

Officials from 1A

among the group is unusual. "We meet regularly in Salem and the communication between members of the caucus is excellent. It is truly a group that works well together and always puts the interests of our constituents first," McKeown said.

One of the cornerstones of the region represented by the Coastal Caucus is the fishing industry, which is experiencing difficult times, particularly in smaller traditional fishing communities like Florence, Winchester Bay and Coos Bay.

One of the most negatively impacted parts of the fishing economy has been the farming of oysters. A few years ago, there was an almost total collapse of the industry due to unexplained deaths of many coastal oyster beds.

Roblan lives in Coos Bay and knew first hand the impact the loss would have up and down the coast. He also worked with marine biologists from the Hatfield Marine Science Center and educators from Oregon State University (OSU) to investigate and identify the causes of the collapse.

This work spurred the development of solutions by introducing legislation to provide information to avert future problems in Oregon fisheries.

"I've been involved in a lot of bills over the years, but this last session I was involved in the issue of ocean acidification," Roblan said. "This started when it was discovered that we lost almost a complete har-

vest of oysters a few years ago. ... Scientists at OSU figured out the problem — as the acidic levels in the ocean rose, the little oyster embryos couldn't make shells and they would just die."

The solution to the acidity situation involved the development of a new water filter to reduce the acidification in the water where embryos develop. The research that went into discovering the problem was undertaken at OSU.

Roblan then co-sponsored a bill to provide solid information to state legislators tasked with ocean oversight in the future.

Senate Bill (SB) 1039 establishes the Oregon Coordinating Council on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia. The bill was introduced last spring and made its way through the legislative process over the summer.

In August, the bill was signed into law. It mandates the mission and establishment of the council, which will investigate the effects of climate change on all aspects of Oregon fisheries. The multi-discipline advisory group will be based at OSU and conduct field studies from the Hatfield Marine Science Center.

The marine biologists at the center will accumulate research findings and species data that will serve as a base line to better inform members of the legislature on ocean-related issues.

The council will have 13 members with representatives from the Governors Office, Oregon Fish and Wildlife,

Department of Environmental Quality and the director of Land Conservation and Development, with additional members from the fishing industry and conservation groups.

This group will now be responsible for a wide variety of research projects that affect coastal communities.

During the town hall, another of the main topics was education. Both McKeown and Roblan are former educators, as McKeown served on the Coos Bay School Board for 11 years and Roblan is a former teacher and principal.

Education continues to be a topic they are both involved with as they said they are keenly interested in the state's educational system.

One of the accomplishments of the 2017 session cited by the visiting legislators was SB 13, which is education related and will impact many coastal communities, including Florence.

"We recently passed a bill on Native American education so that local tribes can make decisions about the kind of knowledge that kids get about their local tribe," Roblan said. "Native tribes have been here for 10,000 years or more and it would be good to impart some of the knowledge that they've learned over the years to the to kids so they have a better understanding of the peoples that live here."

Oregon Innovation Officer and Department of Education Interim Director Colt Gill and Oregon Department of

Transportation Regional Manager Frannie Brindle also gave brief presentations Saturday, updating attendees on relevant developments from their departments.

Gill is the state's first Education Innovation officer and he discussed his intention to work closely with local educators to improve graduation rates. Under Gill, the Department of Education will work to identify and develop policies and plans that better prepare high school graduates to excel in either the workplace or at an institute of higher learning.

Stormwater from 1A

Recent flooding concerns in Mariners Village and Creekside Pines have prompted city responses for those particular areas, which will be discussed at the forum.

Miller said the city's current Stormwater Management Plan has been used effectively to guide and direct the planning and development efforts associated with the stormwater system.

"Most of the projects contained in the 2000 Stormwater Management Plan have been

completed. An update of the Stormwater Management Plan is necessary so that budget, planning, design and construction of storm improvements can be staged and phased in an informed way that responds to the needs of the community," he said.

For more information, contact Miller at 541-997-4106 or stop by the forum at Florence Events Center.

To view the current Stormwater Management Plan and the 2011 Stormwater Design Manual, visit ci.florence.or.us/planning/stormwater-management-plan.

Dunes City from 1A

City really wants to be a city." The citizens turned out to protect Dunes City from what they felt was a danger. Therefore, the citizens want a "city" — with systems in place including police, courts and community engagement. Because of this, the council has begun to take steps toward becoming a city.

Forsythe will be speaking with Mayor Joe Henry and City Manager Erin Reynolds, both of Florence, to find out how the larger city approached funding and city ordinances.

Dunes City Council will also look into IGAs with police services, such as the Florence Police Department, and pressuring Lane County to develop a plan for court systems.

In the meantime, the city council, planning commission and city staff will work on revising city ordinances, laws and the Dunes City Comprehensive Plan.

But they can't do this on their own, councilors contended. They need more help from the community, not just on controversial issues.

Regarding the entire marijuana debate, Forsythe looks at it as a growing experience.

"I think it's a good thing," he said. "When we look back on it in a couple of years, we'll go, 'You know what? We did what we could and we'll make sure it's handled correctly whichever way it goes.' I trust all of these guys up here to do things because it's the right thing to do, not because it's the thing they want to happen. We'll make it work for the community."

As for the existing marijuana grow operations, Wells felt that, if the public approves the ban in November, the city won't be faced with the issue forever.

"They'll eventually go away," he said. "We won't have these in Dunes city, eventually. When that person is gone and no longer part of Dunes City, then that permit is gone also. And then it will be up to us to use this knowledge and prevent any other commercials from coming into town."

Or, Wells said, the community could eventually decide to accept them.

"If November comes and people, say, 'It's okay, we don't mind having commercial grows here,' then we have to instruct staff to figure out where the heck we can allow them to be and not be caught again like we were this time," he said.

Until that happens, Forsythe and Wells advised calm in the continued discussion surrounding marijuana.

"We have to be civil, whether we agree or disagree,"

Forsythe said. "If not, things will take their course, but I don't tolerate anything in my life that isn't a civil interaction."

Wells continued, "It would work against our cause if that started happening. It's legal. Do I agree with it? No. But it's legal and I would hate to have any vigilante stuff going on."

He pointed out that beyond a very vocal contingent of the public, the majority of Dunes City has not been involved with the marijuana issue.

"There's the vast majority of people out there who don't come to the meetings, either side, that just want to live in Dunes City," he said.

After the Oct. 25 meeting where the councilors allowed the LUCS to remain, Meyer pointed at the Dunes City Logo hanging above the council chamber. It read "Dunes City, A Nice Place to Live."

Meyer turned to the council and smiled, saying, "Even with all this stuff going on, Dunes City is still a nice place to live."

Our Town:

Join us on Our Town for a visit with outgoing CAO of Peace Harbor Hospital Rick Yecny and a look at the state of logging with R&R King Logging's Bob King. We will also be discussing the upcoming Levy renewal vote with Siuslaw School Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak. Norma Barton with Florence Food Share, Kathy Murphey with Peace Harbor Hospice and members of the cast of the upcoming musical Annie.

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