

Women's Foundation of Oklahoma Hosting Event to Finalize Challenge

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The Women's Foundation of Oklahoma will host an event at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford on Saturday, October 27, to raise money to build a million dollar endowment that will provide a reliable, permanent source of grants to invest in the economic self-sufficiency of women and to provide a brighter future for girls.

The brunch, silent auction and style show are open to anyone and will be held at 10 a.m. in the Memorial Student Center Ballroom on the SWOSU campus. The event will be a fun-filled morning with some of the items in the auction donated by Oprah and Reba McIntire. Goodie bags filled with surprises will be at each table.

Because of the generosity of corporate sponsors that will cover the expenses, the entire \$25 ticket is tax-deductible. Plus, all ticket sales will be matched. Tickets are available by calling 580.772-5675 or stopping by The Kloset in downtown Weatherford.

Dr. Joe Anna Hibler, who is a member of the WFO board of directors, said she is pleased that the final event to raise money for the endowment will be held in western Oklahoma.

"Even though this is a statewide initiative, the primary concern of the Foundation is for the rural areas of Oklahoma," Hibler said. "We believe this upcoming event will be a worthwhile and fun event and we want people from all over western Oklahoma to attend."

Hibler said the Foundation started with a committed donor—Merle Chambers, who sold Chambers Oil and Gas and established the Chamber Family Fund in Denver, Colo. She has reinvested in the four states where the family earned their wealth. Her commitment and challenge grant spans over a five-year period. With the help of Communities Foundation of Oklahoma, Chambers put together an advisory board of 14 women and challenged the board to raise \$500,000. If the goal is met, she will match the \$500,000, which will create the \$1 million endowment.

"We are only \$14,000 from our \$500,000 challenge," Hibler said.

While the Foundation has been raising their part, Chambers committed \$25,000 each of the five years for operations and \$50,000 each of the five years so the Foundation could start making grants to worthwhile programs and strengthen organizations that address issues surrounding female incarceration, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, and substance abuse with the overall goal of helping women and girls reach their potential.

Hibler said the Foundation has already awarded nearly \$170,000 the past three years to various organizations.