

**OREGON DUCKS
PRACTICE AT
SIUSLAW**

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Siuslaw News

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FLORENCE, OREGON

Eye on the future

As Siuslaw's graduation rates near 85 percent, students consider additional options

By HANNA ANDERSON
Siuslaw News Intern

Graduation may be at the very end of the school year, but the work towards it starts now, at the beginning. It's like a race, a marathon instead of a sprint, where graduation is the finish line and the trophies are diplomas. However, it is not so much about who is going to finish first anymore, but who is going to finish at all.

Using Siuslaw School District's most recent graduation rate, in a race of 10 people, only eight students would see it through to the end — two of them would never get to see the finish line.

To count as a graduate, students must have earned or been awarded either a standard or modified diploma. Students who have earned an extended diploma, returned for a fifth year, or completed their GED (General Educational Development certificate) do not count as graduating students. Deceased students, or those who have transferred out, are not counted in the graduation rate at all.

See **RATES 6A**

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Summer remodels lead to new beginning for Mapleton Elementary



By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Mapleton Elementary students react to changes seen around campus as they arrive for the first day of school.



It was all smiles at Mapleton Elementary School on the first day of school Tuesday as students discovered what a crew of more than 40 construction workers had been toiling over during the summer break.

The school went through a cornucopia of remodeling projects, including updates to the classrooms, the gym, bathrooms and the outside grounds.

Mapleton School District, which obtained more than \$10 million in funding through bonds and grants, has also undergone a slew of safety changes including asbestos removal and drastic improvements in water lead levels.

"We tested our lead content in the water and that problem has been

solved," Mapleton Superintendent Jodi O'Mara said.

The elementary school is not completely finished, with work on the east wing still continuing, but the kids love what they see.

"I like this place because it's new and it's not as old. It's much better than our old school," said third-grader Lucie Burrus.

Fellow classmates Charley Johnson and Averie Walker also enjoyed the new, brightly colored tiled floors and the private bathrooms attached to the classrooms.

But the biggest hits with the kids were the gym and outside playground.

"It's all about recess," O'Mara said.

Standing to deliver

New teachers at Mapleton, Siuslaw school districts get ready for class

By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The first day of class in a brand new school can be intimidating: Buying a new wardrobe and school supplies. Nervously leaving home at the crack of dawn as loved ones wave goodbye. Walking into class as all the regular students dart their eyes at the "new kid."

Those experiences aren't limited to students.

Teachers also have those first day jitters, but for the 11 new instructors and one assistant principal of the Mapleton and Siuslaw school districts, it's a challenge they're ready to take on.

Starting in Mapleton, where major renovations have just occurred, five new teachers are taking the plunge in the education world of the Upriver community.

Nancy Reade has taught for 24 years, most of which were in small towns in Nevada. She came to Oregon last year after her husband retired, wanting a "little green and rain" in their lives.

She'll be teaching second grade.

"Students don't have fear," she said of the age group. "They know they can learn and want to learn, which they lose when they get older. I want to keep that as their belief system."

See **TEACHERS 7A**

UPRIVER FIRE DEPARTMENTS RECEIVE NEW EQUIPMENT

Annexation of the Upriver fire districts — "Swisshome & Upper Deadwood Creek Fire Department" — is almost complete

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

The fire departments of Swisshome and Deadwood have recently accepted delivery of three pieces of equipment that will significantly improve the ability of the area's volunteer fire departments in those towns to safeguard their citizens.

The upgraded equipment is the first tangible change in the relationship between Deadwood Creek Fire Service and the Swisshome/Deadwood Fire Department, which should be formalized by official state and county approval of annexation between the two departments this October.

The two departments have acted independently to this point in time, but moving forward, there will be coordination of training, volunteer recruitment and retention and, most importantly, on callout support.

Chief Greg Hertzbach of the Deadwood Creek Fire Service has taken the lead in handling the submission of paperwork associated with the annexation.

Hertzbach said the change to a combined "Swisshome and Upper Deadwood Creek Fire Department" should be approved at public hearings scheduled for Oct. 17 and 31.

"We have been working on the annexation process for a couple of years now. It is quite a packet of information, which includes maps and



COURTESY PHOTO

Swisshome/Deadwood Fire Department Fire Chief Greg Lyndsey (left) and Assistant Chief Danny Morgan receive new equipment for the soon to be established Swisshome and Upper Deadwood Creek Fire Department. The new entity will merge the Deadwood Creek Fire Service with the Swisshome/Deadwood Fire Department.

legal descriptions, current property owners and tax lot numbers. There was a lot of research that had to be done before the application could be submitted," Hertzbach said.

The equipment received, while new to the upriver departments, came from a neighboring fire district, which sold the vehicles to the

Swisshome/Deadwood Fire district for a very reasonable price.

Chief Greg Lyndsey of the Swisshome/Deadwood Fire Department said the equipment will make protecting the public easier and safer in the future.

The three new pieces of equipment, all from

Junction City, are a 1,000-gallon engine, a 3,000-gallon tender and a 4,000-gallon brush rig.

"They are new to us, but not brand new," Lyndsey said. "They are in very good shape."

According to Lyndsey, his connections at Junction City let him know that they were getting new equipment. Lyndsey inquired on their older equipment and made an offer.

"The equipment we had still works, but it's from 1968 and you can't get parts for the pump if it breaks down. The engine was showing some wear and we were starting to get a few leaks," he said. "We got all three new pieces of equipment for around \$50,000, which is a great deal, probably like half price."

The decision to purchase the Junction City equipment is just one in a series of steps that are being taken by the Upriver fire districts to become better prepared to respond to emergencies in their communities.

Other changes being implemented are designed to enhance the cooperation between Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and what will become the combined Swisshome/Upper Deadwood Creek Fire Department.

Siuslaw Valley Chief Director Jim Langborg feels the change signifies a shift in the relationship between the Florence fire department and the surrounding areas.

See **DEPARTMENTS 7A**

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