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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Ambulance, fire districts to share leadership

Both boards of directors view intergovernmental agreement as 'win-win'

By CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

At their June meetings, the boards of directors of Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and Western Lane Ambulance District signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) for shared administrative services. Fire Chief Jim Langborg will be the head of operations for both agencies starting Friday, July 1.

The signed IGA is a policy decision by both boards to share and combine administrative services "in an effort to improve organizational efficiencies and save taxpayer money."

"What we do today affects tomorrow. If we do this right, this could really have some long-term positive implications for our community and the services we provide," Langborg said.

Western Lane Board President Mike Webb said, "I see it as a win-win. It looks to me to be a very good starting point from which we can begin to build this kind of relationship."

Western Lane first considered sharing administration services while it drafted its 2016 strategic plan. In February, Interim Executive Director Brian Burrigh and Webb approached Siuslaw Valley about the possibility of an IGA.

"This is a request that Western Lane made to allow us the consideration and explore our option to fill a vacancy in our executive director position," Burrigh said.

After meetings to gauge interest, Siuslaw Valley agreed to pursue the IGA.

The planning process entailed three meetings in May and June and participation by 15 representatives of the community and board members, administration and employees of Western Lane and Siuslaw Valley.

Webb said, "The process has been painstakingly slow — with a purpose. We started out with a broad overview, narrowed it down and addressed every concern that was brought up."

The IGA details the administrator's role over both districts, timelines for the implementation plan, a chain of command and the creation of an administrative advisory committee. Both boards will oversee the administrator.

Siuslaw Valley Board President John Scott said, "It's a win-win for both sides. We have a legally reviewed agreement that

See IGA 7A

SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM MOBILE DELIVERY



PHOTOS BY JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw School District cafeteria staff members Vicki Prociw, Diane Larson and Scarlet Craspay hand out free lunches to youth June 23 as part of the district's mobile van lunch program.

School district offers free lunches for youth

A maroon van pulls up, the back doors open and free lunches are handed out to anyone 18 and younger. No questions asked.

Under the supervision of Siuslaw School District Food Services Manager Dave Bitner, this new mobile lunch program runs Monday through Friday this summer for local youth.

Food for Lane County ran the program for years, according to Bitner, but because they are located in Eugene, managing the Florence program became problematic and the program's manager asked Bitner and the school district to take over.

"It sounds daunting," Bitner said, "but in reality, it is just a continuation of what we have done all year."

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

See LUNCH 7A



Food Services Manager Dave Bitner prepares fruit for lunch meals.

Starting up and taking off

RAIN programs focus on new ventures, attracting customers

By CHANTELLE MEYER
Siuslaw News

City of Florence and Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN) held their ninth meeting in the Florence area at Ocean Dunes Golf Links on June 1. The Founders Fireside Chat featured three success stories by Lane County-based start-ups.

Local entrepreneur Carl Hulan, founder of mobile-device app Lofoodal.com, introduced the meeting and RAIN's venture catalyst, Caroline Cummings.

"The purpose of RAIN is to spur economic growth, especially in the traded sector of the economy," Hulan said.

He has been working closely with Cummings and RAIN's resources to further grow his app that connects local farmers to consumers.

Cummings said, "If you have a big idea, we can work with you. I connect you to mentors, capital, space and anyone you need to help you get your business going faster than you would doing it alone."

RAIN offers periodic Accelerator programs with 12 weeks of mentorship, small cohorts and specialized training to help start-ups define their audience, refine their products and take off into the business world.

RAIN and the City of Florence are working with partners Lane Community College, Small Business Development Center and Florence Area Chamber of Commerce to bring a pre-Accelerator to the coast.

Cummings is working on getting grant money from the Ford Family Foundation, but promised to bring "some sort of program to help" even if it isn't RAIN's usual 12-week course.

The June 1 meeting's three speakers — Derek Schloss, Katie Brown and Todd Edman — spoke about their early start-ups, current projects and how RAIN helped them reach "the next level" in growth.

See RAIN 7A

SCHOOL ART PROGRAM MOVES FORWARD, ENLISTS ARTISTS

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Seven local artists signed up for the Arts in Schools project after meeting with Lane Arts Council (LAC) representative Laren Suveges and Siuslaw elementary and middle school principals June 30 to learn about the council's program at the Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) art center.

LAC has operated the Arts in Schools program since 1978. Suveges said it is the organization's longest running program and is designed to supplement district art studies curriculum. Because of the distance between the council's headquarters in Eugene and the Siuslaw School District, it is the only Lane County school district not participating in the program.

Suveges, elementary school Principal

Mike Harklerode, middle school Principal Andy Grzeskowiak and FRAA President Harlen Springer hope to change that with the help of local artists.

The program helps train artists to teach their area of artistic expertise to students in various grade levels.

"We explained the program to them in detail," Springer said. "We also had the two principals share their interest and support for the program. Overall,

the artists were very enthusiastic about the program and the idea of participating in it."

The seven artists that signed up for the initial meeting are Melanie Heard of Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW), Carol Clark who works in oils, watercolors and pastels; John Leasure, oils and acrylic; Catherine Deuter, oils, graphite and colored pencils; Jane Connelley, col-

ored pencil, watercolors, sculpture and mosaic tiles; Rosie Hill, zentangle; and Jo Beaudreau, photography, mixed media and art basics.

"By the end of July these artists will be contacted again to go through a vetting process to ensure that what they teach and how they teach it is appropriate for a school setting," Springer said.

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