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SPORTS — B



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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

CRIME

FLORENCE WOMAN CHARGED WITH FELONY THEFT

Driftwood Shores accuses former employee Christy Bursaw of stealing tips

Florence resident Christy Lynn Bursaw was arraigned at Lane County Circuit Court on Oct. 25 on a felony charge of aggravated first-degree theft.

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Bursaw, 44, had been an employee of the Driftwood Shores Resort and Convention Center for the last 18 months and was allegedly stealing money from her co-workers for much of that time.

Driftwood Shores General Manager Martin Alletson believes Bursaw was stealing tips from employees of the company's Surfside Restaurant by changing paperwork reflecting tip amounts intended for servers.

"Christy was the bookkeeper here and she worked under an accountant. When staff fills out the reports at the restaurant, they also put on what the charged tips are. She would look and see what the amount was and she would reduce the charge tip on the envelope and take the cash out," Alletson said. "She was pocketing the difference between what she wrote down as charged tips and what the actual tip was."

Bursaw's alleged theft was an ongoing enterprise, beginning soon after Bursaw was hired, and which apparently netted the bookkeeper more than \$17,000.

Alletson said the fact that an employee he trusted had stolen from his company was a disappointment. What was even more disheartening was that other employees were affected by Bursaw's actions.

"She was taking money from her co-workers and that's what irritates me the most," he said. "She said she was sorry for her actions and she was just trying to make ends meet, but she was stealing from people that make less money than her."

See **THEFT 8A**



Coast Radio's 28th annual Great Pumpkin Giveaway opens weekend of Halloween events

KCST KCFM Coast Radio handed out 3,000 pounds of free pumpkins to area youth on Thursday, continuing a long Halloween tradition. The Lemhouse family, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and the Florence Siuslaw Lions Club all helped with the event, including providing activities, photo opportunities and a free hot dog lunch. Check out more Florence-area Halloween events for kids and families on page A6.



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



'Do we really want to be a city?'

Dunes City's marijuana debate raises questions of the city's issues, future

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

As Dunes City Councilors sat in a special work session on Oct. 17 to discuss the future of current marijuana grow operations in the city, newly appointed Mayor Robert Forsythe posed a question to the council.

"Do we really want to be a city?" he asked. "Are we acting like a city? Are we providing services? We don't have a police force and we don't have a library. We can write citations but nobody pays them because you have no way to make people pay them. We don't have any agreements with any of the court systems. I think the question is, do we want to act like a city, or do we want to become a county again or 'Florence south'?"

The months-long process that led to this point, coupled with the divisive debate that accompanied it, laid bare many of the issues currently facing Dunes City.

Through a complex combination of vague laws, coupled with an inability to reasonably enforce them, slim city coffers and miscommunication between city officials, the recent marijuana debate made the city's problems starkly clear.

The work session's focus on marijuana stemmed from the council's Sept. 13 decision regarding the future of the marijuana agricultural industries in the city.

At issue were three different parties that had applied to have grow sites within city limits. While the process to become a certified marijuana grow in the state of Oregon is lengthy, one part of the process requires applicants to submit a Land Use Compatibility Statement (LUCS).

The purpose of the LUCS, which is required by the Oregon Liquor License Commission (OLCC), is to determine whether a land use proposal is consistent with a local government's comprehensive plan and land use regulations. City representatives must review their ordinances to make sure marijuana operations conform.

Dunes City has had two completed LUCS' for quite some time, with one approved for grower Valerie Cain-Mathis back in February, though public outcry about the issue didn't start until August.

The public, who was for the most part unaware of the LUCS, called for the grows to be shut down and further grows be permanently banned in the city.

In a Dunes City Council public

meeting held Sept. 13, councilors passed Ordinance 245, which allowed the existing grow operations to remain in the city, but banned further operations from being approved until the November 2018 elections, where the public could have the opportunity to vote the ban into law.

The main reason the council decided to keep the existing grows was because two separate law firms — one from Lane Council of Governments, the other Speer Hoyt LCC — had agreed that city codes did not prohibit the grows. The LUCS were legally sound, in the attorney's opinions.

While there have been three grows discussed, currently OLCC has received just two LUCS, and one of those was from Cain-Mathis, according to Acting City Administrator Jamie Mills.

At this time, it is unclear if the third grow will be grandfathered in and allowed to stay, or would fall under the city's ban as a new applicant.

Some members of the public were not fully satisfied with Ordinance 245, and turned their focus to the existing grows. Their primary argument was that the LUCS were filed in error and that city officials did not properly prepare them or interpret local laws correctly.

At the Oct. 11 city council meeting, citizens asked the council to review the LUCS, which the council agreed to do, leading to the Oct. 17 work session questioning the future of the city.

"As I've been saying all along, we spend a lot of money on attorneys who say we have to allow these three commercial grow operations," said Councilor Robert Orr. "However, we're also being told by our community that the attorneys are wrong. ... They're preaching to the choir when they're yelling at us. We've done all we can do because we did what our attorneys told us to do. We can't do any different than that."

"But if the community has another way, man I'm all for it. I'm not saying there were any errors made. I think certain community members seem to imply there were, but whether they were or not, I think there's another way to looking at this — and if there's a way to right our wrong, then we need to right that."

But Councilor Duke Wells didn't think that there was a way around it.

"Remembering what we discussed with our attorney, and as much as I don't want these things in Dunes City, as far as I can see the ship has sailed on this," Wells said. "I don't see where I can go back in and redo

these, ... but I don't see anything we can do."

Forsythe agreed, and the council decided to contact the city's attorney for further input, which they received the next day in a special executive session that was closed to the public.

After the executive session, the council made a decision not to withdraw the LUCS. The marijuana grows could continue.

The Siuslaw News requested the attorney reports that cleared the LUCS for approval, but were turned down due to confidentiality. However, there are clues to the attorney's reasoning, and many of those reasons cut to the heart of the city's problems, the first of which are poorly written city ordinances.

Before the council took its final vote to allow the grows to stay, Day Law and Associates, attorneys representing the operations, submitted a letter to the city for public record. The letter laid multiple reasons why the council should not withdraw the LUCS, including a legal explanation for the grows.

The letter pointed out that Dunes City Development Code 155f.1.3 defines agriculture as "The tilling of

See **DUNES CITY 7A**

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