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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Town hall to discuss fire protection assessment

700 Florence properties reassessed as forestland after state error

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) announced that 700 properties in the Florence area were reassessed as forestland, which changes the tax lot designations of the properties. An upcoming town hall meeting on Monday, March 28, will discuss fire protection assessments.

According to ODF, Oregon Sen. Arnie Roblan, District 5, will attend the town hall meeting, which is set for 6 p.m. at Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue's main station, at 2625 Highway 101.

"When we got information from local residents with regard to the issue, we decided to set up this town hall," Roblan said.

Rep. Caddy McKeown, District 9, and West Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich may also attend.

At the meeting, ODF's Western Lane District will give information on fire protection assessments for wildfire protection. ODF will explain the assessment process to attendees and answer questions.

Many landowners in western Lane County received a letter from ODF in late February stating that a recent audit "found that many lands formerly paying forest patrol are now not paying."

ODF referred to the issue as an error, and said that it may have resulted when larger tax lots divided into several smaller ones.

In reviewing the existing Forest Patrol Assessments in the area around Florence, ODF determined that 700 additional lots meet the definition of forestland for the purpose of wildfire protection.

The last review of the area was conducted more than a decade ago.

"The ODF is responsible for providing wildfire protection. All rural properties pay this fee," Roblan said. "I think it just came as a shocker that people who hadn't paid it will need to."

See **MEETING 7A**

POWERFUL POWWOW



PHOTOS BY JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

More than 500 people attended the 23rd annual Siuslaw Indian Education Program Powwow Saturday, March 19, at Siuslaw Middle School. Families came from as far away as Montana, Arizona, Colorado and Wyoming to attend the event, the largest of its kind in Oregon. "We're very fortunate to have this historic celebration in our town," said Florence City Councilor Joshua Greene at the council meeting on Monday. He said there were about 133 youth participants.



Heceta Water awards bid for new pipeline

Unstable land after landslide necessitates moving pipe from Chapman Road

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Heceta Water People's Utility District Board of Directors voted to award a bid for the construction of a new pipeline on Collard Lake Road, instead of the pipe's former location on Chapman Road, after engineer reports advised against unstable land.

Eighteen people, including four members of the five-member board of directors, district staff and members of the public, attended the March 15 meeting.

A large section of the PUD's main fill line for the Mercer Lake tank ran along Chapman Road until Dec. 18, when a landslide originated at the road and flowed onto Mercer Lake

Road near Santa Road. One woman died in the slide.

After the landslide, the district shut the line and began reviewing alternate ways to bring water to a neighborhood consisting of View Road, View Cul-de-sac, Ocean Way, Collard Lake Road, Collard Lake Loop and Collard Lake Way. A water curtailment will continue for 90 customers in the area for about



FILE PHOTO

Engineers have determined that the area on Chapman Road, where a landslide originated Dec. 18, is unstable for Heceta Water PUD's current pipeline. The district plans to build a new line on Collard Lake Road.

two more months.

Heceta Water created an Intergovernmental Agreement with Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue to coordinate a water truck to deliver water to the reservoir in the area. The current contract will end May 29.

In the meantime, Engineer Aaron Speakman from Dyer Partnership in Coos Bay advised the district's board to

seek a permanent alternative to the Chapman Road Line. PUD District Manager Carl Neville and the engineer then looked into installing a new line on Collard Lake Road.

At the board meeting on March 15, Speakman presented three bids for the project. The lowest bid, at \$597,900, was under the project's estimate, but did not include working

with Central Lincoln PUD to provide power to the site.

"Costs came in really low, at some of the lowest costs we've seen in six to eight years," Speakman said. "Knife River Materials was the lowest bid contractor. ... They've been very successful on projects and given great results."

See **HECETA 7A**

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