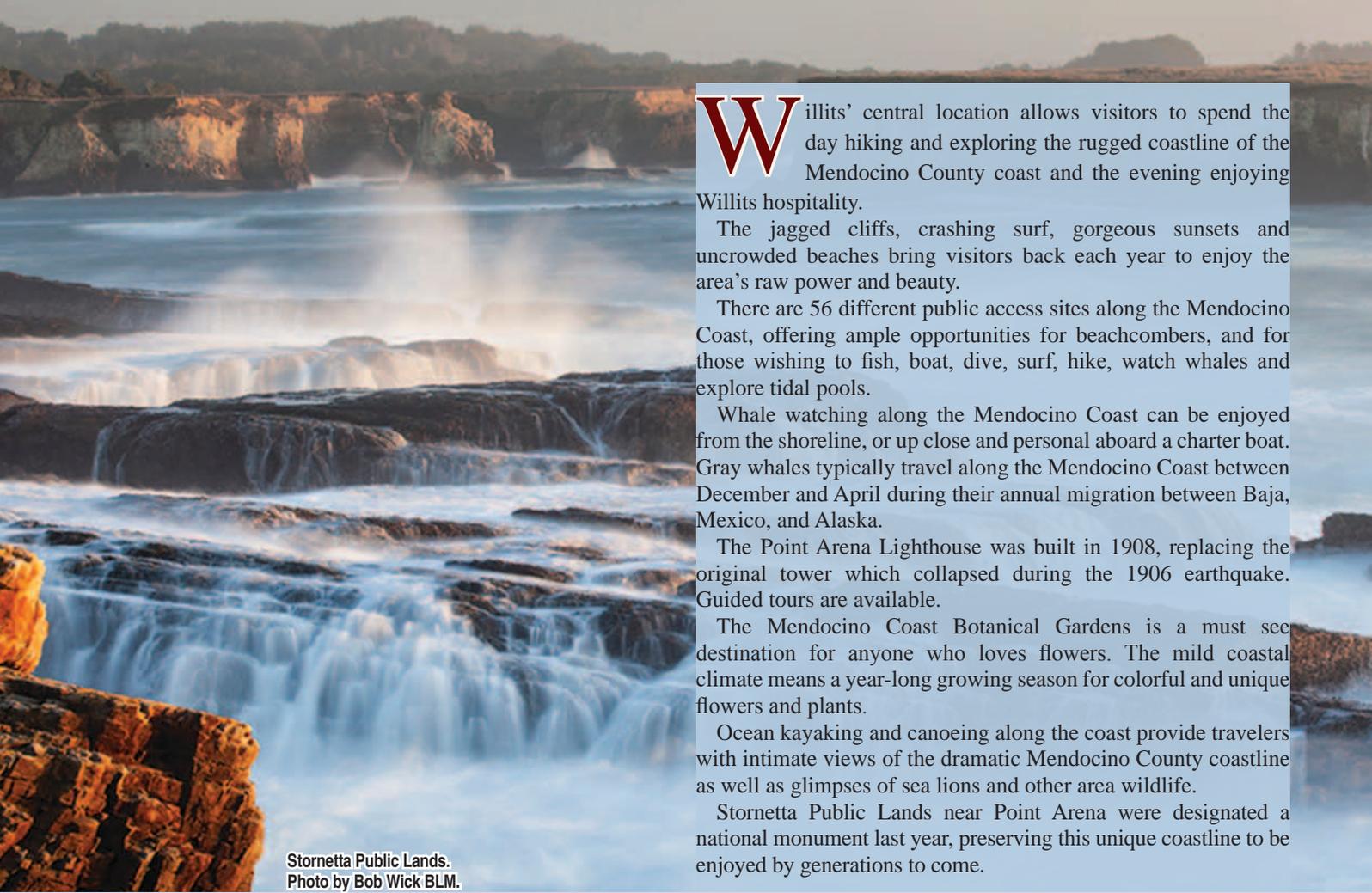
10 WOOD STREET IN WILLITS 707-459-1434

The ocean is only 32 miles west of Willits





Bowling Ball beach at sunset. This unique beach is located 3 miles south of Point Arena. Photo by June Ruckman



Stornetta Public Lands.
Photo by Bob Wick BLM.

Willits' central location allows visitors to spend the day hiking and exploring the rugged coastline of the Mendocino County coast and the evening enjoying Willits hospitality.

The jagged cliffs, crashing surf, gorgeous sunsets and uncrowded beaches bring visitors back each year to enjoy the area's raw power and beauty.

There are 56 different public access sites along the Mendocino Coast, offering ample opportunities for beachcombers, and for those wishing to fish, boat, dive, surf, hike, watch whales and explore tidal pools.

Whale watching along the Mendocino Coast can be enjoyed from the shoreline, or up close and personal aboard a charter boat. Gray whales typically travel along the Mendocino Coast between December and April during their annual migration between Baja, Mexico, and Alaska.

The Point Arena Lighthouse was built in 1908, replacing the original tower which collapsed during the 1906 earthquake. Guided tours are available.

The Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens is a must see destination for anyone who loves flowers. The mild coastal climate means a year-long growing season for colorful and unique flowers and plants.

Ocean kayaking and canoeing along the coast provide travelers with intimate views of the dramatic Mendocino County coastline as well as glimpses of sea lions and other area wildlife.

Stornetta Public Lands near Point Arena were designated a national monument last year, preserving this unique coastline to be enjoyed by generations to come.



Fun in the surf. Photo by June Ruckman.

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