

**GREATER TOLEDO
HERITAGE AND HORIZONS
2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

Preserving Our Story ~ Building Our Future

A Year of Formation, Visibility, and Action

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A Year of Formation, Visibility, and Action

2025 marked the beginning of Greater Toledo Heritage and Horizons (GTHH) as a charitable organization serving Toledo and the surrounding South Lewis County region. As GTHH established its organizational foundation, an important early priority was introducing the organization to the community, building recognition, and demonstrating its mission through action.

During this first partial year, GTHH developed its public presence, began building community partnerships, introduced its long-term vision, advanced local heritage research and interpretation, supported hands-on environmental education at Wallace Pond, and responded to an immediate environmental stewardship need through non-lethal beaver mitigation.

Formal recognition as a 501(c)(3) public charity came late in 2025, limiting GTHH's practical ability to pursue many grants and outside monetary and in-kind contributions during much of the year. Consequently, 2025 was less a fundraising year than a year of organizational development, community outreach, relationship building, and demonstrating through tangible activities the kind of public-benefit work GTHH was created to undertake.

Our Mission

Greater Toledo Heritage and Horizons is a charitable nonprofit organization working to preserve and interpret the heritage of the Greater Toledo area while supporting education, environmental stewardship, community revitalization, and thoughtful planning for the region's future.

GTHH seeks to connect Toledo's history with opportunities for future generations through heritage preservation, education, environmental stewardship, partnerships, and community-focused initiatives.

Building the Organization

Much of GTHH's work during 2025 involved establishing the foundation necessary for a responsible and sustainable charitable organization.

GTHH began developing governance, financial, administrative, and communications systems; established its public website; developed its community identity and outreach materials; and began building relationships with public agencies, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community partners.

On August 9, GTHH became a member of the South Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, expanding its connection with businesses and organizations throughout the region. The organization's public website was launched on August 10, providing a central source of information about GTHH's mission, current initiatives, community involvement, and longer-term concepts.

GTHH also began receiving broader public exposure during the summer of 2025, including coverage in *The Chronicle* concerning the organization's community vision and revitalization concepts. These efforts were an important part of GTHH's first-year strategy: building public awareness while demonstrating that the organization intended to move beyond concepts and become actively involved in projects benefiting the community.

Sharing a Vision for Greater Toledo

GTHH introduced its broader community vision during 2025 through presentations, website materials, conceptual illustrations, and public outreach.

A Community Vision Presentation introduced ideas concerning heritage preservation, community revitalization, environmental stewardship, education, and potential long-term opportunities for Toledo and the surrounding area. A narrated version of the presentation was subsequently made available online to make the information accessible to a wider audience.

The concepts presented were intended to encourage discussion about possibilities for Toledo's future while recognizing that major future initiatives would require further planning, partnerships, funding, public involvement, and appropriate approvals. This public outreach also provided an opportunity to introduce GTHH itself - its mission, charitable purpose, and the role the organization hoped to play in connecting people, ideas, resources, and community opportunities.

Preserving and Sharing Toledo's Heritage

Heritage preservation was central to GTHH's work from its beginning.

During 2025, GTHH continued research into Toledo's river and steamboat history, including the Steamboat Toledo, the sternwheel steamboat for which the community was named. Research drew upon historic newspapers, books, archival materials, photographs, and other sources to better document the vessel and the river transportation system that once connected Toledo with communities along the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers.

In October, GTHH introduced an expanded historical tribute to the Steamboat Toledo. The work was intended not simply to preserve historical information, but to make that history accessible and engaging for the public. GTHH also established contact with a present-day descendant of steamboat operator Joseph Kellogg as part of the continuing effort to expand knowledge of the vessel and the people associated with it.

This work laid an early foundation for future heritage interpretation, educational programming, exhibits, and public activities.

Environmental Education at Wallace Pond

GTHH's mission began moving into hands-on educational activity during 2025 through environmental learning at Wallace Pond in South Lewis County Park.

Working with the Toledo School District and EarthEcho International, GTHH supported a teacher-led, student-conducted water-quality testing program designed to provide local students with practical experience in environmental science.

Students conducted water-quality testing at Wallace Pond and uploaded their results to the EarthEcho Water Challenge database. In addition to giving students first-hand experience collecting and evaluating environmental information, the activity contributed local observations to a broader citizen-science effort.

The project demonstrated an important element of GTHH's developing approach: combining education with practical community and environmental stewardship. It also began establishing a foundation for continued environmental monitoring and additional STEM learning opportunities associated with Wallace Pond.

South Lewis County Park and Wallace Pond

During 2025, South Lewis County Park and Wallace Pond emerged as an important area of interest for GTHH.

The park is a significant community resource, and Wallace Pond provides opportunities for recreation, environmental education, habitat stewardship, and hands-on student learning.

GTHH began gathering information about the park, pond, shoreline conditions, vegetation, infrastructure, and potential future stewardship needs. The organization also began exploring ways it could appropriately support the park while recognizing Lewis County's ownership and management responsibilities.

This early work helped establish a foundation for future cooperation with Lewis County and for environmental, educational, and community projects that could be pursued with appropriate County coordination and approval.

Responding to Beaver Activity

In December 2025, renewed beaver activity at Wallace Pond caused fresh damage to shoreline trees.

Working in coordination with Lewis County and using guidance from the Cascade Forest Conservancy, GTHH undertook an initial non-lethal response intended to protect vulnerable vegetation. During the third week of December, protective wire fencing was installed around affected trees as part of the initial mitigation effort.

The Home Depot in Chehalis supported the project through an in-kind donation of approximately \$400 in fencing, posts, and protective paint. While modest in dollar value, the contribution represented GTHH's first successful outside in-kind donation and an important early step in building relationships with community supporters.

The effort provided an early example of GTHH responding to an immediate community need through cooperation among a nonprofit organization, county government, technical resources, volunteers, and a local business. Monitoring and additional mitigation work would continue in 2026.

Partnerships and Community Relationships

GTHH recognized from its beginning that a small nonprofit could accomplish more through collaboration than by working independently.

During 2025, GTHH began developing relationships with organizations and institutions including the Toledo School District, EarthEcho International, Lewis County, Cascade Forest Conservancy, the South Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and other community organizations and supporters.

These relationships supported educational activities, environmental stewardship, public outreach, historical research, and organizational development. GTHH also sought to complement rather than duplicate the work of established community organizations, recognizing that successful community development depends upon organizations bringing different capabilities and perspectives to shared goals.

IRS Recognition and Fundraising

GTHH's IRS determination was dated October 16, 2025, with recognition of its 501(c)(3) public charity status effective July 10, 2025. The determination letter was received late in the year.

The timing had a practical effect on GTHH's first year. By the time formal documentation of the organization's tax-exempt status was available, application periods for many 2025 grant programs had already closed.

Until the determination was received, GTHH also did not yet have the formal IRS documentation commonly requested by grantmakers and prospective donors. This limited the organization's practical ability to pursue both monetary and in-kind contributions during much of its first year.

Following receipt of the determination, GTHH began expanding its fundraising and donor outreach and entered 2026 better positioned to pursue grants, charitable contributions, in-kind support, and other mission-appropriate funding.

Financial Stewardship

Because 2025 was GTHH's organizational formation year, financial activity was very limited.

Initial formation and operating expenses were paid personally by members of the Board of Directors. These expenses included nonprofit and corporate formation, tax-exempt status, registrations, website hosting, domain names, and other costs necessary to establish the organization.

GTHH received a small amount of monetary support during the year through recurring contributions from a board member but did not conduct significant public fundraising during most of 2025.

Following receipt of its IRS determination, GTHH began expanding its ability to seek outside support. In December, The Home Depot in Chehalis provided approximately \$400 in donated materials for the initial Wallace Pond beaver-mitigation project. The contribution represented GTHH's first successful outside in-kind donation and helped demonstrate the organization's growing ability to secure community support for mission-related work.

Throughout its formation year, GTHH worked to establish the financial and administrative practices needed to responsibly receive and manage charitable contributions, grants, earned revenue, and in-kind support as the organization moved into full operations.

2025 Board of Directors

GTHH was incorporated in 2025 with Lawrence F. Davidson, Joe Notch, and Dan Gorton serving as the organization's initial directors. Dr. Sandy Hare joined the Board in October 2025, expanding the Board to four members.

Throughout GTHH's formation year, Board members served in a working-board capacity, providing organizational leadership while also contributing directly to administration, community outreach, project development, educational activities, and other early organizational needs.

- Lawrence F. Davidson - President/Executive Director
- Joe Notch - Secretary
- Dan Gorton - Treasurer
- Dr. Sandy Hare - Director of Education Programs

Looking Ahead to 2026

With its organizational foundation established and IRS recognition in hand, GTHH entered 2026 prepared to move from its initial formation and public-introduction period into a more active year of programs, partnerships, fundraising, and community projects.

Priorities for 2026 included expanding grant and donor outreach; continuing heritage research and interpretation; developing additional educational and STEM opportunities; continuing environmental stewardship activities at Wallace Pond and South Lewis County Park; strengthening relationships with public agencies, schools, nonprofits, businesses, and community organizations; and increasing opportunities for volunteers to participate in GTHH's work.

GTHH also planned to continue developing longer-term heritage and community initiatives while distinguishing those future concepts from projects ready for near-term implementation. As opportunities developed, the organization would evaluate projects based on their consistency with GTHH's charitable mission, available resources, community benefit, partnerships, and required approvals.

Most importantly, 2026 would provide GTHH with its first full year to build upon the visibility, relationships, and practical experience established during 2025 - and to expand the organization's ability to turn its mission into meaningful community action.

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