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Get an early start to the holiday shopping season Thursday

By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

Fall is in the air. Most trees have changed colors, and Halloween is nearly a week in the past. Thanksgiving is about three weeks away, and immediately following that comes Black Friday, traditionally the start of the Christmas shopping season as well as the biggest shopping day of the year.

With a few events happening in early November, however, some local people have had and will have a chance to get a head start on shopping for gifts for friends and relatives.

Baker Arts Center kicked off the shopping season last weekend in Liberal with its annual French Market event. Now, shoppers will be able not only to buy but also see some of the sights as well as hear and taste some other things that make the season bright.

The Liberal Chamber of Commerce will kick off its annual Holiday Open House Thursday evening, and chamber director Rozelle Webb said all local businesses are invited to participate.

“Whether they choose to or not, they don’t let us know,” she said. “They just do. I’m sure a lot of businesses will be participating. I know a lot of the downtown businesses have specials and things they’re going to do.”

The Holiday Open House will start at 5 p.m. Thursday, and Webb said merchants will be decorated with Christmas lights and decor. With sunset falling before 6 p.m. this time of the year, the night in Liberal will be lit up for the holidays.

Thursday’s portion of the open house runs until 8 p.m., and the event will continue on Friday and Saturday during regular business hours.

“Most businesses will have their stores decorated, their holiday merchandise out and have some kind of specials or refreshments,” Webb said.

This weekend also marks the annual KSCB Holiday Home and Fun Show. Vendors from the Five-State area will be set up in the Seward County Activity Center both Saturday and Sunday.

The doors will be open from 10 to 6 on Saturday, and from noon to 5 Sunday. Goods, services and wares of all types will once again be offered at the show, and admission is free.

Webb said having both the Holiday Open House and the Home and Fun Show on the same

weekend allows those shopping for presents more choices for gifts as well as a chance to see the holiday season come to life in Liberal.

“It’s always good to have a lot of things going on,” she said. “When people get out, they have more that they can go to.”

Webb said the Holiday Open House has always been a successful event and a good way to get people in the Christmas spirit.

“We continue to do it, and businesses continue to want to do it,” she said. “I think it’s a real good opening for the holiday.”

Webb said the Holiday Open House is an event that dates back to at least the 1980s, and she is looking forward to seeing what happens over the three days the event takes place.

“It’s just a kick-off for the holiday shopping season, and it’s a way for people to get out and see what’s new for the season,” she said. “It’s fun. They have refreshments, and the lights are on. It’s just neat.”

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