

Siuslaw schools hire new bus drivers

By Jack Davis
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw School District has hired three new school bus drivers for the 2015-16 school year. All three are from outside the Florence area.

James Neider drives the Twin Lakes route, north of Florence, in bus No. 3. Neider and his wife Jill moved to Florence from Bend last year when his wife was hired as a fifth-grade teacher at Siuslaw

Elementary.

Joan Leschot drives the U.S. Coast Guard route in bus No. 9. Leschot moved to Florence from Indianapolis, Ind., where she drove buses for the school district.

"I've been in town about five weeks," Leschot said. "I moved here from Indianapolis. I have an old friend who has been in Florence for five or six years. I came to visit and am looking to semi-retire."

Ron Rommel drives Special

Education route 19 in bus No. 18.

"I'm originally from the Springfield-Eugene area. I've been over here the last few months," Rommel said.

He and his wife were volunteer hosts at Honeyman State Park over the summer when he applied for the position with the school district.

"This is a great staff we have here," Rommel said. "I've been able to compare this to when I was a bus driver

in the Eugene-Springfield area and find this very refreshing. I've been trying to recruit others to follow in my footsteps here. This is a great opportunity."

The school district has a total of 12 full-time and three part-time substitute bus drivers.

Follow Jack on Twitter @SNews_Jack. Email him at jack@thesiuslawnews.com.



JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw School District hired three new bus drivers: James Neider, bus No. 3, Twin Lakes route; Joan Leschot, bus No. 9, U.S. Coast Guard route; and Ron Rommel, bus No. 18, Special Education route 19.

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Sea lion from 1A

Twenty area artists will be a huge part of the project that consists of 20 7.5-foot fiberglass sea lions.

Sponsorships are now available for the project. Sponsoring a sea lion will cost \$1,500. The FEC is looking for a total of 20 sponsors to fund the sea lions, though other sponsorship options are also available.

Currently, two businesses are "Stellar Underwriters" for the project: Sea Lion Caves and Three Rivers Casino Resort.

That leaves just 18 statue sponsorships available, and the FEC, Banner Bank and Oregon Pacific Bank already turned in forms.

"I keep going back to our original theme, that the arts have a ripple effect on the community. Art reaches out to all ages, and this project will reach out to all ages too," Connor said.

The FEC recently agreed to a design for the sea lion, nicknamed "Porter."

"It's a cow sea lion," Connor explained. "She's been modeled after a sea lion that's actually in the water."

An earlier design featured a sea lion in more of a lounging, stationary position. Porter now looks active, and depending on which base the fiberglass figure occupies, can look like she is doing several motions.

The Dancing with Sea Lions committee based the more active design on the logo, initially created by Karylynn Keppol, of Florence, who is now a senior at The Art Institute of Portland.

Keppol's sea lion design is also featured on Dancing with Sea Lions geocache coins, created by Cheryl Pincock.

The coins will be awarded to geocache enthusiasts who can get codes for visiting the various sea lions on display.

Connor said the project will really kick off Sunday, Nov. 1, when the call to artists goes out. Soon, artists will be able to pick up a packet detailing dates and

design requirements.

"We just received a grant from Spirit Mountain Community Fund to provide stipends for the artists," Connor said.

The \$500 stipend is for artists who are selected and who complete the project.

"In the beginning, they will get \$250 up front so that they can get their supplies and start the project. When the sea lion is completed, they'll get another \$250. We hope that's an incentive to bring in the artists, and that will get a lot of ideas going," she said.

A line-art drawing will be available for artists to compose their color sketch, where they will also need to list design elements and materials.

All artist applications will be due by the afternoon of Friday, Dec. 4.

"I hope that our local artists really jump in and get excited about this. It's an opportunity for them to be recognized," Connor said.

She added that the Florence Public Arts Committee is help-

ing set standards, so certain designs will not be allowed.

Selected artists will know by the end of December. They will receive their statues in early January and finish work in March, before the April 7 and 8 Dancing with Sea Lions Splash Off, when all 20 unique sea lions will be on display at the FEC.

Connor said, "I foresee that some of these sea lions will be in the area for years."

While they are on display, a map will detail each of the 20 locations, starting at the Umpqua Discovery Center in Reedsport, stretching through Florence to the Sea Lion Caves on Highway 101 and up toward the Sea Lion Foundation in Newport.

Many of the sea lions will be available for auction in October 2016.

For more information about the project, visit www.facebook.com/DancingWithSeaLions.

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

Mapleton from 1A

"Under a desk might work in an earthquake situation, but it's not going to help at all if there's an intruder or active threat," Hoberg said.

Instead, Hoberg advised students on ALICE: Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Escape.

"You come up with a plan. You're doing something, instead of just sitting there. 'Let's do something' is basically all ALICE is. Basically, we want you to have a choice," he said.

For older students, this can mean barricading the door and distracting an intruder by throwing things, but most importantly, escaping.

Hoberg said, "ALICE isn't about training you to be ninjas, or something like that."

It's giving students, faculty, staff and community members methods to stay safe and leave harm behind.

"We want your parents and the community to know what we're doing to keep kids safe," O'Mara said. "It's important you share it with them, so they know what you are doing in case of an active threat."

She said that Mapleton students will receive a letter about the training to take home.

"We want you to learn this all the way up," Hoberg said. "It's not just going to help you in school. ... It's something to prepare you for life afterwards, not just school."

Businesses, hospitals, even camps are learning ALICE methods.

"The response is the same. ALICE fits the whole way. ... We can adjust it to make it work everywhere," he said.

The school district will be adding active threat drills to its monthly routine of fire and earthquake drills.

"I can't even tell you the last time that somebody in a school has died from a fire, because we do fire drills. Everyone knows to get out. That's the goal of this, to give you practice," O'Mara said.

"Giving you the power instead of just sitting under the desk and locking the door.

"Ultimately, once we're in a situation, and I hope we never are — I pray we never are — we want you guys prepared."

Hoberg and O'Mara presented additional safety measures that Mapleton will be including in the future.

The important thing, they repeated, was that students should aim to escape.

"The natural response for humans is fight or flight," Hoberg said. "We're just going back to our natural fight-or-flight response and giving an option to either take off or defend yourself, and not make yourself a target."

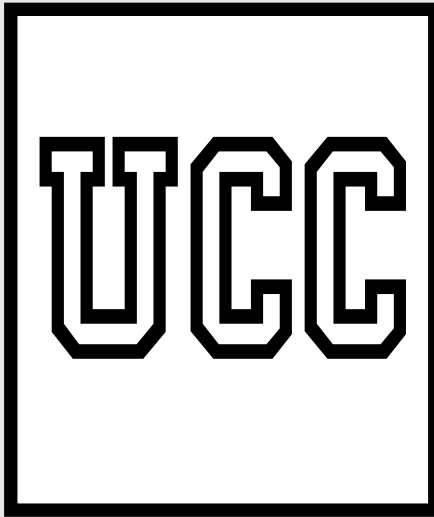
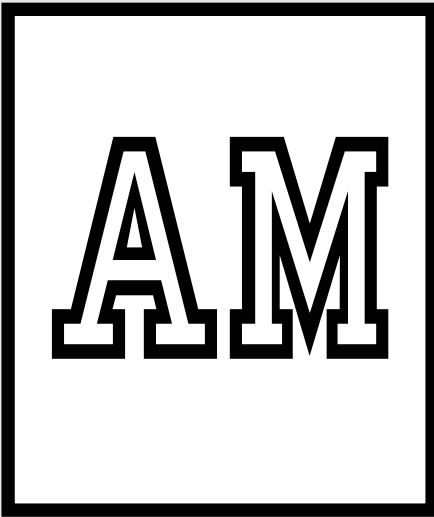
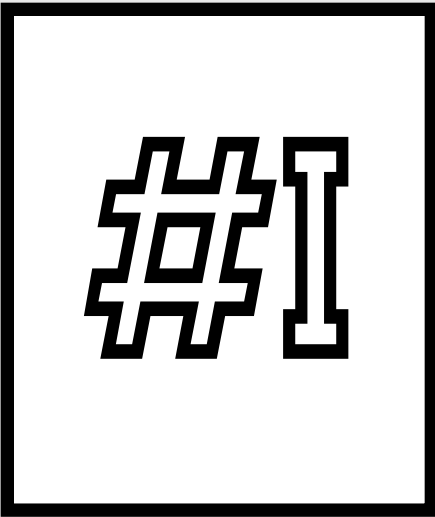
Students will still be expected to listen to authorities, such as teachers and law enforcement.

For more information on active threat situations, visit www.alicetraining.com.

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WORD ON THE STREET

Florence supports Umpqua Community College



We stand in solidarity with the students, faculty and staff at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg. Show your support by participating in a social media campaign using #IamUCC along with messages and photos of the hashtag. —Siuslaw News Staff

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