

WOAHINK INVITATIONAL

SPORTS — C



National Arts and Humanities Month

COMMUNITY — B



Siuslaw News

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FLORENCE, OREGON



MARCH FOR AWARENESS

PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS) held its annual Domestic Violence Awareness Walk Sunday in Historic Old Town Florence. Mayor Joe Henry and City Councilor Ron Preisler joined members of the Siuslaw High School band, football team and cheerleading squads and approximately 100 community members as they marched down Bay Street from the Veteran's Memorial Park (right) to the Port of Siuslaw boardwalk. SOS Director David Wiegand said the walk gets bigger every year, and that this year garnered attention from Old Town merchants and visitors as the participants marched. For more information on SOS, attend its Business After Hours on Thursday, Oct. 6, from 5 to 6 p.m., at its office at 1576 12th St., or go to FlorenceSOS.org.



Making the grade

Siuslaw superintendent evaluates recent school testing results

BY JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

The state of Oregon has completed the second year of a new school evaluation test program that replaced the Oregon Assessment, Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) test.

Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak discussed the recently released all-state test results during an interview on Sept. 28.

The new test protocols call for testing to be done at the third-through eighth-grades and again at 11th-grade.

The purpose of the testing is to track the class's likely graduation rate and to project senior graduation percentages — a statewide problem for Oregon schools.

The tests, which take up to three days for each subject, evaluate English language arts, mathematics and science.

"There is nothing I didn't really expect to see," Grzeskowiak said. "We have made moderate progress in most grade areas. There is a bit of a drop off in middle school, but then an immediate recovery back in high school."

In math and science, the 11th-grade class scored higher than the state average — significantly higher in science, with 75.8 percent to the state average of 59 percent — while, in English language arts, the Siuslaw 11th-grade class scored 64.4 percent, compared to the state average of 69 percent.

According to Grzeskowiak, the test percentages are based on a four-point scale. Three equals "meeting" and four equals "exceeding" graduation expectations at that grade level.

"Being at three or above means you are definitely on track to graduate," he said.

The new testing schedule can be daunting for elementary and middle school students.

"Our old OAKS test took two or three days to finish. Now we are having kids take up to 10 class periods in sixth grade just to finish the Language Arts test," Grzeskowiak said.

He added, "We have basically tripled our time in testing. Some kids get tired and just want to get done. Then they go into what we call 'happy clicker mode,' and just

New reporter joins Siuslaw News editorial team

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw News has announced the hiring of Mark Brennan as its new community reporter. Brennan began working on Monday.

Brennan's primary focus is to write stories and take photos that inform readers about community-based events, organizations and individuals who impact Florence and Mapleton, including the Siuslaw and Mapleton school districts, Dunes City Council, local clubs, community organizations and various community events.

Siuslaw News General Manager Jenna Bartlett said, "We're excited for Mark to become part of our team. He has strong ties to our area that will serve him well as the communi-

ty reporter."

Brennan, 58, has lived in Florence since 2010 with his partner Linda. He previously lived in Eugene and in New England.

His "first career," as he says, was in photography.

"I was originally a photographer and owned a photolab, Eugene Family Photo, but people stopped dropping off photo rolls with the digital revolution," Brennan said. "Once the digital paradigm occurred, I decided I needed to do something else. I followed my natural inclination and went back to the University of Oregon for journalism."

He earned a bachelor's of science in journalism and twice was named student of the year.

"I've always been really interested in journalism. From the time I was

quite young, I interned at my high school newspaper. I've done all sorts of things that are journalism related," Brennan said.

His photographs have won a number of awards over the years.

"I look forward to bringing a new perspective to the photography at the paper," he said.

Aside from photography, Brennan has an interest in film. He created "Welcome to Florence," a documentary film about the area.

"One of the first things I did when I came to the area was learn about the history of Florence at the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum," Brennan said.

As the museum's reference librarian, Brennan got a grant from the Lane County Historical Society to digitize records and photos. One of his projects was to find and repair



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Mark Brennan

vintage images of the area for the City of Florence's Siuslaw River

See **REPORTER 7A**

Florence Economic Development Committee details successes and highlights

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Florence City Council heard a presentation by the Florence Economic Development Committee during the council meeting on Monday night.

Committee chairman Mike Rose and members of the committee gave an overview of the committee's history and its current and future projects.

Economic Development focuses on two aspects: business retention and expansion and marketing and recruitment.

"We've got to go find new businesses that might want to relocate to our great community and work on how we

can expand businesses and bring in more family-wage jobs," Rose said. "We are in motion, as the mayor would say."

Mayor Joe Henry said, "In a nutshell, economic development is about jobs, skilled workers and housing."

He was appreciative that the Economic Development Committee was working so hard "behind the scenes" to create so many small successes.

Committee member Meg Spencer, who is also the director of Siuslaw Public Library District, said, "I was

very excited to work on business retention and expansion. A lot of time marketing and recruitment is seen as kind of sexy, but the vast majority of jobs within the community come from people who are already in that community."

With assistance from city staff, the committee conducted a survey about business needs through the city's business license renewal process.

Of the 134 respondents, Spencer said

17.5 percent of local businesses have plans to expand, 30 percent identified an insufficient qualified labor supply as a challenge and 40 percent asked for a follow-up from the committee.

Spencer said she talked with the respondents about Lane Community College's Small Business Development Center mixers and training, the South Coast Development Council's efforts to market Sandmaster Park in Japan and the Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN).

"Since RAIN started here almost a

year ago now, we've had 11 meetups and 142 entrepreneurs have been served," Spencer said.

She invited the community to come to tonight's free State of the Startup, sponsored by RAIN and the City of Florence.

Light food and beverages will be provided during the year in review at City Lights Cinemas, 1930 Highway 101, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

One entrepreneurial success, Florence resident Carl Hulan, will talk

See **ECONOMY 6A**

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	Library Tidings	A5	Sports	C
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THIS WEEK'S WEATHER
Full Forecast, A3

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