



Siuslaw News

WEDNESDAY

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LOOK AT US NOW, A CITY IN MOTION

Mayor Henry addresses new direction for Florence in State of the City

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Mayor Joe Henry presented the State of the City at the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Noon Forum on Feb. 19, building his address around two phrases: "Look at us now" and "A city in motion."

He focused on the changes already made by the city as well as new plans for the future.

"The state of our city is excellent because of the many difficult decisions and investments all of us have made in our community over the years. ... Our future remains bright if we accept the challenges ahead and

rise to meet them," Henry said.

Henry thanked his fellow Florence city councilors, Joshua Greene, Ron Preisler, George Lyddon and Susy Lacer, for joining him in a productive team.

The council passed the city's Five-Year Work Plan on Feb. 17, which had seven main goals: to deliver efficient and cost-effective city services, to expand and diversify the Florence economy, to improve the city's livability and quality of life, to sustain the

city's strong financial position, to strengthen and improve organization, to improve the city's communication program and strengthen citizen trust and improve the community's safety and perception of safety.

As the work plan was passed, Councilor Lacer said, "I love this work plan. I'm very excited about our future."

Henry said, "I second that. It's a very exciting work plan. A lot of work. And we're going to work very well

together as a team."

"That document is a living, breathing document that covers so many opportunities for us... It's got everything in there," Councilor Greene said.

The council also hired Erin Reynolds as city manager, a position open since May 2014, and applicants have begun filing for the Florence police chief position.

See CITY 7A

Cormorant impact on the rise

Port addresses marine bird and floating restroom issues during Feb. 18 meeting

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Megan Gerber, office manager of Don Wilbur Ltd., gave a presentation Feb. 18 on the Wilbur Island mitigation bank to the Port of Siuslaw commissioners, sharing concerns over the negative environmental impact the estimated 1,200 resident cormorants were having on both local fish and habitat.

A mitigation bank is wetland property that developers can rent or purchase to replace wetlands that might be lost due to development. Gerber's presentation to the commission explained the process.

At the end of her presentation, Gerber said, "Hundreds of cormorant pairs are resting in a patch of spruce on the south side of the Siuslaw River. The noise is astonishing and their excrement is killing the trees. The cormorants are also eating salmon smolt and other salmonids in huge numbers."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has recently approved reducing the cormorant population on East Sand Island in the Columbia River by authorizing shooting 11,000 birds and oiling the eggs to prevent hatching.

"We have approached the Corps of Engineers about reducing the population of cormorants here as well," Gerber said.

Port commissioner Jay Cable said the Corps of Engineers allowed the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program volunteers to haze cormorants along the Siuslaw River two years ago. It had no impact on the cormorant population. Cable said that Bolan Island between the Smith and Umpqua rivers is almost completely dead because of cormorants resting in the trees.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the average cormorant eats one pound of fish per day. That equals 1,200 pounds a day taken from the Siuslaw River; almost 500,000 pounds per year. The increase in cormorant populations has been linked to outlawing of the pesticide DDT in the 1960s and 1970s.

Current cormorant population in the United States is estimated at 2 million birds by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The numbers grew at an annual rate of 7.9 percent between 1975 and 2000. The current cormorant population growth rate is somewhat less.

In other business, the board agreed to continue to maintain the dock and restroom facilities in Mapleton, but will seek a partnership with another entity to defray costs.

The floating restroom project, being funded by the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB), has resurfaced.

See PORT 7A

ON THE RED CARPET



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHAEL FALTER

Big Night Buzz

Tara Lewis and Paul and Tanya Garrett pause for the paparazzi on their way to watch the live broadcast of the Oscars presentation Feb. 22 at City Lights Cinemas. The gala event, complete with red carpet photos, was a fundraiser for local charities. According to movie theater co-owner Michael Falter, the event raised nearly \$500. Tanya Garrett won the competition for Best Dressed.

Travel Lane County markets the coast

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Florence City Council received an update from Kari Westlund, president and CEO of Travel Lane County, who explained budget and marketing strategies involving the coastal area.

Travel Lane County is a private corporation that invests funds generated through the 9 percent Lane County and Florence Transient Room Tax (TRT) as well as funds from Travel Oregon, which

receives the 1 percent statewide TRT.

"We're responsible to go out and market the Eugene, Cascades and coast areas as a visitor destination. The more people we bring in to meet our mission of increasing overnight visitors, the more room tax there is and the more money we have to go out and do our job," said Westlund.

The coastal economy captures 25 percent of visitor spending in Lane County.

She said, "Because you have so

much recreation and so many jewels here, people come over and play. They may not always spend the night, but they are spending money in your local economy."

She added, "Hotel visitors are generating about 40 percent of visitor spending. They are the most lucrative target. That's why our mission is focused on overnight visitors staying in commercial accommodations, whether that is a hotel or a campground."

Travel Lane County is running advertising campaigns, such as

commercial on television and online and print ads.

Visitors can go online to www.eugenecascadescoast.org to see the custom landing page and view the video advertisement that also can be seen in Portland markets. They also have a TripAdvisor platform.

"We participated in an Oregon coast travel show to be broadcast on television and on Alaskan Airlines in-flight," Westlund said.

See MARKET 7A

INSIDE WEDNESDAY

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Your Weather

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy	Clouds & rain	Clouds & rain	Mostly sunny
54 45	54 46	53 41	55 39

