

Fourth from 1A

Fire Marshal Sean Barrett said, "We received the normal ATV calls for a holiday weekend." This included aiding a hiker with an emergency on Hobbit Trail, north of Florence off Highway 101.

Barrett also said the fire department put out several fires from illegal or improperly used fireworks in the Florence area.

"We usually get one call like that a year," he said.

Starting on June 28, the department received a call about legal fireworks set off in a driveway that ignited nearby grass. Other incidents through the weekend involved fireworks too close to dry grass and brush.

"One fire moved towards the new, nice Sandpines West

subdivision. It could have been bad, but we got there in time," Barrett said.

Five fires began in the brush — most likely from fireworks — on South Jetty Road on July 4, before Siuslaw Valley assisted with the Port of Siuslaw and Florence Area Chamber of Commerce's annual fireworks display in Old Town Florence.

"Be careful where you use fireworks and keep a bucket and water on hand," Barrett said. "Be aware of your surroundings and make sure nothing gets out of control."

Siuslaw Valley firefighters got the chance to enjoy the holiday weekend by participating in Wings and Wheels Fly-In and Car Show on Saturday at the Florence Municipal Airport.

"They enjoy getting to do that," Barrett said.

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More photos from the area's 4th of July weekend events



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Chamber from 1A

The chamber has been the City of Florence's tourism and marketing coordinators for the past two years. Its mission is to "champion the future of the greater Florence community as an innovative leader in economic vitality and active lifestyle."

As such, it focuses on marketing and tourism, economic development, annual and seasonal events and member services.

Chamber Executive Director Bettina Hannigan said, "Our vision for Florence is a place to live, grow and raise our families and enjoy our golden — or, as my mother-in-law says, rusty — years. This is what we at the chamber call our leadership purpose."

One way the chamber is "making the circle bigger" is by collaborating with the Florence Events Center, Port of Siuslaw and the City of Florence to extend the influence of the region.

The Marketing Team, led by Chairwoman Cindy Wobbe, also brings together key members.

"We get all the partners at the same time to discuss how we can collaborate and leverage our marketing dollars, for we all have a limited pot to work with," Wobbe said. "It's

really energizing to get different people in the same room who are excited about our community and what we have to offer, and taking it to the outside world."

Using the slogan "Too Much to Do in Just One Day," the chamber has worked with the Transient Room Tax "to fuel our outreach to tourists, as tourism funds funnel into our overall economy," the report said.

Wobbe also showed the economic impact of several of the chamber's biggest events.

"Visitor spending at chamber events is \$2.3 million," she said. "It's important to see the impact those three days of the Rhododendron Festival have on our community, bringing in \$2,109,079. That's directly injected into our local economy. It's our signature event."

Old Town promotional events, such as Monday's Fourth of July Fireworks and Pie and Melon Eating Contests, the Chowder Fest and Wine Walk, Florence Holiday Festival and Florence First Friday, bring in \$15,000.

This past weekend was the chamber's Independence Day Festival, bringing in a projected \$56,000 in visitor spending, and the Wings and Wheels Fly-In and Car Show on Saturday, a collaboration with the Lions Club, bringing in \$70,000.

"It's important to put a dollar value on why we market our community to the outside world, and what that repre-

sents to shop owners, businesses and employment," Wobbe said.

To better target the outside market, the chamber has shifted focus to online marketing and social media.

Robbie Wright, owner of Siuslaw Broadband, is on the chamber's Technology Committee.

"One of the biggest things we did was migrate the site to a very mobile-friendly website. It was really critical for us to do, especially before Rhody Days," he said.

Now, florencechamber.com is more navigable for smartphones, tablets and people on the go.

"Our website is our single most important marketing tool," Wobbe said. "From there, traffic distributes into areas of interest."

Easily shareable content — vital for users of Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites — and the instant success of local resident Deborah Heldt Cordone's video of orcas on the Siuslaw River helped bring the chamber into a new realm of visibility.

Wobbe said, "We're getting noticed all over the place. It's the power of social media. Influential people like bloggers, travel bloggers and people from Expedia have noticed us. We've received two awards this year due to the effect of social media."

Expedia ranked Florence one of "The 30 Most Beautiful

Towns in America" in April and The Oregonian named Florence "People's Choice" for best Oregon coast getaway earlier this year.

"The dollar amount effect is incalculable, and we're going to ride this Expedia wave for a long time," Wobbe said.

Many chamber members and others are now displaying the award icons on their marketing.

Councilor Joshua Greene said, "Congratulations on what you've done. I'm so excited for the focus and refocus that's happened with social media. It really is the way we operate today."

Wright said, "We're making sure our online presence is doing everything we need for us and we're pushing it forward."

"It's working," Wobbe said. "This year will be even more exciting. We think we're your marketing solution for the City of Florence and we think we're rocking it out of the park. I hope you do too."

The councilors thanked the chamber members for the presentation.

"You have a great team in place," said Mayor Joe Henry.

"Stable economic development, tourism, education and community all play a signature part of the chamber's overall focus," Hannigan said. "We can all agree that we want to see a city that brings opportunities for our families and our children."

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Classes and Workshops

How to Place Glass/Shiny Objects into Watercolor Paintings with Barbara Moore
Learn the technique to make vases/bowls in your watercolors look realistic. July 25th and 26th 9 am - 4 pm and July 27th, 9 am - 12:30 pm \$140/member, \$155/non-member Pre-registration at FRAA required 10 days prior to class start. Contact Polly 918-453-3244 or Barbara 918-869-8718 for questions Material list available at FRAA

Whimsical Hand Building Ceramics with Alissa Clark
Every Wednesday, 3 - 5 pm Per weekly session: \$10/member, \$15/non-FRAA member, Clay/Firing extra No experience required. Class held at Alissa's Studio at 180 Laurel Street. Register at FRAA or with Alissa. Contact Alissa for questions: 503-957-5222

Ceramics for Kids with Ben Calhoun and Alissa Clark
Thursdays, 4-5 pm starting July 14th Fees and location same as class above. No experience required. Will ship at cost.

Spoken Word Poetry Class for Teens with Noah Schultz and Stephen Fowler
Teens will be guided through writing their own poems and performing them. At the end, there will be a Teen Spoken Word Poetry Slam for them to perform their work. Free to all. Mondays, Jul 11 - Aug 29, 3 - 5 pm For questions call Bettie Egerton, 503-910-3625

Creative Writing Workshops - Writers on the River with Catherine Rourke
Upcoming classes: July 16th, August 20th 9 am - 11 am \$20/member, \$25/non-FRAA member To register, call 541-708-2120 or email CJReditor@gmail.com

Oil Painting with Michael Wood
Wednesdays 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm Contact: fmwood@msn.com for details, fees, and more information

Painting with John Leasure
Saturdays (July 2, 9, 23 and 30) Fridays (July 15) 9:00 - 12 noon Contact: jnleasure@hotmail.com or 541-991-2754 for details and fees.

For more information about classes, visit fraaoregon.org. To register for these classes, please call or visit FRAA at our art center on Maple Street.

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