



HOMECOMING FOR VIKS

SPORTS — B

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

OCTOBER MOMENTUM CONTINUES WITH RAIN, DEVELOPMENT

Florence-area economic development picks up with partner programs, property sales in Pacific View Business Park

BY CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

View Business Park.

“The City of Florence is thrilled that our town has become a place of year-round entrepreneurial activity and enthusiasm,” said Florence City Manager Erin Reynolds.

“Our rural coastal region is now connected with resources more commonly found in metro areas that are essential to any startup business. As we begin our third year as partners

with RAIN, we can’t wait to see how this startup community will continue to grow and flourish.”

At Monday night’s Florence City Council meeting, Venture Catalyst Caroline Cummings highlighted some of RAIN’s victories since it partnered with Florence in October 2015, including the recent “graduation” of six Florence-based startups from a course

designed to activate and grow fledgling businesses.

“The six companies ranged from software and tech-based to fishing products, art, over-the-counter healthcare and at home design products,” said David Youngentob, who led the Pre-Accelerator Course.

Youngentob was hired as RAIN’s coastal venture catalyst in November

2016. Since then, he has worked with Lane and Lincoln counties to promote entrepreneurs on the coast.

“You have some really cool innovators in this community,” Cummings said. “We catalyze these individuals to help them create jobs and bring wealth into Florence.”

See **DEVELOPMENT 8A**

Beyond labels — Part I

An in-depth look into the area’s LGBTQ community and its many facets

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

(Editor’s note: This is the first in a two-part series examining the LGBTQ community in the Siuslaw region.)

Jane Hudson, along with others in the Siuslaw region, are trying to keep the Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) group alive. But Florence PFLAG, along with other chapters across the region, has been seeing dwindling numbers in recent years.

The goal of PFLAG is to help parents and family members understand what their loved ones who identify as lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) are going through, and in the process helping those who are LGBTQ live better lives.

One way PFLAG looks to help is through an event held today — a public meeting at Gazebo Park in Old Town Florence at 5 p.m. in celebration of National Coming Out Day.

“I’m thinking of having several people show up,” Hudson, a transgender woman who lives in Mapleton and is president of PFLAG Florence, said. “We’ll just kind of rotate and have people tell stories. We’re going to have PFLAG brochures on the table so if anybody comes by, we can explain and educate, whatever they need. I think that’s what Florence needs.”

There are other PFLAG chapters in the area. Coos Bay recently opened one, and the Newport chapter is thriving, according to Hudson. Others haven’t been so lucky.

“Eugene PFLAG called up and said, ‘We’re closing,’ about a year and a half ago,” Hudson said. “Couldn’t get anyone to get any officers. Everyone figures the battle (for LGBTQ) is over, problem taken care of, so we can all go home.”

Florence has seen its numbers shrink as well.

In its heyday, PFLAG had dozens of people coming to meetings.

“Now it’s to the point where there’s the board and several other people that show up,” Hudson said. “We’ve had a pretty big drop over the past couple of years.”

See **LGBTQ 7A**

FLORENCE WINE & CHOWDER TRAIL



PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS



Historic Old Town Florence was filled to the brim with wine and chowder this weekend for the seventh annual Wine and Chowder Trail. Ten wineries came into town to tempt tasters for Saturday’s Wine Walk, while 10 local businesses brought their chowder chops to Sunday’s Chowder Trail. Voters bestowed “Best Chowder” to Novelli’s Crab and Seafood, located on the dock at the Port of Siuslaw. And at the end of festivities Sunday, crowds gathered around Gazebo Park in Old Town as glass floats and other prizes were raffled away. “We gave away 30 beautifully blown glass floats,” said Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Assistant Executive Director Terry Abeyta. “The crowds were up substantially from last year, and many of the participants were from out of town and told us they came back specifically for this event. The spirit was very festive.”

Time passes but the Otter remains the same

Marina’s classic vessel passes the century mark as owner reaches 88

Walt Fossek is 88 years young, and his boat, the Otter, is 104 years old. Both wear their age well.

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Fossek is active, mentally sharp and a great storyteller and the Otter draws daily interest from tourists who wander around the marina, wondering at the elegant lines and excellent condition of the old wooden boat.

If these visitors are lucky, Fossek will be on board and in a story mood, sharing tales from his 50 years as the owner and operator of the well-maintained antique vessel.

Fossek celebrated his birthday last month by doing one of his favorite things in life —

working on his boat. “I always like to talk about boats, especially wooden boats. There is quite a revival in the area of wooden boats and a lot of people are really interested in Otter, because over time this has become a historical vessel, and now it is over 100 years old. Originally, I thought of it as an income producing, but now it is more of a piece of history,” he said.

Fossek is an angler and a farmer and has been living in Florence since World War II. He has seen the area change significantly in the intervening years, moving steadily away from an agriculturally based economy.



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Walt Fossek spends many of his days on board the Otter, currently docked at the Port of Siuslaw, where he tends to the 104-year old vessel with continual maintenance and care.

See **OTTER 9A**

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