



Cheyenne Downtown Development Authority

(307) 433-9730 • www.downtowncheyenne.com • 2101 O'Neil Ave., Room 302, Cheyenne, WY 82001

STAFF REPORT

Proposal: Downtown Halloween Event Sponsorship Request
Date: September 17, 2026
Staff Contact: Miya DeBusk, *Communications Coordinator*

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Move to approve a financial sponsorship of \$10,000 to the City of Cheyenne Community Recreation & Events Department in support of the Downtown Halloween Event on October 24th, 2026 as outlined by staff.

BACKGROUND:

The Cheyenne DDA received a sponsorship request from Community Recreation & Events for a new Halloween community event to be held within the Historic Core of downtown Cheyenne on October 24th, 2026 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is designed as an immersive, family-oriented experience centered around a Halloween-themed story of lost souls traveling through downtown Cheyenne and returning to the Historic Depot. Upon arrival at the Depot, children will receive a train ticket and travel through participating locations throughout the Historic Core, where they will collect candy, participate in activities and experiences, and receive a punch on their ticket. Along the route, participants will encounter themed characters and interactive elements that contribute to the event's storyline. Once all participating stops have been completed, attendees will return to the Depot to meet the conductor and complete the final portion of the experience.

Primary Goals of the Event:

Create a fun, safe, and welcoming Halloween event for the downtown Cheyenne community. This free event will allow families and children to enjoy Halloween themed activities and games while engaging with local businesses. It will also promote community connection, support downtown businesses, and establish a new annual tradition for downtown Cheyenne.

Direct Public Benefit:

The event benefits the public by attracting families and visitors to downtown Cheyenne by offering free Halloween activities. Increased attendance will bring more foot traffic to downtown businesses and encourage families to explore the downtown area.

Safety and Accessibility Considerations:

Safety and accessibility into account to ensure the event is welcoming, secure, and enjoyable for everyone in the community.



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Itemized Use of DDA Funds:

Requested DDA funds will be used toward the following event expenses:

- Candy & event materials \$10,000

Total event budget: starting at \$15,000

Marketing & Visibility Plan:

In exchange for sponsorship, the DDA will receive recognition across all event marketing channels and activities, including:

- Logo Placement: Promotional materials, including event graphics, social media posts, and event posters
- On-site recognition through signage at a high-visibility location at The Depot, and the opportunity to have a table at the event to hand out swag.
- Other Benefits: DDA will be tagged and acknowledged in social media content across Facebook and Instagram. DDA-branded materials may also be included in attendee grab bags.
- Post-event thank-you communications, social media recap posts, and event reporting materials.

Impact on Downtown Visitation and Foot Traffic:

This event will attract families and visitors to downtown Cheyenne by offering free Halloween activities. Increased attendance will bring more foot traffic to downtown businesses and encourage families to explore the downtown area.

ANALYSIS OF PROPOSAL WITH REVIEW CRITERIA:

1. **Review Criterion: The proposal meets the intent and purpose of a Downtown Development Authority and the execution of its Plan of Development pursuant to W.S. §15-9-201 et seq.**

The statutory intent of the DDA includes promoting health, safety, prosperity, halting blight, and supporting redevelopment in the Downtown District.

The 2024 Cheyenne DDA Plan of Development is a governing body-adopted plan to be executed for the DDA to fulfill its intents and purposes. The Plan of Development outlines four focus areas:

- Building & Street Character
- Economic & Cultural Development
- Infrastructure & Land Use; and
- Transportation & Parking.

The proposal aligns closest with Economic and Cultural Development. The goals of this area are to:

1. Encourage businesses to capitalize on increased pedestrian traffic and visitation tied to downtown events.



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2. Support arts, culture, and creative enterprises by expanding facilities, enhancing promotion, and funding.
3. Leverage Tax Increment Financing to spur private sector investment.

The proposal supports goals #1 and #2 as an event being held in the Downtown District that encourages pedestrian traffic and enhances promotion of downtown patronage.

The proposal does sufficiently fulfill the Plan of Development's intent to use public funds for the promotion of public events that benefit the Downtown District. **The proposal meets this review criterion.**

2. Review Criterion: The proposal aligns with the appropriate use of public funds outlined in Article 16 of the Wyoming Constitution.

Article 16, Section 6 of the Wyoming Constitution outlines the appropriate uses of public funds (such as the DDA Special District Mill Levy), limiting them to the direct benefit of the public or the necessary support of the poor. Section 13 further provides that incorporated municipalities may "appropriate from local sources of revenue such funds as may be deemed necessary for an economic or industrial development project or program, public or private, subject to approval by a vote of the majority of the registered voters of the county or municipality voting upon the question."

The 2023 Mill Levy election, approved by a majority of the Special District's commercial property owners, authorizes the levy of 20 mills on commercial properties within the District to fund:

1. Landscaping or maintenance of public areas;
2. Planning or management of development or improvement activities;
3. Promotion of public events; and
4. Activities in support of business recruitment and development.

The request to fund general expenses for an event that is free and open to the public meets constitutional standards for the use of public funds and the mill levy purpose #3. **The request meets this review criterion.**

3. Review Criterion: The proposal meets the requirements for quality control, fairness, and public oversight the DDA exercises when granting funds to external entities.

The event is free and open to all citizens and visitors. This approach aligns with the criteria of fairness and equal benefit to the Downtown District.



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Overall, the proposal meets the transparency and structure required to meet DDA funding standards, as the organizer is a public entity (City CRE) and is held to the same transparency and structure requirements as the DDA. **The proposal meets this review criterion.**

CONCLUSION:

Staff analysis concludes that the request meets all review criteria. Staff recommend approval of a \$10,000 financial sponsorship, on the condition that the funds be used for general operating expenses for the Downtown Halloween Event.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board approve a financial sponsorship of \$10,000 for expenses for the Downtown Halloween Event taking place in the Historic Core on October 24th, 2026, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DDAS-26-6 Application
2. Downtown Deadhead Express Flyer

YOU ARE INVITED TO BE A STOP ON THE

DEADHEAD EXPRESS

A DOWNTOWN CHEYENNE HALLOWEEN EXPERIENCE

THE LOST PASSENGERS | THE CONCEPT

Saturday, October 24th | 11 AM- 3 PM:

This Halloween, Downtown Cheyenne becomes part of the story.

Many years ago, a mysterious train pulled away from the Cheyenne Depot before its passengers could board. Now, these lost souls wander the streets and shops of downtown Cheyenne, haunting the walls of the Historic train depot every October hoping to finally catch their train home.

But they can't board without a completed ticket.

Kids become Junior Conductors and receive a vintage-looking train ticket when they arrive at the Depot. They travel through downtown, visiting participating businesses, each of which gives them candy and a punch on their ticket.

dead-head

/ded,hed/ noun · railroad

A locomotive, railcar, or train traveling without passengers.

THE GRAND FINALE

Once they've completed enough stops, they return to the Depot and turn the ticket in to the Ghost Conductor, who makes one final punch.

"BOARDING APPROVED"

Then the child gets to "send" their passenger home by ringing a big train bell, while the conductor announces that another one of Cheyenne's Lost Passengers finally catches the train home.

Each Junior Conductor then receives a small Lost Passenger keepsake as a thank-you for completing the mission.



MORE THAN TRICK-OR-TREATING

Instead of walking from candy bowl to candy bowl, families become part of a story. Participating businesses become stops along the railroad, giving families a reason to enter businesses and create new meaningful experiences.

The Depot serves as both the beginning and the end of the adventure, creating a central gathering place with additional activities, entertainment, food and fun.

ALL ABOARD

ONE TICKET. ONE DOWNTOWN ADVENTURE.
ONE VERY IMPORTANT TRAIN TO CATCH.