

Siuslaw News Coast Life

SENIOR NEWS CALENDAR

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PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Trees — be they Noble, Douglas, Nordman or Grand Fir — line Linda Wilcox's property at 37th Street and Highway 101. Wilcox also offers wreaths and fir swags for sale.

OH CHRISTMAS TREE

Linda Wilcox's holiday tree tradition turns 20

There are some holiday traditions that are passed from generation to generation and some that develop over time.

The latter is the case with Linda Wilcox and her Christmas tree business. It started with a few dozen trees transported to Florence in the back of station wagon and sold out of her laundromat.

These trees sold quickly and the seeds of a successful family business had been sown. Fast forward 20 years later, and the success of that first humble attempt has blossomed into a full-blown holiday extravaganza.

Wilcox moved the enterprise from the laundromat to her front and side yards a few years back, and these spaces are now lined with Noble, Douglas, Nordman and Grand Firs.

The yard is strung with thousands of lights and 20 or more inflatable holiday characters bob in the afternoon breeze.

Linda Wilcox is a woman of few words when it comes to discussing the amount of time and energy she has invested over the years building her business, but she is happy with the results.

"When I first started this, I had no idea how big it would become. I guess I am just really happy that I can bring a little Christmas cheer to my friends and neighbors every year," she said.

When asked how many trees she has distributed over the years she paused, thinking for a moment and calculating.

"I have averaged about 350 trees a



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year and this is the twentieth year, so I guess about 7,000 trees," Wilcox said.

High quality trees have always been an important focus for Wilcox. She switches out old trees and replaces them when they start to drop needles and keeps an eye on the droopy trees.

"I (received) a fresh shipment of 60 trees on Monday, and I will be open 'til Christmas Eve — or until the trees are gone, whichever comes first," she said. "I have had people come up and ask if they can get a tree on Christmas morning."

Over the years, wreaths and swags have been added to the inventory available to customers.

Wilcox also collects food and clothing for distribution to local charities.

"This year we are collecting food for the Kiwanis. Folks can stop by and drop off cans of food and help them-

selves to some cookies and hot chocolate," Wilcox said. "And Santa will be here on Saturday to visit with the kids from 4 to 7 p.m."

The seasonal fun doesn't end when the sun goes down as there is a roaring campfire going at night to keep visitors warm and dry.

There is also a covered porch that has lots of snacks, casserole dishes and coffee and hot cocoa, all for free.

Wilcox smiled easily as she sat and looked around at the little Christmas land she has created for the community.

"I started out hoping to bring in some good trees and to make a little money, I never expected it to be such a big hit," she said.

Wilcox's tree lot is located on the corner of 37th Street and Highway 101 and is open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Linda Wilcox (above) has been running her tree lot at 37th Street for 20 years. It is now a family tradition as well as a community standard, with fresh trees through Christmas Eve. Bright lights, holiday decorations, festive music, an evening bonfire — even a visit from Santa Claus on Saturday, Dec. 17 — are all part of the fun for the whole family.



CONFECTIONARY CONSTRUCTION

Siuslaw Public Library hosts annual family gingerbread house party

There's no place like home for the holidays — especially a tasty gingerbread house. Siuslaw Public Library Youth Services Librarian Gayle Waiss continued the holiday tradition of inviting community youth to the library Saturday to decorate graham cracker houses with royal icing, marshmallows, chocolates, breakfast cereal, pretzels and candy — tons of candy. Mapleton High School students (right) helped Waiss and library staff construct the building materials during a recent field trip. Hundreds of youth and their families attended throughout the day.



PHOTOS BY MACKENZIE CLEARY AND CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



BLACK
YELLOW
MAGENTA
CYAN