

## Chamber finishing up solid year

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Wednesday, 26 December 2012 00:00 -

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The Washington County Chamber of Commerce has had a great year in 2012. The group started a spring Friday Night on the Square and also host Eikosi Festival in the late fall.

Those events along with getting the word out to the community about on-going events have helped with exposure.

The added exposure is paying off with a record-breaking season for Santa visits.

Heading into the Christmas weekend, more than 925 kids had visited Santa's house, which is located on the square.

Two weekend days remaining, that number likely climbed to more than 1,000.

People visiting Santa pays off for the local economy and more specifically chamber members.

The group sent out an e-mail stating those benefits.

Following are the reasons visits to Santa helps the local economy.

Businesses have the opportunity to advertise to those visiting Santa (children and adults), thru the sponsorship of the house/Santa. Thanks Frontier Communications! In addition other businesses donated items for goody bags; also advertising their business at a premium price (the cost of pencils, candy and coloring books. Thanks to Frontier Communications, Salem Crossing, St. Vincent Salem Hospital, Shady Patch Farm, Meadow View Health & Rehab and WSLM Radio.

People are bringing their children to visit Santa. And are mostly likely shopping while they are here... or going to the grocery... or to a restaurant.. or to get gas for their vehicle... And shopping locally, thus helping our local economy.

"We know that local residents are visiting Santa," said Chamber Secretary Anita Bush. "We also know that people from outside the community are visiting Santa. Again, it can be expected that those visiting are making purchases here in Washington County. This also encourages repeat business."

Bush said she isn't sure how long the chamber has been running Santa's house but said this is the fourth year for sure.