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Siuslaw News

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FLORENCE, OREGON

PEACE HARBOR NURSES APPROVE 3-YEAR CONTRACT WITH PEACEHEALTH

Oregon Nurses Association, PeaceHealth corporate managers sign finalized contract Aug. 3

By NED HICKSON
Siuslaw News

Nurses had been working without a contract since January 2017.

“Nurses and community members worked together to make sure we reached a fair agreement with the hospital that allows us to recruit and retain the health care providers we need to care for our friends, family and neighbors,” said surgical services nurse and ONA member Sandy Fleetwood, RN. “Thanks to our community’s support, we won a fair deal that will help us attract topflight nurses and improve the quality of

care we provide for our patients.”

Nurses had been working with PeaceHealth’s corporate managers since November 2016 in an attempt to reach a contract agreement that increases wages and improves nursing recruitment and retention.

In May, following unsuccessful contract mediation sessions with PeaceHealth corporate administrators, nurses held an informational picket on the corners of Highways 101 and 126 to inform the public of the key issues raised by nurses.

Among them were ending staff call requirements, addressing below-market wages, improving staff safety and increasing recruitment and retention.

“The Florence community has actively supported nurses throughout contract negotiations,” said Fleetwood, who noted that more than 100 community members met with local nurses at the Florence Senior Center to discuss the key issues the ONA was negotiating.

The three-year contract nurses

approved on Thursday goes a long way toward addressing those issues, including increased security measures to help protect nurses working off-site, rules designed to dissuade excessive call shifts and overtime use, and cost-of-living adjustments to help attract and keep more qualified nurses in Florence.

In addition, a new Labor Management Committee will be established to help preemptively address future

See **NURSES 6A**



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw Public Library wrapped up its “Build a Better World” Summer Reading Program this week in Florence and Mapleton. Area youth splashed on a bouncing water slide, spun hula hoops, created massive bubbles, got their faces painted, ate a hot dog lunch and chose from a variety of books donated by the Friends of the Siuslaw Public Library.



ECONOMY

Survey seeks to find the future of Florence

New Housing Opportunities and Economics group forms, looks to residents for vision

What is the general business climate of Florence like?

The quality of life?

How about the available workforce?

What types of housing opportunities should the city focus its resources on?

What is an affordable purchase price for a home in Florence?

These are just some of the many survey questions that the Housing Opportunities and Economics Project (HEOP) is asking Florence area questions.

By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

Commissioned by the City of Florence, HEOP is looking at the link between housing and the economy, an extraordinarily complex relationship that deals with issues of home pricing, housing types, industry revitalization and bringing outside businesses to the community.

It’s a tall order, and the group needs the help of Florence area residents.

“We’d like to make sure we’re hitting the nail on the head with what the community needs,” said Florence Economic Development Coordinator Kelli Weese.

The project is running a four-page survey for Florence-area residents to help find the direction of where the commission will go. It is open through Sept. 15.

“We’re typing to figure out what are our major issues with housing and with jobs, but we also want to hear from the community because nobody knows better than those who live here,” Weese said.

Survey questions run the gamut from how much a rental dwelling should cost per month to what the city’s strengths and weaknesses are as a whole.

The answers to these questions will help inform city officials in the rules and regulations they create in the coming years.

But getting people to think about these issues can be difficult.

The Siuslaw News conducted an impromptu survey with residents of the city on some of the questions.

For some people, the city needs a brand before it begins building.

“Somehow, the Florence experience has to unite (the different) people who live here,” said Florence resident Stephanie Ames. “When I was a young woman, Florence was a logging and fishing town. Now, we’re a tourist town and we have to embrace it, manage it and be it.”

For others, the issues seemed too complex to answer.

See **GARDEN 6A**

See **SURVEY 6A**

Cultivating a memory

Sunni Days helps veteran’s widow, restores garden

By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The yard work was therapy. The immaculately kept flowers outside the home of Carol and Lance Blalock was a way for Lance to keep his dexterity up, diminished over the years from Parkinson’s disease.

“For Parkinson’s patients, you need to keep moving. Once you stop that, it’s over,” Carol said.

So Lance would kneel in the yard, hands gripped around the dandelions, his muscles remembering a sense of purpose.

This, according to Carol, was when he was truly at peace.



JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Carol Blalock holds a picture of her late husband, Lance, in her newly manicured yard by Sunni Days Yard Care.

And then, on March 9, he passed away.

Carol was devastated; they had been together for 37 years and it was too painful for her to do much of anything. The yard fell into disrepair.

Plus, as she admitted, she’s terrible at gardening.

“I just can’t tell what a weed is,” she admitted. “If it has a flower on it, I’m calling it a flower.”

INSIDE Classifieds B5 Side Show B4
Community A3 Sports B
Opinion A4 This Week on the Coast A7
Records A2 Weather Data A2

THIS WEEK'S WEATHER
Full Forecast, A3

TODAY
66 55

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MONDAY
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TUESDAY
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