

VFW AWARDS INDIVIDUALS FOR SERVICES TO REGION

Local agencies honored at July Florence City Council meeting

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Grimshaw Post 3232 Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) honored individuals from Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, Oregon State Police and Western Lane Ambulance District at the July 11 Florence City Council meeting.

Mayor Joe Henry opened the meeting and invited VFW Commander Paul Gargis to the front of the council chamber.

"Paul has a number of folks he'd like to recognize tonight," Henry said.

Gargis named Captain Elizabeth Iabichello, a volunteer with Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, Firefighter of the Year.

Fire Chief Jim Langborg and Fire Marshal Sean Barrett presented her with the award.

Langborg said, "Captain Liz is one of our big hitters in our fire district. She is constantly working — about 90 percent of her time is spent in public service."

He said Iabichello is a prime example for new firefighters and helps make the entire department better. She also works part-time at Western

Lane Ambulance and with the hospital.

"She does a wonderful job for us. When we had this opportunity to recognize her, we thought it was great," Langborg said. "Liz, thank you for everything you do."

Barrett said, "She's one of my best friends. She just dedicates her life. It's incredible, and she cares. She really loves doing it."

Gargis gave her the award "for firefighter leadership and on behalf of a grateful community and the VFW of Florence."

Gargis then welcomed Oregon State Police Sgt. Chris Ashenfelter to the front to present the Law Enforcement Award to Todd Cutsforth, a fish and wildlife trooper for the Florence area.

Ashenfelter said Cutsforth has been the state police's primary patrol in western Lane County.

"Todd covers all the crashes, goes to the domestic disturbances that are out in the county and backs up the city in some instances — he's doing a lot of things that are really above and beyond what his job calls for," Ashenfelter said. "He's performing those jobs and going

PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



Elizabeth Iabichello (right), SVFR Firefighter of the Year



Todd Cutsforth (right), OSP Law Enforcement Officer of the Year



Darrek Mullins (right), WLAD EMT of the year

out of his way to make sure the citizens of Florence and western Lane County are taken care of."

Gargis presented Cutsforth with a plaque of recognition and thanked him for his service.

The VFW's final award went to Western Lane Ambulance District's Darrek Mullins for the Emergency Medical Technician of the Year.

Western Lane's emergency medicine specialist, Matthew Danigelis, said he has worked with Mullins since 2003.

"Darrek wears many hats," Danigelis said. "He has dedicated an extraordinary amount of his time to public service, whether that's being part of his drum and bugle corps, being on

the Lane County medical board, volunteering for Camp Agapé or donating time at the Eugene Mission, Darrek is very dedicated to the community."

Mullins also participates in the South Willamette Valley Honor Flight for veterans.

"He's very privileged to receive this award and we're honored to have him work with us," Danigelis said.

Gargis shook Mullins' hand and thanked him for his service to veterans and the community.

At the end of the presentation, Henry congratulated Iabichello, Cutsforth and Mullins.

"On behalf of the city, I'd also like to say thank you to the

VFW, Paul and your volunteers you do for the community," Henry said.

CROW seeks artists

Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) is seeking artists to paint and decorate 16-inch wooden crows that will adorn the walls of the new CROW Center for the Performing Arts, 3120 Highway 101 in Florence.

Finished crows will be sold or auctioned at CROW's Grand Opening Celebration in September. Money raised will be utilized for finalizing build-

ing renovations and providing arts programs for local youth.

Artists are asked to be creative and have fun. Crows must be completed and returned by Wednesday, Aug. 31.

Anyone interested in painting or decorating a crow can contact CROW Artistic Director Melanie Heard at crowtheatrekids@yahoo.com or go to www.crowkids.com.

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College from 1A

Stiles added, "And we are not getting what we need from the state."

She said LCC Florence Center is doing very well and had praise for the center's Interim Director Russ Pierson.

"Russ is doing a very good job," she said. "He is very caring and his staff loves him."

She added that if people wanted to help LCC, they should talk to their state representatives about better funding for community colleges.

Districts from 1A

Langborg added, "One benefit for us is by having a slight increase in calls, it gives us the opportunity to have more firefighters experience more calls. As you know, the more experience they have, the more efficient they can be."

Siuslaw Valley's board gave Langborg the direction to proceed at its meeting on July 20. Mapleton Rural Fire District's board is expected to approve the agreement later this month.

Attorneys for both districts reviewed and approved the policy.

"Once Mapleton's board directs their chief to sign it, you can expect an implementation period where we can train our folks together with our dispatch center ... to make sure we are tapped out at the appropriate time," Langborg said.

The automatic aid agreement should be fully functional in December and January.

"My philosophy is, if people need help, we want to be there," Langborg said.

"When you need help, you need it quick, and we always want to make it a priority to serve and protect our district."

DISTRACTED DRIVING | OTHER DISTRACTIONS

COMING UP ON WEDNESDAY JULY 27: DISTRACTED DRIVING | IT CAN WAIT

Phone Conversations

Sometimes, the statistics say it all. According to a AAA study, drivers talking on cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a vehicle crash than drivers who are not distracted.

A University of Utah study showed that talking on a cell phone has a greater effect on reaction time than having a blood alcohol level of the legal limit of .08.

But why is talking on your phone while driving such a dangerous activity? The answer is a complicated one comprised of issues both psychological and physical.

THE DANGERS

Two types of cell phone behavior typically lead to unsafe driving conditions, and it may surprise you which one can have a greater impact on your driving.

These classifications of cell phone usage are:

- Handling the phone, which includes dialing, answering, text messaging and using it for GPS navigation. If your hands are on your phone, it means they aren't on the wheel.
- Conversations, which can be just as dangerous, as studies have shown your mental commitment to a phone call is demanding, even if you may not realize it.

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The National Safety Council reports that in simu-



lated driving tests, drivers who were asked to carry on a cell phone conversation were so distracted that they went unaware of some traffic signals.

The study compared phone conversations to other related

activities such as listening to audio books and news radio, stating that these types of activities are less emotionally engaging, hence safer to do while driving.

The more emotionally engaged the subject, the

study found, the less attentive he or she was to safety signals.

Digging a little deeper, the results were unaffected by whether the subject manually held the phone or if the mechanism was hands free.

This means that even if you're following the law by using a hands-free device, you may still find yourself in a situation where you're unable to react quickly enough to a dangerous situation.

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