

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

125TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK

1890 | THE WEST ❖ FLORENCE TIMES ❖ THE SIUSLAW OAR ❖ THE SIUSLAW NEWS ❖ SIUSLAW NEWS | 2015

This year marks Siuslaw News’ quasiquicentennial, our 125th anniversary, a remarkable achievement for any business in a small community like Florence. To commemorate this milestone, throughout the year we’ll feature some of the town’s history as originally published in the newspaper, including historic articles and photos from more than a century ago. —*Editor*

Central coast reels from holiday storm

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An unannounced storm packing a 100-mile-per-hour punch toppled trees, knocked out power and sank pleasure boats, but otherwise failed to dampen the spirit of a festive Fourth of July.

Arriving at about 4 a.m. the morning of the holiday, the unusually strong summer storm crashed into a coastal area primarily between Newport and Coos Bay with a swatch from Tahkenitch Lake to just south of Florence receiving a major blow.

The storm was a result of a low pressure system that had been forming in the Gulf of Alaska for a few days prior to its arrival on the Oregon coast, according to a National Weather Service spokesman in Eugene.

The cold air mass was forecast for the Oregon coast as temperature, cloud conditions and a brief rain, said Daryl Jameson, weather service specialist, but winds of more than 30 miles were not anticipated.

“It’s pretty hard to judge those things since satellites can’t gauge surface wind velocity,” Jameson said.

He added that Eugene experienced winds of up to 51 miles per hour (mph), compared to 15-20 mph normally.

On the coast, winds were clocked at 68 mph

at the U.S. Coast Guard watch tower at the Siuslaw River north jetty and in excess of 100 mph at Sea Lion Caves north of Florence.

A Coast Guard spokesman reported that seas were unusually high at 18 feet with 15-foot breakers on the bar. No unusual boating problems were attributed to the storm, however, said Executive Petty Officer Charles Pilcher of the Siuslaw River Lifeboat Station.

Campers at the Ada Resort on Siltcoos Lake southeast of Florence have a different story to tell about their holiday.

Excessively high wind and waves pummeled the lakeside RV resort until 12 boats were sunk and large sections of dock and pilings were torn up and washed away.

“It seemed to me like 12-foot waves came up and over some of the small trailers,” said resort owner Joella Collins.

She and many of the occupants of the 55 trailers and campers watched docks being twisted and trees bending over from the force of the storm.

“It was like a little tornado with a little hurricane,” said Collins, who estimated that winds greater than 100 mph roared through her fishing camp.

Of the 12 boats that were sunk, all were fished out of the lake by Monday, said Collins.

The boats incurred various degrees of damage from broken windows, crunched fiberglass and

waterlogged motors.

Fourth of July campers at Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area campgrounds experienced similar horror during the storm. Approximately 150 trees snapped in two or were uprooted at the Tyre, Waxmyrtle and Carter Lake campgrounds south of Florence, according to Area Ranger Karl Denison.

Waxmyrtle was hit hardest, he said, and was evacuated and closed following the storm.

About 250 to 300 people were evacuated with the help of the Volunteer Dune Patrol and the Eugene Sand Bugs, groups which also helped clean up the roads and campgrounds after the storm. The beach parking lot at Siltcoos Campground was opened to accommodate evacuees, Denison said.

Several trailers, motor homes and vehicles were damaged at the Dunes NRA campgrounds, but only one injury was reported.

Officials at Western Lane Hospital, however, said that no serious injuries were attributed to the storm.

“The folks were very understanding and there were no major problems,” said Denison. “We’re just thankful that no one was seriously injured since there were lots of opportunities.”

He said that one particular tent was surrounded by downed trees at Carter Lake, where Denison estimated winds at about 100 mph for the damage they did.

Cars were covered with wet sand and “they looked like Mount St. Helens in ash,” Denison said. He said that Dunes NRA crews were still cleaning up downed trees and that a commercial firewood sale would likely be held with the next couple weeks to dispose of the downed trees. He added that Waxmyrtle would probably remain closed for about two weeks.

Central Lincoln People’s Utility District (CLPUD) crews were kept busy repairing downed power lines from the morning of the storm until 9 p.m. on Saturday night, according to Engineer Ron Ellson of the Florence office.

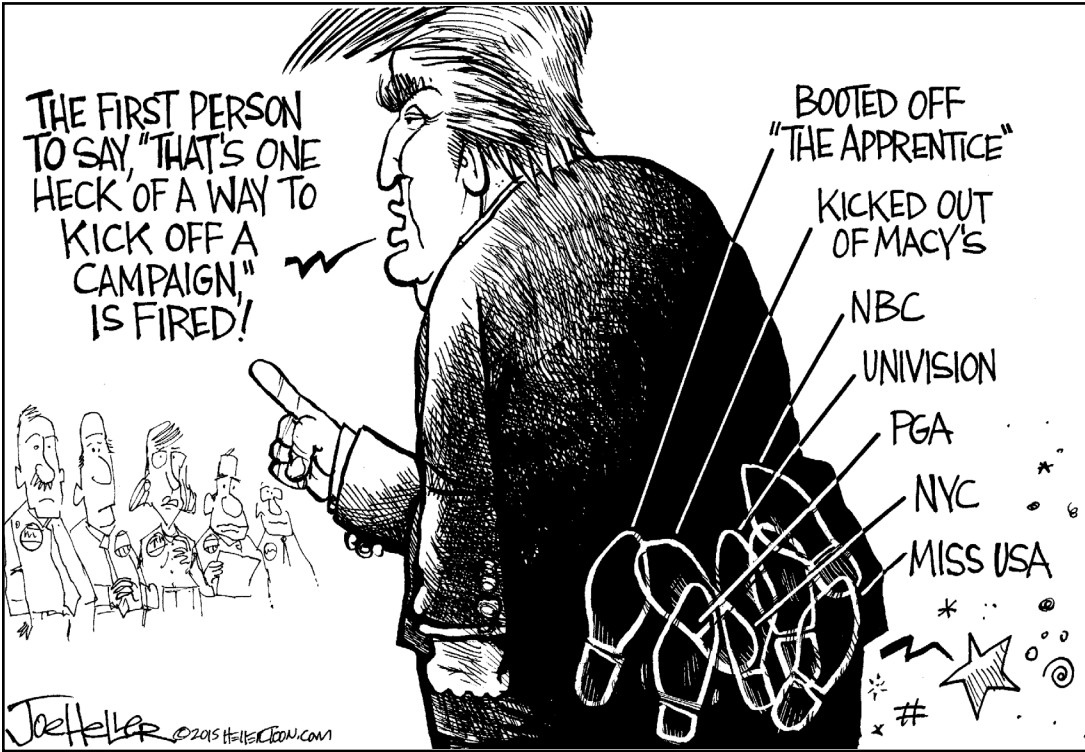
About 1,600 customers were without electricity after the storm, the majority of whom live in Dunes City.

Ellson said some of his crews worked 22 hours the first day and 16 hours the next to get power restored to customers.

Steve Saubert, general manager of Sea Lion Caves, said that the facility’s wind gauge was “pegged out at 100 mph” when employees returned to work Friday morning.

He added that the sea lions had predicted the storm, as two or three days before the storm a group of about 30 of the mammals gathered in the cave.

“Usually they congregate at the lookout at this time of year,” Saubert said. “Someone must have whispered in their ears to warn them of the storm.” ❖



LETTERS

Re-think fireworks show

Are you kidding me? There were 10,000 to 15,000 visitors, both local and visiting from distant cities, down at the Port of Siuslaw boardwalk July 4, including my husband and I.

We were all there for several hours (five hours for us) waiting for the fireworks to start. When they finally did, they were not visible to the great majority of visitors.

Who decided to move the fireworks location from the middle of the river off the boardwalk to the east side of the condos? I will never go down there again to watch, and will never contribute to the fireworks donations again.

Whoever decided to change the location needs to re-think their strategy. Also, it would

have been ever so nice to have been given some notice of where they were being set off this time so more people could have seen them.

Nancy Vogel
Florence

Compassionate care

As a retired registered nurse, I have seen many levels of care but none as compassionate, kind and loving as the health care system of PeaceHealth. I have not encountered staff like those who work at the hospital, clinic and home health and hospice.

The one thing our small hospital has that large facilities don’t is the compassion and true caring for their fellow human beings. The vol-

unteers are willing to take time out of their lives to assist those in need. This is amazing to me.

I will be eternally grateful to all of these extraordinary people.

They all deserve their wings.

Valerie Lemmon
Florence

Thanks, Florence

On Friday and Saturday, June 26-27, the local Veterans of Foreign Wars held a Yard Sale in our local Elk’s Lodge parking lot to raise money for the purchase of uniforms for our Honor Guard, which performs services for deceased military personnel’s funeral or memorial service upon request, complete with Post Chaplain, rifle

salute and bugle taps.

I am very happy to say on behalf of our local VFW Post 3232 that the people of Florence supported our efforts to meet our goal, and we are now able to complete our desire to represent our Post with complete uniforms to perform our functions.

Our Post has been selected by the Oregon State VFW Headquarters to be the Honor Guard at the upcoming mid-term Statewide Convention as well as the Annual Convention in January 2016.

Our sincere thanks to all those who donated items and supported our efforts.

Tony Cavarino
Surgeon, VFW Post 3232
Florence

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