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SPECIAL PUBLICATION INSIDE



Siuslaw News

126TH YEAR | ISSUE NO. 45

SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

EMERGENCY PREP

Major disaster drill scheduled for Thursday

Local WLEOG members simulate emergency drill at port, hospital

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

Disaster will strike the Port of Siuslaw at 10 a.m. tomorrow. A boat will catch fire in the Siuslaw River and potentially hazardous materials will spread to nearby visitors and campgrounds.

Emergency responders will transport survivors to PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center for treatment and decontamination.

This is a drill.

Yes, this is only a drill for Western Lane Emergency Operations Group (WLEOG).

The event will focus on response plans for an actual disaster that would trigger a sudden influx of patients to Peace Harbor Medical Center, in addition to its day-to-day patient activity.

The drill is also designed to provide on-scene training for local emergency responders.

This disaster drill is a collaboration between multiple WLEOG partner agencies including PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center, Western Lane Ambulance, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue, Port of Siuslaw, U.S. Coast Guard, Lane County Sheriff's Office and the Florence Police Department.

Western Lane Operations Manager Matt House said, "Participating in these exercises is extremely important to ambulance operations in order to identify strengths and areas that need improvement. The importance of collaborating with our WLEOG partners in this exercise is to test all participants' capabilities, so when real time events occur we are better prepared for our community."

According to a WLEOG press release, organizers caution that the event is a significant exercise and the local community can expect to see emergency responders at the Port of Siuslaw and Peace Harbor Medical Center looking and acting as if this was an actual disaster.

See DRILL 7A

Learning nature's way

Siuslaw fifth- and seventh-graders have 'Outdoor Adventures' at Camp Cleawox

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Students from Siuslaw School District got out of brick and mortar classrooms and into nature's study hall last week during Outdoor Adventures 2017.

"Our home-spun Outdoor Adventures is four days of fun and learning in the great outdoors," Siuslaw Elementary Principal Mike Harkelrode said. "Each year a dedicated team of staff work hard to secure funding and in-kind donations to make it a great experience for our fifth- and seventh-graders."

Siuslaw Outdoor Adventures Coordinator Benjamin Wells said, "We had over 220 students, 70 parents and a ton of camp partners at Camp Cleawox this week for Outdoor Adventures 2017, and our themes this year are peer mentoring, cultural education, outdoor recreation and science."

Outdoor Adventures is a program that has always been popular.

However, according to Harkelrode, obtaining the funding for the four-day camp has recently been a challenge.



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Water activities such as canoeing and kayaking are some of the hands-on activities that campers participate in during Outdoor Adventures 2017 at Camp Cleawox.

"A recent ballot measure mandates an outdoor school type experience for all districts. However, the measure failed to name a funding source," he said.

Siuslaw Middle School Principal Andy Marohl, who has been an

integral part of the leadership team of the camp, believes the additional expenses of the camp are easily balanced by the benefits to the students who attend.

"Outdoor School has been a large part of this district for

many years," he said. "In approximately 2008, when we had large budget cuts, the program was cut. We feel that it is an important part of a student's education,

See OUTDOOR SCHOOL 10A

LCC Florence Center's new dean shares vision, goals



LCC Florence Center Dean Russ Pierson

By JACK DAVIS
Siuslaw News

In March, Lane Community College (LCC) Florence Center's former Interim Dean Russ Pierson was chosen from a field of candidates to become official dean.

Pierson, 59, was appointed interim director of the Florence Center March 9, 2015, replacing M.J. Kuhar, who was promoted to the position of Executive Dean of Academic Affairs.

Even though Pierson was appointed two years ago, he still had to apply for the permanent position along with several other candidates.

"I'm happy to say there was an outstanding field of candidates. It was very ominous for me as a candidate myself. It speaks to the great work the community here has done to make the Florence Center an attractive location for folks in higher edu-

cation," Pierson said.

Until now, Pierson has been commuting back and forth to his home in Eugene on weekends and staying in Florence midweek.

"My wife Tammy will be moving over from Eugene. We were renting a small place here but we will be looking to buy, making our full time residence here," he said.

Pierson expressed some frustration over the two years he had to split his time between Florence and Eugene.

"I've tried to be as engaged and involved as I could be while not being here on the weekends. A lot of community kinds of things happen here on the weekends. Both Tammy and I are excited that we will now get to partake of those kinds of happenings as well," he said.

LCC Florence Center has approxi-

mately 300 full-time equivalent students and a total annual enrollment, including non-credited and online classes, of approximately 2,250 students.

Pierson sees expanding the Florence Center's career technical education offerings in two areas: culinary arts and hospitality management, and nursing assistant and medical assistant programs.

The college is working to partner with Siuslaw High School's culinary arts program.

"This year we were able to get one course fully articulated so high school students can take our culinary arts program at Siuslaw High School and receive college credit at no cost to them," Pierson said.

See DEAN 7A

LIONS CLUB BASS TOURNAMENT CELEBRATES 35TH YEAR

Local club raises money annually for students and people with disabilities in the community and the world

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

The Florence-Siuslaw Chapter of Lions Club International hosted its annual Bass Tournament on Siltcoos Lake this past weekend.

The event is a major fundraiser for the civic-minded group, which is committed to addressing the serious issues of blindness and deafness — not only in America, but around the world.

Darling's Marina was the host location for the tourney June 3, which drew more than 40 competitors.

According to Mark

Meyers, Sight and Hearing Chair for the local chapter of the club, the tournament has a long tradition of engaging the community in an activity that is outdoors and regionally significant.

"This event started 35 years ago and is held every year on the first weekend of June. We took a popular activity in the community and tied it to a fundraising event. We focus on addressing sportsmanship and healthy competition with a sense of community," he said.

The Lion's Bass Tournament is one of the



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Lions Club Bass Tournament top finishers were (from left) James and Ron Pearson, Art Mulligan, Larry Slaughter and Mark Whitlock. More than 40 people competed in Saturday's event.

few "open," tournaments in the area and the tourney is organized to encourage family participation.

This year's tournament awarded trophies for teams and for individual men and women in adult and junior categories.

Meyers said the majority of funds raised from the event will go directly to local students.

"This year we raised \$570 from the raffle which is dedicated to the two high school scholarships we give each year," he said. "The \$229 from the food wagon sales will go to our other programs, which include

eye and hearing care and exams, eyeglasses and dogs for the blind."

Local Lions are also involved as sponsors in the upcoming Wings and Wheels car and plane show on Saturday, July 1, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Florence Municipal Airport.

There are a number of meaningful projects on the horizon for the club, which will be partially funded by the proceeds from the "Wings and Wheels" show.

"Shortly, we will be building and putting in place the first of five school bus shelters

See BASS 7A