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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

FIRE, AMBULANCE DISTRICTS LOOK INTO COMBINING ADMINISTRATIONS

Staff to research process that could increase efficiency within both departments

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) and Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD) are looking at ways to increase effectiveness and efficiency, and that might mean combining administrative serv-

ices. WLAD's board of directors gave Interim Executive Director Brian Burright direction to meet with Fire Chief Jim Langborg about the possibility.

The SVFR board of directors approved the beginning of the research process at its board meeting on Feb. 17.

According to WLAD Board President Mike Webb, the decision to look into sharing administrative services came out of the district's January strategic plan meetings.

Webb and Burright attended the SVFR board of directors' meeting to discuss the possibilities.

"The concept we're working with at this point is establishing a common administration and oversight, but still maintaining some separation between the entities. ... This might be a step in the

direction to get us into some kind of mutual arrangement that would be complementary and beneficial, as well as beneficial to taxpayers," Webb said.

Under the potential Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the two districts, administrative services already provided by finance and human resources manager Julie Brown would expand to include director's oversight by Langborg.

SVFR and WLAD currently have an IGA that allows Brown to work

for both districts.

"Under the new agreement, these districts would still be separate operationally," Langborg said.

Both districts would retain their own uniforms, equipment, vehicles and spaces.

Langborg and Burright both stressed that they plan to "look into" sharing services, and that nothing was set in stone.

See ADMIN 9A

Regional 10-year vision plan underway

Action team receives Florence, Mapleton input for area's future

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

What will the Siuslaw region look like in 10 years? That was the question posed to Mapleton- and Florence-area residents during two forums in January by the Siuslaw Regional Visioning (SRV) action team.

The Siuslaw region is defined as the area served by the Mapleton and Siuslaw school districts. The area includes Florence and Dunes City as well as the upriver communities of Mapleton, Deadwood and Swisshome.

As part of the meeting, an open house period allowed participants to hear from vision team members located at six stations. The six stations were education, natural resources/environment/outdoors, government/infrastructure, health and human services, arts and culture, and business and economy. The list of goals at each station came from input received during SRV focus group sessions held last November and December throughout the region.

Following the open house, SRV facilitator Jane Barth gave an overview presentation of the project. Participants then broke up into table discussion groups to further explore goals and ideas.

Input from both meetings will be compiled by the action team and be presented as a vision statement presentation Wednesday, March 16, at the Florence Events Center.

"Pursuing a vision for the region emerged from a program called Pathways, which was offered to the Florence area by the Ford Family Foundation," said SRV action team co-chairwoman Becky Goehring. "That program was chosen because it included a community survey and the action team felt that the survey would bring in a lot of great data about what people were thinking and feeling about the area."

The survey was conducted online September through October 2014. Almost 650 people completed the survey.

The SRV project was adopted by the City of Florence, which, along with Siuslaw Public Library, Florence Rotary and the Ford Family Foundation, donated money to support the program.

See VISION 9A

BARBERSHOP TRIO



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

Camp Florence youth bring haircutting skills to Helping Hands Coalition

Salvador, Austin and Shawnell (above) from Camp Florence donated their barber skills Feb. 15 at Helping Hands Coalition. At left, Austin cuts a woman's hair using his own tools.



Camp Florence, an Oregon Youth Authority transitional facility on South Jetty Road, teaches youth offenders

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

important skills and life lessons. Shawnell, Salvador and Austin, who trained as barbers at the facility, brought some of those lessons to light by cutting hair at Helping Hands Coalition last week.

See BARBER 9A

Water-shuttle service continues for Mercer Lake tank

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Heceta Water People's Utility District and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue renewed their Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Wednesday during the fire board's regular meeting. The IGA allows the fire district to provide Heceta Water with water-shuttle service.

The two districts first formed the IGA in January after the water district called a Level 4 emergency water cur-

tailment when a landslide in December reduced its capacity to fill the Mercer Lake tank.

Since then, the fire department has used one of its water tenders to deliver water to the PUD's supply tank on View Road, north of Florence.

"We're still filling the tank and still plugging along," said Fire Chief Jim Langborg, adding that the tender can fit in about 10 trips a day.

According to Heceta Water PUD Manager Carl Neville, the water cur-

tailment when a landslide in December reduced its capacity to fill the Mercer Lake tank.

"When we started this, the PUD's hope was that this would be a little quicker than it's turning out to be. We built that into the IGA extension," Langborg said.

The original goal was 90 days, but permit delays prevented Heceta Water from breaking ground on a new supply line to the tank.

"The fire department is doing a wonderful job for us. We are very

thankful," Neville said. "... Everybody in the area has been wonderful in meeting the requirements of the curtailment."

The updated IGA allows the fire department to switch between its two water tenders and continue to provide service, as well as use the tenders for their intended purpose during fires.

The districts check each load of water before it is pumped into the tank to ensure it meets all health requirements. Residents may call the PUD at 541-997-2446 for more information.