



STEADY SWING

SPORTS — B



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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

POLICE

Bank threat turns out to be plea for help

Florence police to give suspect mental health evaluation after scene at OPB

On Friday, a man entered the Oregon Pacific Bank (OPB) branch at 1335 Highway 101 at 10:19 a.m. and said he was going to rob the bank.

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Florence Police Commander John Pitcher said, "We have been dealing with this individual for the last few days. He is having some mental health issues. Today, he went into OPB and made a comment about robbing them. This obviously caused some concern inside the bank. He then stepped outside and waited for the police to arrive."

According to Pitcher, the individual told police officers that he wanted to go to jail.

"We are going to do a mental health evaluation and put a peace officer hold on him. It sounded a lot more serious than it ended up being," Pitcher said.

OPB CEO Ron Green said, "Outside of the teller being upset it was pretty much a non-incident. Our staff and teller performed wonderfully. They followed all procedures to protect our staff and customers."

Learn about the history of civil rights today

Group to hold 15th annual celebration of civil, human and equal rights today

The 15th annual commemoration of 300 years of progressive legislation to bring civil, human and equal rights to all people in the USA will be celebrated today, from 1 to 3 pm in the Bromley Room of the Siuslaw Public Library.

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

In conjunction with Black History Month, the meeting will feature speeches and writings from civil, human and equal rights advocates throughout the years.

Event spokesperson Jenny Velinty said, "We decided that the great speeches were the ones that pushed legislation. Legislation either advances human rights, civil rights and equal rights, or it regresses them. We went back over 300 years to try and find the first known people whose speeches on civil rights became legendary."

According to Velinty, a professionally produced video featuring speeches from Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass, Gandhi and James Baldwin will be shown, followed by a discussion period.

See **RIGHTS 7A**



By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Putting Florence under the pump

JACK DAVIS/SIUSLAW NEWS

Florence Public Works Department set up a pump this week to drain a 7.5-acre flooded area east of Spruce Street.

Saturated ground water table creates 2.5 million gallon "lake" near Willow Loop

Continuing heavy rains have left Florence with one more "lake," according to City of Florence Public Works Director Mike Miller.

Miller said the more than 30 inches of rain

that have fallen so far this year have created a 7.5 acre "lake" on the east side of Willow Loop.

"That area, which has always been a wetlands between the east end of 16th, 17th and 18th streets and Three Rivers Casino Resort,

has now become more of a seasonal lake," Miller said. "The same thing happened back in 1996, during that very wet season."

See **FLOODING 7A**

Volunteers power Blue Water Task Force

Siuslaw Watershed Council and Surfriders monitor pollution and bacteria levels

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Florence is a city surrounded by water. Even a cursory glance at a map of the area shows that we are nearly encircled by the Siuslaw River and its tributaries.

And of course there is the Pacific Ocean to the west and many fresh water lakes scattered on the outskirts of town. Residents and visitors fish, swim and even drink from these waters.

Insuring that the various bodies of water in the area are fit for these activities is ultimately the responsibility of state agencies. However, they are assisted in this challenging task by a small group of dedicated volunteers that go by the name of the Blue Water Task Force, as part of the Siuslaw Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program.

The Florence Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and The Siuslaw Watershed Council coordinate the effort.

Linda Serbus, a retired science teacher, has participated in the monitoring program for the last five years.

"We work in conjunction with the Siuslaw Watershed Council so that we can capture a snap shot in time of what's going on in the watershed," Serbus said. "Once a month, on Tuesdays, we do the upstream waterways and on Wednesdays we do

downstream. We test for E-coli upriver and enterococcus downstream because the salt water will kill the E-coli."

The raw data from the watershed has been collected and collated by members of these groups since 1999, providing important insight into the chemical and bacteriological make up of local waterways.

Task force volunteers take monthly samples from 15 locations in the Siuslaw Watershed to determine and record pollution and bacterial contamination levels.

Fortunately, the test results for the past year or more have been good.

Serbus remains optimistic on the continued viability of the watershed.

"We rarely have samples that are considered a high level of pollution. Sometimes we do get



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Members of the Blue Water Task Force collect water samples from the Siltcoos Wetland Outlet. The group gathers once a month to test water in the Siuslaw Watershed for contaminants.



those higher levels in the fall, after the first big rains, when everything kind of flushes into the system, but they usually drop quickly," she said.

The members of Blue Water have been trained to extract samples and test them properly. The samples are taken from both fresh and salt-water locations to determine contamination levels that

may vary due to the differences in the sample locations.

"Most of the sites that we take samples from are coastal river locations. But we have volunteers that gather samples at the North and South Jetty. Those are ocean

See **TESTING 11A**

NIKE AWARDS SCHOOL INNOVATIVE FUND GRANT TO MAPLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mapleton's partnership with AVID Training Program provides academic support for students and teachers

The Nike School Innovative Fund (NSIF) has announced the 2017 recipients of its grants to support the use of the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) in Oregon schools. And for the third year in a row, the Mapleton School District has been selected to receive one of these grants.

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O'Mara said the AVID program is important for

a number of reasons.

"The AVID program allows us to send our staff for training on how to best prepare a student, not just for college but for life. It also helps students to decide what they really want to do after they graduate from high school," she said. "The program is focused on students developing skills that can be used to improve their ability to determine what courses they need in order to be successful in whatever path they choose after graduation."

NSIF has partnered with AVID because of the strong results the program has shown over the past three years.

Nike is an Oregon based company and it is interested in improving high school graduation rates across the state.

"We believe all kids deserve the chance to graduate ready for their future, and that's why we're investing in Oregon schools through the Nike Education Fund," said Vanessa Wilkins, North America Community Impact Director at

Nike. "Oregon is working hard to help more students graduate from high school and we're excited to be a part of the solution."

The AVID program has gained wide acceptance across the country, especially in smaller communities that are less likely to have a strong college preparatory focus.

AVID provides educators with curriculum, training and a support team to advise and support

See **MAPLETON 7A**

INSIDE	Classifieds	B9	Religion	A12
	Community	A3	Spring Home	A8
	Opinion	A4	Sports	B
	Records	A2	Weather Data	A2



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