

FAR WEST UNDERWAY

SPORTS — B



100th birthday gets mayoral visit

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Mapleton cleans up for Earth Day

Village Cleanup seeks volunteers for Saturday, April 22, meeting

Mapleton High School and Mapleton Food Share invite all interested community members to sign up for a "Village Cleanup" on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, at Mapleton Food Share at 2:30 p.m.

The sign-up will include an assessment of the project's needs and how interested participants can contribute to the effort.

Tasks that were suggested by students and project coordinators focused on planting flowers, bushes and ornamental grasses to help beautify the Mapleton downtown area.

The actual date for the cleanup will be determined in the near future, with weather being the most important factor when considering the final scheduling date for the event.

Mapleton Food Share is located at 10718 Highway 126. It is open the second Thursday and fourth Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., providing essential nutrition to children, seniors, families and more in the Mapleton area.

This nonprofit organization relies on donations, both of cash and food items, and volunteers to provide services.

Food Share also has resources such as clothing, shoes and household items, as well as additional information for patrons to access.

For more information on the event, donating or getting involved, call 541-268-2919 or visit mapletonfoodshare.org.

U.S. Rep. DeFazio discusses hot topics at town hall

Audience of 200 constituents ask about President's budget, ICE, EPA, healthcare and more

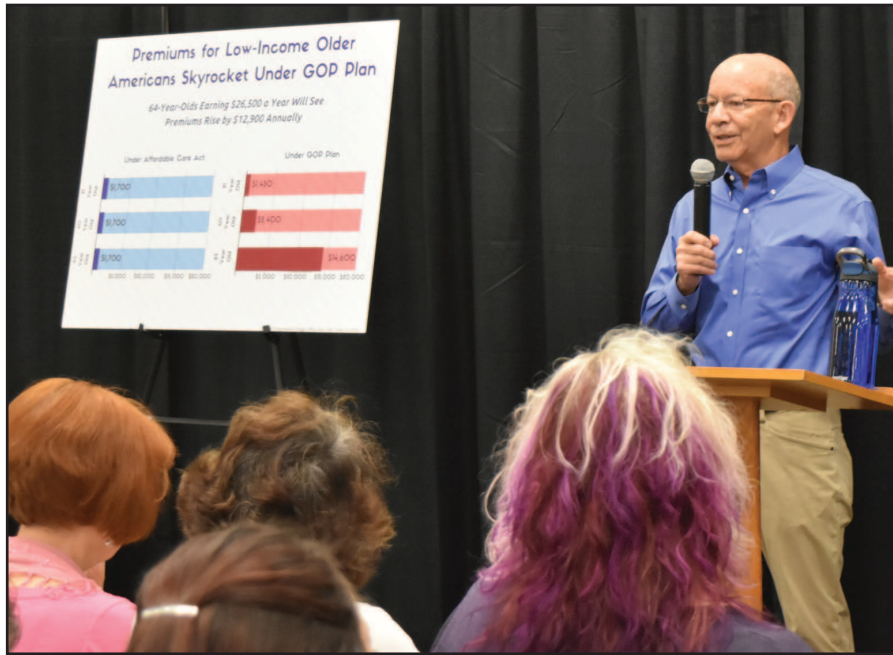
More than 200 people attended a town hall meeting to interact with U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio at the Florence Events Center Monday.

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Topics ranged from transportation, healthcare and social security to immigration, the federal budget and EPA cuts.

DeFazio, a ranking member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said, "We heard a lot during the campaign about investing \$1 trillion in infrastructure. There is a war going on within the White House over whether they are really going to invest in infrastructure or pretend to invest in infrastructure."

"To really invest would require public funds because you can't build public infrastructure without public funds. Even if you tolled the entire interstate (highway system), many areas do not have enough volume to make a return on investment."



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio discusses healthcare premiums during Monday's Town Hall meeting at the Florence Events Center.

According to DeFazio, the same is true for the 140,000 bridges that need repair or replacement across the U.S. For many, traffic volume is inadequate for a private investor to earn a return on investment with tolls.

"There is no transit system in the world that makes money," DeFazio added. "There has to be public investment."

Locally, DeFazio talked about a bill he recently introduced to have Congress release funds already acquired to support more port dredging and maintenance.

"As you know, we have jetty problems here (at the mouth of the Siuslaw River). We have one down at Coos Bay and we have a big one up on the Columbia (that need improvements)," he said.

DeFazio's bill would set aside 10 percent of the funds to support small harbors.

Another bill that DeFazio has introduced would raise money for infrastructure repair. The bill would increase the federal gas tax by 1 to 1.5 cent per gallon.

See TOWN HALL 7A

NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

'Let your voice be heard'

Florence residents Casey and Kelly Kawahara speak to state senators about lack of disability services on coast

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

April is Autism Awareness Month. In recent years, the percent of infants diagnosed with autism spectrum syndrome continues to increase nationwide, primarily among baby boys. The advocates for those with the disability point out that in the last decade the medical community has learned a great deal about how best to treat and teach those with autism.

In order to better understand the changing landscape in this field, the Oregon Developmental Disability Coalition has organized a series of "Advocacy Days," held at the state capital, to share their concerns and problems with elected officials. These public forums focus on one aspect of the autism paradigm during each of the seven days. These

continue through June.

Coastal residents impacted by autism have seen their support services drift away over the past few years. One of the local families affected by this diminution of services is the Kawahara family.

Casey Kawahara, who has autism, and his mother Kelly traveled to Salem on March 20 to speak with elected officials from across the state about their concerns at one of these advocacy forums.

The Kawaharas are members of a support group that is based in Eugene that organized the trip to Salem.

"We belong to a group called, 'Surfing Through the Waves of the Uniquely Gifted,' which is funded and supported by a group called ARC Families Connected, and they gave us a flyer that had a list of dates and subjects that were going to be discussed up

at the state capital," Kelly said. "One of the topics was about services and the availability of services here on the coast for people with special needs. We used to have services and, somehow, nobody knows how it happened, the money got shifted around and we were the area that lost those services."

Casey, who is 20 years old, graduated from Siuslaw high school in 2014. He is an engaging young man that is quick to smile and once comfortable, will share his opinions and feelings with others. Casey is interested in trains and videos and is looking forward to his 21st birthday, when he can do something that he has always looked forward to.

"We are definitely going to the Beachcomber," Kelly said. "He has always wanted to go in there and he finally gets to do it. I think Casey will have a



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Casey Kawahara and his mother Kelly spoke on the subject of diminishing services for those with developmental disabilities at a March 20 public forum at the state capital.

beer, something he has always wanted to try."

The Kawaharas had the opportunity to participate in a number of discussions with legislators in Salem and were able to speak directly to representatives about the current situation on the coast.

"We met with Sen. Arnie Roblan and Sen. James Manning in a small hearing room. Casey read a speech that

he and I had worked on together about the situation. It was very interesting because in that small group, the senators were more relaxed and they were able to share some of their personal family history."

One of the most touching interactions of the trip occurred during a discussion with Manning, when the senator

See ADVOCATES 9A

Good eggs



One whistle and they were off — hundreds of children racing across the field at Miller Park to be the first to find a sparkling prize egg, or perhaps to find the highest number of treat-filled plastic treasures. At the April 15 Community Easter Egg Hunt, sponsored by the Siuslaw High School Interact Club and the Rotary Club of Florence, the fun was over in just two minutes. Youth and families went home with bicycles, prize baskets and Easter candy. Club members filled and "hid" 4,000 plastic eggs in the grass before the event.



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN AND CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

