

**MARCH**

**Home and Garden Show turns 20**

The 20th annual Florence Home and Garden Show returned to the Florence Events Center in a celebration of the 20th show and its relationship to the community of Florence.

Jon Thompson, owner of Coast Radio and founder of the Home and Garden Show, said, "The seed was first planted in the planning of the FEC. We've been doing it every year since it has been open."

Lisa Walter-Sedlacek, co-owner of Laurel Bay Gardens, has been a vendor at the Home and Garden Show since the event opened in 1997.

"It was a true celebration of our community that so many people came out," Walter-Sedlacek said.

**Florence kicks off new tsunami preparedness program**

The City of Florence and three other coastal communities are starting a new line of tsunami preparedness: the Blue Line Project, from the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

Oregon's Geological Hazard Program Coordinator Althea Rizzo started the Blue Line Project in Oregon.

"This blue line lets people know when they can stop running," Rizzo said.

**Rotary takes flight**

For the 2016 Rotary Auction, the sky was the limit! Extravagant costumes fit the travel-the-world themed auction at the Florence Events Center, with more than 300 people dressed to match the destination of their choice — from Italy to Ancient Greece to post-apocalyptic Australia to Hawaii, and many more.

Guests bid on hundreds of silent auction items, desserts and 50 live-auction items, netting \$108,000 for area scholarships and community projects.

**APRIL**

**Siuslaw River Bridge rails to be donated, repurposed**

As part of the Siuslaw River Bridge Restoration Project, Oregon Department of Transportation and its contractor Hamilton Construction are donating the bridge's old rails, which are being replaced with new rails of a similar design.

The goal is for the rails to be enjoyed and re-used for decorative purposes, and for none of them to be crushed or destroyed.

The City of Florence and other entities are receiving hundreds of feet of the railing and Eugene-based nonprofit BRING Recycling will sell the remainder.

**Local DAV chapter dedicates highway sign to veterans**

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 23 held a ceremony April 5 to celebrate the unveiling of the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway 101 sign, which was later installed at milepost 184.

**Making a splash!**

More than 750 people 'danced' with sea lions for Florence Events Center's Splash Off! Dancing with Sea Lions event. The event center commemorated its 20th year with the public art program featuring 21 hand-decorated fiberglass sea lions from Reedsport to Newport and locations throughout Florence.

About 750 people viewed the sea lions during the two-day Splash Off.

It's not easy being green

Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW) presented "Shrek the Musical, Jr." to hundreds of local elementary school students in two free shows at the Florence Events Center. CROW's production continued on the main stage throughout the weekend.

**MAY**

**SHS band invited to OSAA competition**

For the first time in nine years, Siuslaw High School band has been invited to compete in the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) 2016 Band/Orchestra State Championships next week.

Under the guidance of Director of Bands Chris Rowbotham, the Siuslaw band will compete with 10 other bands for the 4A OSAA state championship.

**Triathlon nets profit for the first time in its 4-year history**

Oregon Dunes Triathlon and Duathlon event, held earlier this month, turned a profit for the first time in its four-year history.

The event netted approximately \$4,000 after expenses, according to Dunes City Mayor Rebecca Ruede.

She attributed the significant increase in revenue to the overwhelming financial sponsorship support provided by 34 local businesses, organizations and individuals. Athletic participation was also up for the fourth straight year, with more than 300 athletes competing.

**Voters pass Mapleton bond, defeat Siuslaw's**

Mapleton School District voters approved a \$4 million bond measure for school improvements, while Siuslaw School District voters rejected a proposed \$36.9 million new high school in the May 17 Primary Election.

Siuslaw was the only Lane County school district bond measure to fail, with 53 percent voting against it and 47 percent in favor. Of the four Lane County school district bond measures, Mapleton School District's \$4 million bond had the highest voter approval with nearly 63 percent in favor. The last bond measure passed by the school district expired in 1961.

**JUNE**

**Archie Knowles Campground reopens**

Lane County, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Oregon State Parks hosted a grand opening ceremony on June 17 to mark the reopening of the Archie Knowles Campground and Day Use Area. The campground is located about 18 miles east of Florence on Highway 126.

The USFS closed the popular 4.5-acre campground in 2012 because it was deemed too expensive to renovate and maintain. The park infrastructure, including septic and water systems, had been deteriorating for years. An \$84,976 grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and a \$58,838 grant from the Siuslaw National Forest made the rehabilitation possible.

**Ambulance, fire districts to share leadership**

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 became the head of operations for both agencies on 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.

**Siuslaw School District offers free summer lunches for youth**

Under the supervision of Siuslaw School District Food Services Manager Dave Bitner, a new mobile lunch program runs Monday through Friday this summer for local youth under age 18.

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.

**JULY**

**Boys and Girls Club earns high marks**

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County members participated in a National Youth Outcomes Initiative survey conducted by the Boys and Girls Club of America, and the results showed the club far ahead of other Oregon, regional and national clubs in most categories.

The survey asked a series of questions on many topics including academics, graduation expectations, overall experience, staff expectations, safety and fun.

This is the first year the club has participated in the annual survey that polled 46 local elementary and Teen Center members ages 9 to 18.

**Real Food co-op closes**

After recent closures due to a lack of patrons and volunteers, Real Food Co-op has announced that it will permanently close, pending next week's outcome of a resolution approval by its members.

During a special meeting July 8, the board voted to adopt a resolution to approve dissolution and to submit it to the co-op's members.

According to Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), the voluntary dissolution of a co-operative requires a two-thirds majority vote from members to approve it.

**New Siuslaw superintendent outlines priorities**

New Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak took over this month from retiring superintendent Ethel Angal.

"I've been a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, principal and now superintendent," he said. "That is an odd thing for someone to do, especially all in one school district."

Grzeskowiak sees two issues having priority for the coming school year: revamp the push for a new high school building and improve chronic absenteeism and its negative effect on graduation rates.

**AUGUST**

**PeaceHealth holds healthcare town hall**

Hundreds gather to hear local and corporate officials answer questions, explain doctor recruitment process

Almost 300 local residents attended a town hall meeting jointly sponsored by PeaceHealth Medical Group, Peace Harbor Medical Center and the City of Florence at the Florence Events Center Thursday to talk about the current primary care physician shortage at Peace Harbor, affecting approximately 6,000 patients.

PeaceHealth Medical Group addressed the audience about the problems the physicians' shortage has caused the Florence community.

**Assistant principal makes graduation**

Siuslaw Elementary and Middle schools selected Leonard Ulrich as the new assistant principal.

Ulrich, 39, said, "My job responsibilities will range from evaluating teachers, to discipline, to helping improve attendance here at the schools."

**SEPTEMBER**

**Mapleton schools find lead in water**

Mapleton School District found that 10 of its 35 food prep sinks and drinking fountains exceeded the minimum acceptable lead levels of 20 parts per billion established by the Environmental Protection Agency.

"I was pleased that we were able to address all of the issues quickly to ensure that when students and staff return to school they have safe drinking water," Superintendent Jodi O'Mara said. "The health and safety of our students and staff is our No.1 priority."

**Hickson becomes Siuslaw News editor**

Siuslaw News entered a new era when Editor Ryan Cronk moved to take a new News Media Corporation position in California and Sports Editor Ned Hickson took the editorial helm.

The shuffling in the office included promoting Chantell Meyer to features editor and hiring Mark Brennan as the community reporter. Jack Davis shifted his focus to the city beat.

**Florence Festival of Books caters to lovers of written word**

"The whole point of Florence Festival of Books is to celebrate the written word," said event organizer Judy Fleagle.

That especially means printed books — hundreds of them — that were on display for purchase and signing at the Festival of Books. An Author's Panel allowed Northwest writers to talk about "The Path: Idea to Book." Author Phillip Margolin presented the event's keynote address, emphasizing "write what you know."

Seventy authors and 10 publishers from Oregon, Montana, Idaho, California and Washington featured tables full of their books.

**Boys and Girls Club membership grows**

From struggling to open its doors last September to enrolling more than 100 members starting this school year, the Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County elementary and Teen Center programs are targeting the needs of members and the commu-

nity. Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Chuck Trent said, "We are doing everything we can to support the school district to make sure we create ladders of opportunities for these kids."

**OCTOBER**


**Sea Lion Caves undergoes major upgrade**

One of the Oregon coast's most popular tourist destinations, the Sea Lion Caves, conducted a major renovation and upgrade of its elevator that takes visitors to the caves.

Access to the sea lion caves was closed for about 7 weeks as construction crews changed the historic elevator for a newer, "green" design. The caves' walking paths and the gift shop remained open.

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