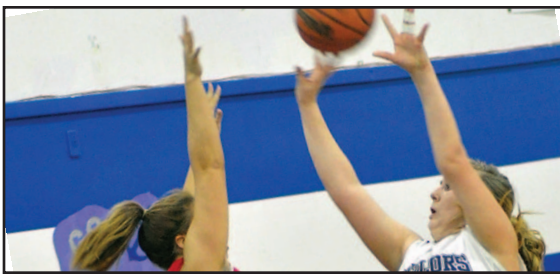


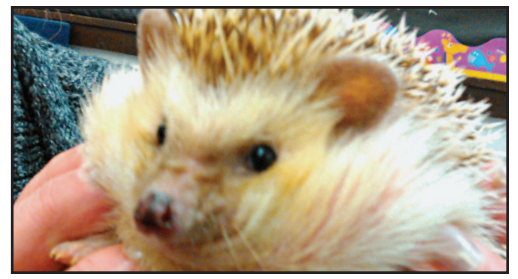
CHOPPY WATER FOR SAILORS

SPORTS — B



Mapleton class gets prickly new pet

SCHOOL NEWS INSIDE



Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

FURA explores beautification projects

Revision Florence, Downtown Revitalization Team and Public Art Committee share visions for Florence

During the Jan. 25 Florence Urban Renewal Agency (FURA) meeting, the board of directors received updates on the \$6 to 7 million ReVision Florence project, the Downtown

Revitalization Team program and Public Art Committee activities.

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

City of Florence Project Manager Megan Messmer said that more than \$2 million of the estimated \$6.95 million Revision Florence project was the result of a 50 percent contingency pad and future underground utilities.

She told directors that the \$1.6 million contingency number would come down as the project progressed and costs estimates became firmer.

The city has negotiated a \$460,000 not-to-exceed contract with Murray, Smith and Associates to provide engineering and design services for the project.

Murray, Smith Civil Engineer Chris Link said, "As we get more detailed the contingency (rate) will drop. Basically final plans will go to 3.5 percent."

He said that figure was standard for Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects.

City Manager Erin Reynolds assured the board that this was not the final estimate.

See **URBAN RENEWAL 9A**

READY TO RHODY



JENNA BARTLETT/SIUSLAW NEWS

2017 Rhododendron Festival Court

All 13 members of the 2017 Rhododendron Court met this week to begin their campaign towards the 110th Rhododendron Festival, May 19 to 21 in Florence. Senior Court Princesses Eyza Abbas, Chehalis Stinger, Claire Waggoner, Abby Watkins and Jewel Roby and Senior Court Princes Benjamin Cahoon, Michael Larson and Kyle Doran will mentor the Junior Court Princesses, first-grader Clover Holbrook, second-grader Chloe Clark, third-grader Madi Jerabek, fourth-grader Arianna Williams and fifth-grader Ava Center. Mapleton School District has three students participating this year and Siuslaw has 10. From now until May, the Senior and Junior Courts will work to be "Always Ready to Rhody" with the Rhododendron Court Committee to develop leadership and communication skills and make public appearances in the area. This year's Queen Rhododendron and King of the Coast will be crowned in a coronation ceremony in May.



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB TEAMS UP WITH BLAZERS

Rip City Academy program supplies jerseys, tickets, workshops and expertise

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County continues to improve the services and programs it offers to the Florence community.

One of the latest programs it has introduced is a partnership with the Portland Trail Blazers, named "Rip City Academy." The program's goal is to support efforts of organizations around the state that want to conduct local youth basketball leagues.

Teen Program Director Tracy Aaron said the opportunity to participate in the initiative brings with it many benefits.

"Basically, you sign up with them and it's a partnership. They will sponsor your basketball team. Every kid that signed up to play will get a ticket to a Blazers game," Aaron said. "They also get to purchase, at a very reasonable price, a Nike jersey."

See **BLAZERS 9A**



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Boys and Girls Club student Alejandro wears one of the jerseys supplied by the Portland Trail Blazers for the Rip City Academy program.

BLACK
YELLOW
MAGENTA
CYAN



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

(Above) Florence ARES/RACES member Bill Herbner, left, and President Bob Pine show the emergency ham radio equipment they maintain. (Below, right) Details of the group's mobile communications unit.

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When All Else Falls...

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Florence, Oregon USA

Turn on the radio: Florence's lifeline

In the event of a natural disaster, local ham radio club may be Oregon coast's only link to outside world

It's not a matter of if — it's a matter of when. That is the overarching theme that the members of Florence's amateur ham radio club want to share with the community.

Members are referring to the unfortunate inevitability of a large-scale disaster hitting the Oregon coast and, more specifically, Florence.

The need for communication services during a time of crisis seems obvious, but is often overlooked in the planning for such an event.

The preparations for disaster are centered on civic entities. The responsibilities of the police and fire departments are delineated in action plans and exercises that are rehearsed and evaluated. There are, however, some eventualities that cannot be simulated.

Those eventualities are the reason that the Central Oregon Coast Radio Club (COCRC) and its members have spent tens of thousands of dollars of their own money to insure that vital communications continue during a disaster.

COCRC organized two smaller subsets of the agency to take a larger role in assisting first

responders when the inevitable occurs. This group of highly trained radio operators comprise the Florence chapter of the Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) and the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES), network.

Bob Pine, the president of Florence ARES/RACES, believes that the current set up for emergency communications is adequate, but the physical structures that house needed communication equipment are susceptible to flooding or other damages.

"We anticipate that during a catastrophic event this area is going to be cut into three pieces," Pine said. "The bridge going south is going to collapse, since it is not seismically designed to withstand a 9.0 earthquake. Towards Mapleton we have a road that is frequently flooded, and going to Eugene, which is where we would hope to receive assistance, there is a tunnel that was never designed for an earthquake. Going north, we have a road that has perpetual landslides."

The prospect of isolation during a time of crisis is not simply speculation; it is based on a situation that occurred in Oregon not too long ago.

"In 2008, there was intense flooding in Astoria. Astoria was completely cut off. There was no phone service, no cell phone

reception or Internet," Pine said. "Emergency management in Salem was trying to figure out what was going on, but an individual noticed that some one kept bringing in updates from other areas, and it turned out he was a ham radio operator. He was on the radio with other operators, and they were able to communicate what was happening on the ground."

This experience was critical to the realization by state authorities that radios could play an integral part in the system needed to maintain communications between locally affected areas and the civic entities tasked with their recovery.

In a remarkable display of bipartisanship, a bill was quickly passed that authorized funding to establish ham radio centers in all counties in the state, for the specific purpose of communicating during natural disasters.

The Florence ARES/RACES group has created and maintained the network for the community since that bill took effect. The group continues to upgrade and improve on the system currently in place here, in Mapleton and in Dunes City.

One of the major upgrades that the group has undertaken is the purchase and equipping of a trailer that has been turned into a mobile

See **RADIO 9A**