

Submit nominations for Siuslaw Awards

The eighth annual Siuslaw Business Awards event is fast approaching. The awards banquet, sponsored by the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, is Wednesday, Jan. 20, at the FEC.

This event recognizes excellence in the local business community by naming recipients for awards in Excellence in Customer Service, Curb Appeal, Nonprofit Achievement, Community Caring and the Stu Johnston Business of the Year Award. This year, a new category, Innovation in Business, has been added.

The recipient of this award will be a business that has introduced an innovative product or service or operates in a mode where innovation is built into the company's culture.

The Siuslaw Awards also recognizes two outstanding individuals in the community

by honoring them with the Future First Citizen Award and the First Citizen Award.

The First Citizen Award recognizes an individual who has given selflessly to the community based on leadership and overall impact. The Future First Citizen Award recognizes a student for their academic success as well as civic and community involvement.

An individual or business that has selflessly given of their time and efforts in supporting the chamber will also be recognized with the Distinguished Service Award.

Applications are available at the chamber Visitor Center and at www.florencechamber.com. Nominations must be submitted by Dec. 11.

First Citizen nomination forms are available through area service clubs and are due by Dec. 20.



COURTESY PHOTO

Florence Area Humane Society board secretary Sammi Lewis congratulates new shelter manager Tanya Garrett, right, who began her new position Tuesday.

Shelter from 1A

Garrett hopes to increase in-town adoption events for dogs and cats.

"We congratulate Tanya on a well-deserved promotion," Lewis said.

Anyone looking for a holiday volunteer opportunity should consider FAHS, which

continues to need volunteers throughout the year.

Volunteers don't have to work with dogs or cats. Other duties include pulling weeds, maintaining the landscape and working at the FAHS thrift stores.

For more information, contact the Humane Society at www.florencehumane.org, or call 541-997-4277.

Parks from 1A

"My responsibility is to ensure that our long-rang plan is successful," Mokrohisky said. "We're overdue."

The task force will pick up where the current draft left off. It will look at public comment received in the last six months and identify special issues.

It will be a working group made up of stakeholders from the coast, Cascades, McKenzie River and other areas in Lane County. At most, it will be 10 to 15 people.

"We want to make sure we have people from Florence involved," Mokrohisky said. "We need people with broad interests and a county perspective."

The plan will not be complete any time soon.

"We're looking at a 'best practice' scenario. ... It will be a slow process to make sure we go through the right steps," Mokrohisky said.

Another step will be the appointment of a park planning specialist with the background and technical expertise.

The county parks website will continue to track public comments, notes from the meetings, survey results and petitions.

Many of the comments received are from residents of western Lane County, who oppose the current draft's proposal to sell Ocean Woods, a 40-acre undeveloped county park near Heceta South and Idylwood subdivisions.

Mokrohisky said, "Ocean Woods has been a big topic in

Florence for years. We've received a lot of wonderful comment from passionate individuals. We're listening."

The public comments received so far indicate a desire to retain Ocean Woods, and Mokrohisky said it was unlikely the county would sell the land.

Ultimately, however, the county commissioners will decide.

Since Mokrohisky became administrator in May 2014, parks have been a large part of his focus. He has worked with the county's Large Events Task Force for parks like Mount Pisgah and listened to public comment on other parks.

"I have a passion for open space and park land. I understand the value for recreation and families. I want to make sure these continue," Mokrohisky said.

He regularly travels to western Lane County to meet with officials, citizen groups and nonprofits. He also brings his family out to spend time on the coast and even drinks coffee from a Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters mug.

"I know people in the county's outlying areas are worried if we are representing them," Mokrohisky said. "We are concerned with their point of view, interested in what they have to say and working to partner with them. This shouldn't be Lane County government's ideas and visions and goals. It should be the community's."

Follow Chantelle on Twitter @SNews_Chantelle. Email her at cmeyer@thesiuslawnews.com.

Port from 1A

"It is the best and safest place to go clamming," Rickard said. "I'd like to see that available to the public."

Caputo said, "It is also one of the only places on the river where you can dock a barge. It is a deepwater port."

The concerns the port has over the property are the possibility of ground contamination from former tenants and the additional debt the port will have to assume to purchase the property.

The property currently has three tenants who have leases that would transfer over to the port. Caputo said this would help to make the payments.

The port may seek assistance from state agencies in installing a new boat launch ramp.

"It is possible that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) will want to purchase the tidal flats for the clam beds," Caputo said. "And ODFW may help us acquire funding from the Oregon Marine Board to black-top and put in a new boat ramp.

It is high on ODFW's list of concerns of boat ramps on the West Coast."

Port commissioners voted to approve a \$3,000 earnest money agreement to hold the property for 60 days.

According to Caputo, the agreement would provide port access to the property to perform on-site inspections and give the port time to review copies of the leases and other documents related to the leases covering the property. The agreement also allows the port time to investigate whether the property is suitable for the

port's planned boat ramp.

"If we decide not to go through with it, we will lose our earnest money," Caputo said.

Interim port manager Dina McClure said the Department of Environmental Quality should be contacted to do an evaluation.

The price and terms of the proposal are not available to the public at this time.

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Q Advice to an aspiring culinary student in Mr. Lewis's class at Siuslaw High School: Pay attention, be calm and don't be afraid to try new things.

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