

BIRCH BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



(360) 371-5004
www.birchbaychamber.com
www.birchbaywa.org

4819 Alderson Rd. #103
Birch Bay, Washington
WC Contract #202211002

2023 A LOOK BACK

Dear Whatcom County LTAC Committee and Whatcom County Executive Office Staff,

In the attached pages you will see an overview of all that we accomplished in 2023. We saw continued growth and activity for the Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information Center. All events experienced increased attendance and participation, and staff pushed forward with advocacy efforts on important issues facing the Birch Bay community.

We kicked off the year with "Discover Thursdays," a new, multimedia marketing campaign designed to highlight membership and the community overall. Kite Festival was hosted at Birch Bay State Park and the facility was a perfect fit for this event, offering plenty of space and no power lines to interfere with kites. July saw the return of the Rollback Weekend Car Show to the Birch Bay Beach Park, something the community has been wanting for several years. Sand Sculpture Competition, Derby Day, Trick or Treat on the Berm, Ring of Fire and Hope, and Polar Bear Plunge rounded out the busy event schedule.

As the calendar flips to 2024 we are excited to continue our efforts, and while we are busy with the planning process of our annual events, we are thrilled to be helping new visitors plan their adventures to Birch Bay and Whatcom County.

A great way to keep up with all that's going on in Birch Bay is to join the growing list of followers on the chamber's social media channels through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

We are thankful for your continued partnership and support. Without Lodging Tax Funding, the Birch Bay Chamber wouldn't be able to operate our visitor information center, host our popular annual events, or manage the desperately needed porta-potty facilities Birch Bay relies on heavily, especially during the busy summer season.

birchbaychamber.com



birchbaywa.org



Facebook



Instagram



BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

THE AWESOME PEOPLE BEHIND THE BIRCH BAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



DEREK JONES
PRESIDENT



JOELL BYRNES
VICE PRESIDENT



DIANNE MARRS-SMITH
SECRETARY



LINDA GALLE'-PARENT
TREASURER



DORALEE BOOTH
COUNTY LIAISON



MOLLY ERNST
DIRECTOR



DAN MCEVOY
DIRECTOR



MATT BERRY
DIRECTOR



DANIELLE GAUGHEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SACHA SANGUINETTI
EVENT COORDINATOR



MARY JANE THOMPSON
VIC COORDINATOR

THANK YOU TO OUR INTERNS BRITTONI QUADE; KRISTA DOKTOR & CASI POOR FOR ALL THEIR HELP IN 2023.

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

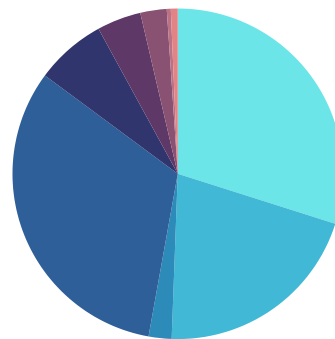


In 2023 The Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce welcomed 21% more visitors to our Visitor Information Center than we had in 2022 and had 1,783 people sign our guest book. We use the information from the guest book to find out where our visitors originate from, where they are staying, and for how long.

The charts on the right help to detail this information. These visitors are independent from the large amount of visitors we engage with during our annual community events that our LTAC funding helps us to plan, promote, and execute throughout the year.

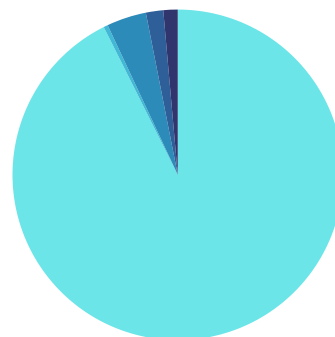
Visitors engage with our friendly staff to navigate the local area, usually wanting maps, activities, and the scoop on local businesses.

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?



- Whatcom County
- Western Washington
- Eastern Washington
- Canada - Mostly BC
- Western USA
- Midwestern USA
- Eastern USA
- Overseas
- Unknown

WHERE DID THEY STAY?



- Birch Bay
- Blaine
- Whatcom County
- Outside Whatcom Co.
- Unknown

2023 ANNUAL EVENTS

AN ESTIMATED 18,700 PEOPLE "JOINED THE FUN" AT BIRCH BAY EVENTS



POLAR BEAR PLUNGE

We are always amazed by how many people join us to jump in the icy waters of Birch Bay on New Year's Day!



KITE FESTIVAL

The Birch Bay State Park is the perfect location to "go fly a kite!" and Kite Fest is quickly becoming our most popular event.



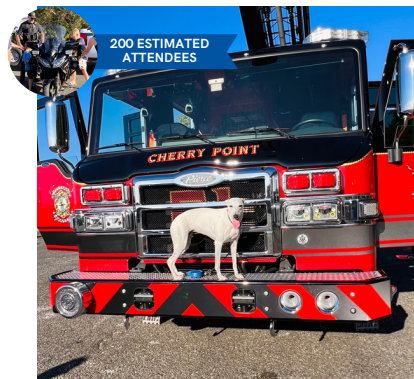
SAND SCULPTURE COMP.

2023 marked 40+ years of Sand Celebrations in Birch Bay. We had a huge turnout, but sadly the tide was just as excited as we were!



ROLLBACK WEEKEND

Rollback Weekend's return to the Birch Bay Beach Park was a huge success and a joy for the community.



NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Birch Bay's Neighborhood Deputy Program makes NNO a fun part of our summer program & families love checking out trucks and cars!



BIRCH BAY DERBY DAY

Birch Bay Derby Day is a transition from "Discover Days". An end to the busy season and a celebration of all things great in Birch Bay.



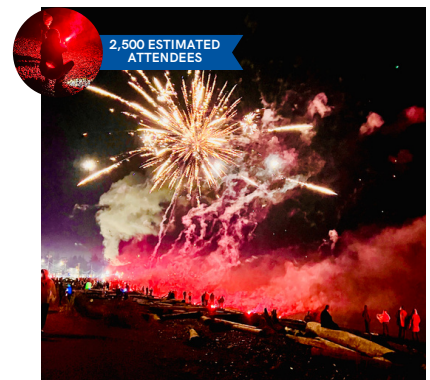
CANDIDATE FORUM

With important elections throughout Whatcom County in 2023 the Chamber hosted a candidate forum that was well attended.



TRICK-OR-TREAT

Where else can you Trick-or-Treat on the beach? This event continues to grow each year, and we have lucked out with weather!



RING OF FIRE & HOPE

Birch Bay's family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration is a huge draw for community and visitors. The red lights around Birch Bay warms your heart.

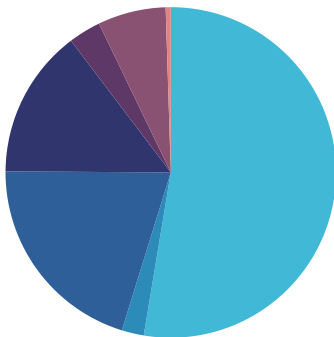
ESTIMATING EVENT ATTENDANCE

In 2023 we utilized a variety of different methods to estimate attendance at our festivals and events. This included, but is not limited to:

- Data from online & in-person registrations
- Mobile visitor booth sign-ins
- Utilizing a person counter at events
- Counting people from arial drone photos

In our application from Whatcom County Lodging Tax for 2024, we learned that Bellingham Whatcom County Tourism has software capabilities to geo-fence locations during events to capture important data regarding where people are traveling from and potentially how long they stay. We are looking forward to partnering with them on utilizing those methods going forward. While the methods we have used for years work, we think this is an area of improvement that we are excited to utilize.

WHERE DID PEOPLE TRAVEL FROM OUTSIDE WHATCOM COUNTY?*



Western Washington
Eastern Washington
Canada - Mostly BC
Western USA
Midwestern USA
Eastern USA
Overseas

*Using Registration Data from: Polar Bear Plunge; Kite Festival; Rollback Weekend; National Night Out & Ring of Fire & Hope.



MANAGING PORTA POTTIES

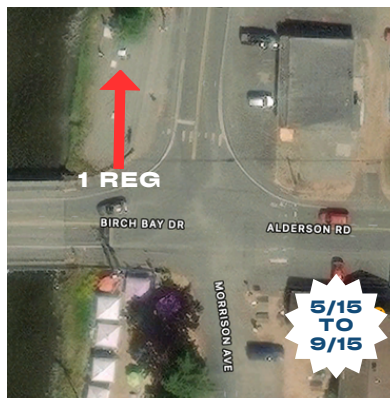
BIRCH BAY HAS A LOT TO OFFER...
UNLESS YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A RESTROOM.



BIRCH BAY PORTA-POTTY LOCATIONS



JACKSON RD. BEACH ACCESS



BIRCH BAY DRIVE, BY TERRELL CREEK



**BIRCH BAY BEACH PARK
3 UNITS**



**SOUTH COTTON WOOD
BEACH ACCESS**



**NORTH COTTON WOOD
BEACH ACCESS**

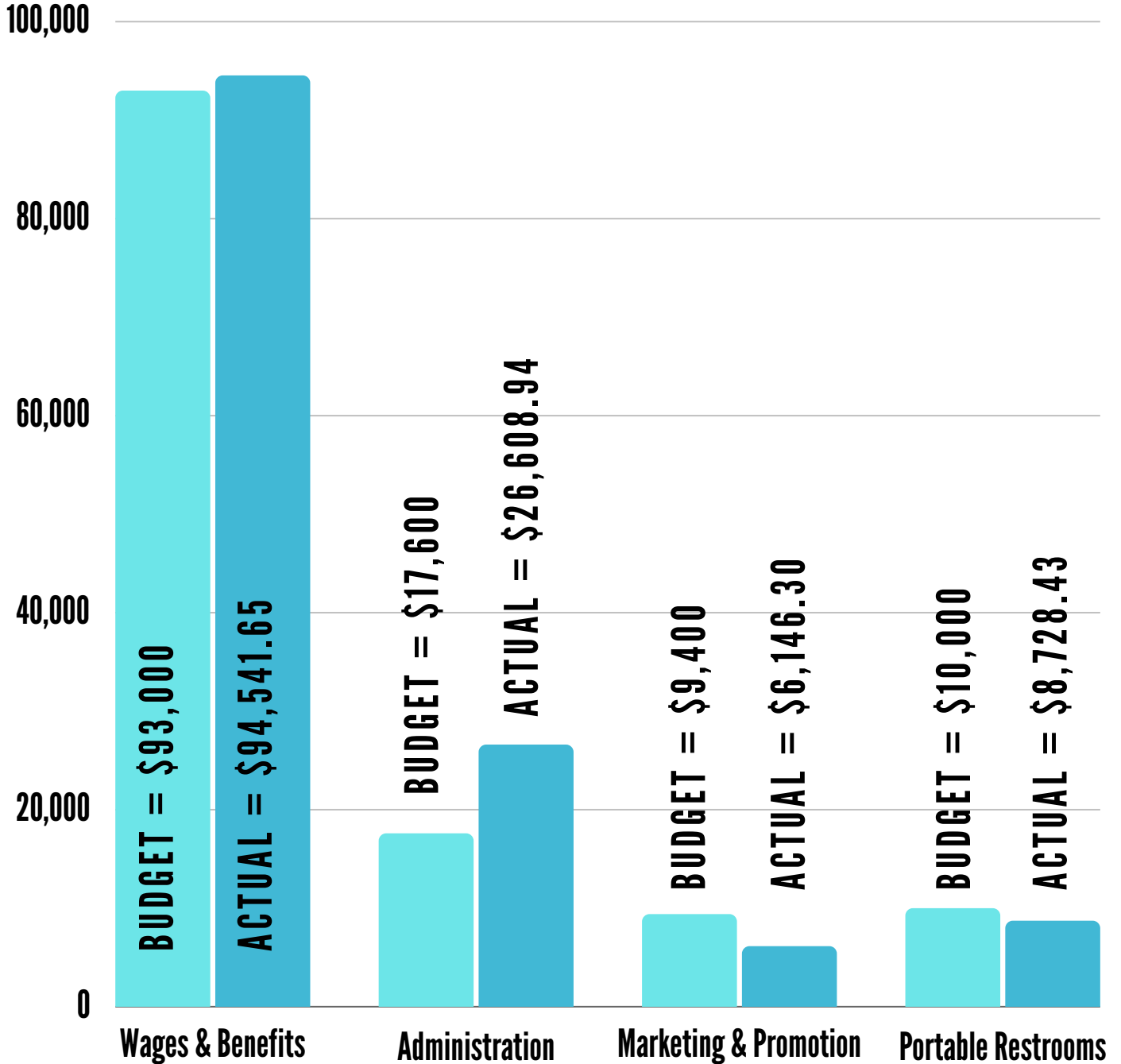


**BIRCH BAY BEACH PARK
7 UNITS**

Our 2023 LTAC funding provided Birch Bay Visitors with two year round porta-potty units located in Central Birch Bay. In May, five additional units were placed along Birch Bay Drive from Jackson Road to North Cottonwood Beach. Then, thanks to permission from Whatcom County Parks & Recreation, we were able to place an additional seven units in the Birch Bay Beach Park for the month of July. The Birch Bay Chamber of Commerce coordinated, communicated, and managed the contract with Honey Bucket regarding delivery and cleanings. It's impossible to know how many people utilized these units in 2023, but having so many units led to a lot less complaints than we heard in years past.

FINANCIALS

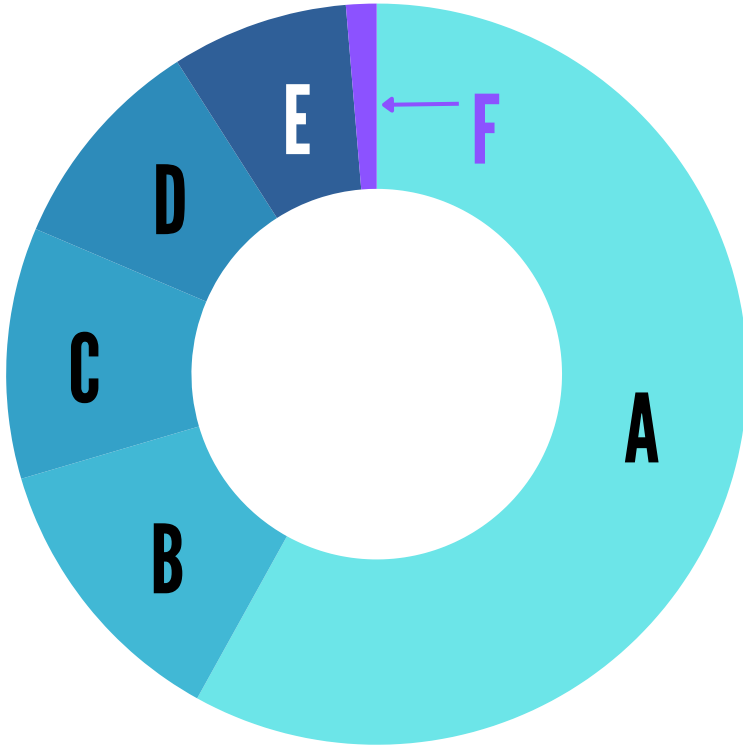
LTAC FUNDING: BUDGET VS. ACTUALS



Reflected above is budget per the contract compared to reimbursement requests. Our final request for 2023 was over the contract amount of \$130,000 payment was modified to reflect the correct remaining amount.

FINANCIALS

LTAC FUNDING: BUDGET VS. ACTUALS

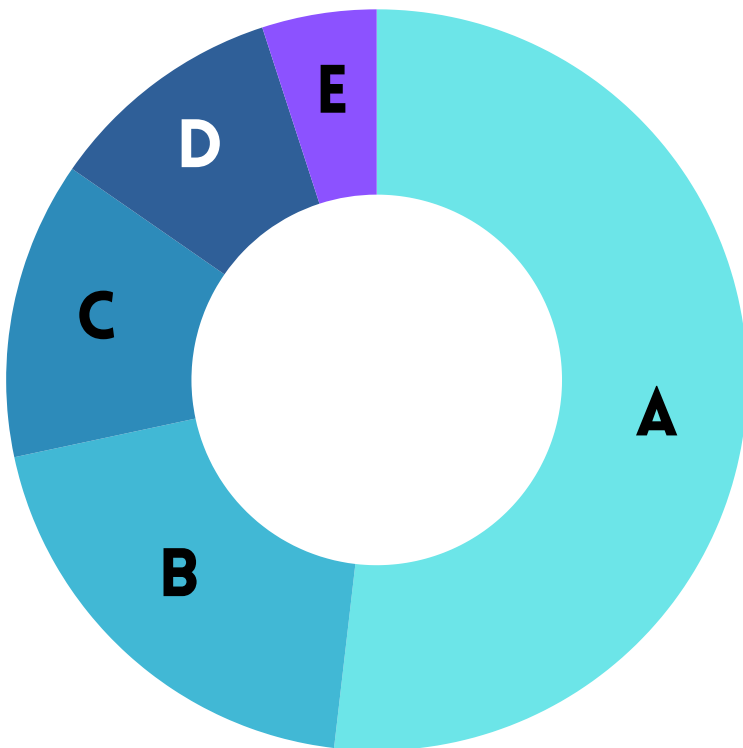


Income

A	\$124,130.27	LTAC*
B	\$26,500	Grants**
C	\$23,433.59	Sponsorships & Donations
D	\$20,413.15	Event Income
E	\$16,506.24	Membership
F	\$2,846.51	Luncheons & Misc

*\$11,233.97 of LTAC funding from 2022 was received in January of 2023. \$17,103.70 of LTAC funding for 2023 was received in January Of 2024

**\$6,500 of grant funding from 2022 events was received in January of 2023.



Expenses

A	\$113,536.84	Wages & Benefits
B	\$43,402.86	Events
C	\$28,450.18	Administration
D	\$22,683.07	Marketing & Promotion
E	\$10,947.36	Porta-potties