OIL CITY NEWS

BUSINESS

Downtown businesses celebrate season with ghost scavenger hunt



by **Tommy Culkin**
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Pictured, a ghost plushie hides in Sword N Stones LLC in downtown Casper as part of the second annual Great October Ghost Hunt. (Tommy Culkin, Oil City News)

CASPER, Wyo. — There is still time for downtown Casper shoppers to become intrepid ghost hunters as businesses in the district are gearing up for the conclusion of the second annual Great October Ghost Hunt, a community scavenger hunt designed to encourage local shopping and boost downtown foot traffic.

Organized by Trinity Beck, owner of The Dreadful Bookstore, the month-long event includes 11 businesses all located within walking distance of one another. Each participating shop hides a small ghost plushie for children and families to find. When families find a store's ghost, they receive a stamp for their event passport, as well as small prizes unique to each business. Families that complete their passport with all 11 stamps are entered into a grand prize drawing after the event's completion.

"I just thought it would be fun and a great way for people to discover all the great shops that we have downtown," Beck said. "That was the biggest thing that I heard last year, feedback-wise, was, 'Oh my gosh, I found so many new shops that I didn't even know were here."

That surge in customers has definitely been felt at Sword N Stones LLC, co-owner Charlie Lee said.

“We’ve actually had quite a few come in because of the ghost hunt,” he said. “Anything that gets people into local businesses is a good thing, but I’ll add that it’s been especially helpful with the **construction** that we’ve had going on.”

Lee said he plans to participate again if the event continues, and added that collaborative projects like the ghost hunt make the downtown business community truly special.

“We’ve got some great, remarkable shops here downtown that all support and look out for one another,” Lee said with a smile. “You can’t get that kind of personality and personability at somewhere like Blackmore.”

In addition to the ghost hunt, downtown businesses are partnering on **other fall festivities** like the downtown trick-or-treating and the Cauldron Crawl, scheduled for the evening of Oct. 29.

“Events like this just illustrate how vibrant our downtown is,” Downtown Development Authority Executive Director Melissa Hugget told Oil City News.

The search for ghosts runs through Halloween, with completed passports accepted through Nov. 5. The winner of the grand prize will then be announced Nov. 6. Though The Dreadful Bookstore is currently closed as it prepares to reopen in a new location, Beck said people are still able to pick up passports at Chozen Yogurt or Bookin’ It.

For Beck, the conclusion of the ghost hunt coincides with a major milestone for her own business, as The Dreadful Bookstore will celebrate its grand reopening on Halloween at a new, larger storefront located at 148 E. Midwest Ave.

The grand reopening event will feature its own special activities throughout the day. The first 25 customers through the doors will receive gift bags, with the first five receiving expanded packages. Attendees will also have access to photo opportunities, refreshments and entries into a storewide grand prize giveaway with any purchase.

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