



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Saturday's march drew participants from a variety of causes. People's signs highlighted civil rights, women's issues, healthcare and more.

March from 1A

"The turnout was amazing," she said. "We had more than 350 people there. One thing that I was really glad about was that we had a lot of men and lots of couples and children. And there were different ethnicities and ages. I was good, because we are stronger at our base when we honor diversity and inclusion."



The unexpected turnout, coupled with the passion and energy that was evident to Bebeau and her team, caused organizers to rethink their future plans.

"Now we have an email list of all these people that attended and want to do something, so this morning, we created a Facebook page and gave ourselves a name, the Florence ORganizers," Bebeau said. "We are going to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit so we can fund some of the ideas people have."

The logistics of the march were surprisingly easy. There were no city permits required, primarily because the group was not protesting — they were simply walking.

Another surprise for Bebeau and her team was the unexpected help provided by the Florence Police Department.

"We marched up to 101 and we were about to cross, and we were trying very hard not to

break any rules, so we were going to cross the street in batches," Bebeau said. "But the police came and put their cars in the intersection, so we didn't have to break up our groups and we could cross safely. So we are very grateful to the Florence Police Department for their help."

Originally, the plan for the day had included a return to Class Act Theatre to listen to a number of speakers but the size of the crowd forced a change in the plan. Ultimately, Florence Events Center allowed the marchers to gather there and the speeches went on without a problem.

Bebeau's final observation about the march was simple and straightforward.

"It could not have gone better," she said.

For more information about the march and its future plans, go to www.Facebook.com/FlorenceORganizers.

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