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INSIDE — A3



Siuslaw News

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MAPLETON SCHOOLS CONSIDER STATE GRANT OPPORTUNITY

District seeks community input for first bond measure in more than 50 years

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

A newly passed state Senate Bill may allow the Mapleton School District to take advantage of a 2-1 matching fund grant offered through the Oregon Department of Education to pay for long overdue facility maintenance and upgrades.

“Senate Bill 447 passed in 2015 — the Oregon State Capital Improvement Matching Funds program,” district Business Manager Maria McEldowney said. “It was created to help school districts like Mapleton that have a small tax base. It combines state dollars with local dollars. That is why

we are going for the bond.” According to district Superintendent Jodi O’Mara, the district could be eligible for up to \$4 million in state grant funds. But in order to take advantage of the grant, the district must have voters approve a bond measure to cover one-third of the cost, up

to \$2 million. That would give the school district up to \$6 million for badly needed improvements. “We are looking primarily at facility upgrades, from windows and doors to actual structural integrity inside some of the classrooms,” O’Mara said. “We are looking at it dis-

trictwide, including our high school and grade school buildings as well as our shop.” The last time the Mapleton School District passed a bond measure was more than 50 years ago when the school complex was built.

See **GRANT 7A**

Siuslaw Fire ‘beefs up’ security at stations

Increased measures come after November burglary at Canary Road Station

By CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) held a board meeting Dec. 16 to discuss regular business items in addition to a monthly report from Fire Chief Jim Langborg, who gave an update on a burglary that happened at the Canary Road Station in November. “We received the insurance payment for the robbery at Station No. 5, and we’ve been replacing the equipment. At the same time, we’re also looking at security systems for our outlying stations,” he said. SVFR staff applied for a Special Districts Association of Oregon Safety Grant to help pay for security improvements. “We’re looking at a couple things with the security,” Langborg said. SVFR Operations Division Chief Marvin Tipler said the department is looking at commercial grade security systems, alarms, security cameras and personalized door codes.

See **FIRE 7A**

City manager ‘outstanding,’ says council

Annual review approves evaluation of Erin Reynolds

By CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Florence City Council met in an executive session Dec. 14 to review City Manager Erin Reynolds’ performance after almost a year in the position. In the regular session held after the executive session, Florence Mayor Joe Henry said, “The city council met to consider approval of the annual evaluation of our city manager Erin Reynolds and consider salary adjustments beginning Jan. 1, 2016.” According to the staff report, Reynolds’ preliminary salary was set to \$105,000 with the allowance for cost of living increases. The council approved a 4 percent salary increase.

See **CITY 7A**

REUNIFICATION DRILL



PHOTOS BY JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

Parents fill out identification forms from Siuslaw Elementary School staff so they can be matched up with their children.

KNOW THE DRILL

Elementary students, parents and school staff practice working together to create order out of chaos

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

The crisis has passed, but the school is without electricity, computers and possibly phone lines. How does Siuslaw Elementary School staff safely and efficiently reunite more than 600 students with family or guardians? That was the purpose of the reunification drill held at the elementary school after classes ended Dec. 4.

More than 50 students and their parents or guardians volunteered to be part of the real-time drill that also involved school staff and representatives from the Florence Police Department and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue. “We were operating under the premise that the immediate danger is over and we have the students gathered in one place,” elementary Principal Mike Harklerode



Siuslaw Elementary School library assistant Julia Craig verifies paperwork for parent Melissa Bauer as part of the reunification drill held at the elementary school Dec. 4.

explained. “The danger could be school violence, an earthquake or anything that would make going through the school building unsafe.” All students were assembled outside, away from the location set up for parents. “The other premise,” Harklerode said, “is to make sure the parents are separated from the students by line of sight. We do that to try and keep the angry concerns of parents

separate from the unification process.” Parents were instructed to fill out a brief two-part form. “We are assuming at the time that we have no electricity, no computers and our normal ways of retrieving students are out of commission. So we need to go with a paper-based process,” Harklerode said. The identity of each person picking up a child or children was confirmed and noted by school staff. “In one of four binders we have the entire student body divided into profile pages, so

See **DRILL 7A**