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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

ELECTION 2016

Local schools, county seek bond support

Multi-million-dollar bond measures to be decided for Mapleton, Siuslaw schools

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw and Mapleton school districts are seeking voter approval on two separate bond measures on the May 17 ballot.

Siuslaw is requesting \$36.9 million to build a new high school to replace the current facility that was built in 1970 and fails to meet current safety and security standards.

Mapleton is asking voters to approve a \$4 million bond to make overdue repairs and updates to both the elementary and high school buildings.

Both districts received a matching grant for an additional \$4 million in funds from the state if their respective bond measures pass.

In addition, Mapleton is eligible for up to \$1.5 million in seismic upgrade funds for both the elementary and high schools, for a

total of \$3 million.

According to Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O'Mara, the 25-year bond length is comparable to other Lane County school districts. The upgrades and repairs proposed by the district, like new roofing, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, septic systems and building exterior upgrades would have a 40-year life expectancy.

A flier sent out to Mapleton district residents said the bond rate would be \$1.59 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. That would mean a home valued for tax purposes at \$100,000 would have

an assessed annual tax of \$159, or \$13.25 per month.

The matching state funds and the seismic improvement funds would not be a part of the assessment.

O'Mara said, "The last Mapleton School District bond expired in 1961. We have not had an active bond or levy for the schools since."

According to the Siuslaw School District, the high school facility does not meet current seismic, energy, fire safety and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance codes.

See **SCHOOLS 6A**

Lane County Measure 20-239 would help fund 4-H and other rural extension programs

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Lane County voters in the May 17 Primary Election are being asked to decide on Measure 20-239, which seeks funding for programs and services provided to county residents by Oregon State University Extension Services.

According to the explanatory statement, the five-year measure would authorize Lane County to levy a local option tax to help support the Extension Services' programs.

See **COUNTY 6A**

APRIL FLOWERS



CHANTELLE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



Downtown Revitalization Team (from left) Chairman David Wiegand and members Susy Lacer, Ellen Huntingdon, Sharon Stiles and Harlan Springer and Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bettina Hannigan stand under new flower baskets installed in Old Town by Florence Public Works Thursday. The baskets are part of the nine-member team's goal to unify and revitalize the downtown area as the primary cultural, tourist, commercial and community core. "These are really awesome, but they are going to get bigger and better," Springer said. DRT hopes to accomplish more projects in the future.

Library approves strategic plan

5-year process focuses on outreach, learning and community

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw Public Library concluded its strategic planning process this week with final approval by the board of directors on Wednesday. With an aim for more community involvement, the library developed a survey and invited people to attend a full day of planning.

Board President Jane Yecny said the board unanimously approved the plan.

"We're really excited about the plan and its implementation over the next five years," she said.

Library Director Meg Spencer used a \$5,000 technical assistance grant from the Ford Family Foundation and money from the library's budget to hire consultant Penny Hummel. The Friends of the Siuslaw Public Library also contributed to the strategic plan process.

Hummel met with the board and staff first.

"We held a planning session and talked about our own dreams and plans," Spencer said.

Then, Hummel directed her focus on the community. More than 300 people filled out the online survey, and of the more than 50 people who attended the full-day meeting, 40 were community members.

"We determined what they love best about the library, what they thought could be improved and what new services they would like us to offer. It was a very thorough process," said Susy Lacer, vice president of the board of directors.

"From that we got a really great document," Spencer said.

Out of the process, three main goals surfaced for 2016 to 2021: providing lifelong learning and enrichment, turning the library into a community center and offering more outreach and engagement.

See **LIBRARY 6A**