

**Shelter** from 1A

“The long-range forecast through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says this winter is predicted to be an average winter,” Wood said. “We don’t really have an idea what that means.”

If given the chance, Wood would want the shelter to be open any time it’s under 40 degrees, but the programs lack resources to handle that at this time. To expand to that temperature, a new structure would have to be found, along with funding and more support from local volunteers.

Currently, the “shelter” is actually housed in the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw, located at 3996 Highway 101. Backup locations include the New Life Lutheran Church and the United Methodist Church.

Wood explained the operation:

“We generally open our doors at 5 p.m. and we have registration,” he said. “We check some of the luggage people have, and then we have coffee and some snacks for people to eat. We serve dinner at 6 p.m.”

For sleeping, the shelter offers blow-up mattresses, along with clean sheets, blankets and pillows.

“And we have, through many generous donations, enough blankets that if somebody wants to sleep under 10 blankets, we can arrange that,” Wood said.

In the morning, breakfast is served and the guests help clean up the area. Mattresses are stored, and if another cold night is expected, names are placed on the bedding so they may be reused a second night.

The shelter serves a wide variety of guests. Some are travelers coming up Highway 101, while many more live in the area.

“We do have a resident homeless population here in Florence,” Wood said. “Folks who are living in tents or people in garages. I think we may have had someone living on a boat, along with many car

campers. We also had folks that were living in trailers that weren’t well insulated and they will just come in and spend the night with us because it’s warm. We also had a number of families that came and stayed with us overnight. That’s sort of the broad strokes we served last year.”

But not all guests come to stay the night. Many come for the hot meal and to warm up, after which they go back to whatever their living situation is.

When the shelter does open, white flags with an outline of a building and people sleeping under it are placed in the library and on Highway 101. Email blasts are sent out, and notifications are given to organizations like SOS,

Helping Hands and governmental institutions like the Florence Police Department and Lane County Sheriff’s Office.

“And at 5 p.m., we have someone who can go and pick up people and bring them to our site,” Wood said.

The price to run the shelter for one night is approximately \$360, which stretched the budget last year when the shelter was open for 22 nights, with costs reaching close to \$8,000. Expenses include paying two people to stay overnight with the guests, as well as food and drinks.

The community has been very supportive in donating time and funds to the project, Wood explained.

“We would get small donations of \$10 to \$100 almost each night that we were open,” he said. “That’s hon-

estly how we have kept in business, through the small donations. The community has been so supportive with donations and with food, hats, gloves and socks. Several times last year we noticed that some of our guests needed socks, so we put out a call on Facebook and 50 pairs of socks show up. People in Florence are so generous and caring.”

The donations are important, Wood believes, because the shelter is the right thing to do.

“I think it’s important because we’ve had some pretty brutal nights,” he said. “We wish we could do more, but it’s something that needs to be done.”

“Nobody needs to freeze to death.”

For more information, or to volunteer or donate, call 541-997-7136.



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# THIS WEEK ON THE COAST

A WEEKLY LISTING OF COMMUNITY EVENTS IN THE FLORENCE AREA  
SUBMIT ALL EVENTS INFORMATION VIA EMAIL TO [PRESSRELEASES@THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM](mailto:PRESSRELEASES@THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM)

**Dec. 9**  
**USCG Boating Safety Class**  
8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
\$15 registration  
Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Main Station  
RSVP at 541-463-1797

**Breakfast Fundraiser for Siuslaw and Mapleton school projects**  
9 a.m.  
\$5 donation requested  
Florence Masonic Lodge  
84910 Highway 101

**Gingerbread Houses at Siuslaw Public Library**  
10 a.m. to noon  
Open to families with kids  
Siuslaw Public Library

**Ada Grange Annual Community Christmas Party**  
1 to 3 p.m.  
Open to public  
Ada Grange  
10 miles out Canary Road

**Peace Health Light Up a Life**  
2 p.m.  
Open to public  
Florence Events Center  
541-997-3418

**Heceta Lightstation’s 22nd Annual Victorian Christmas Open House**  
4 to 7 p.m.  
Open to public — \$5 day-use fee required for parking  
Heceta Head Lighthouse State Scenic Viewpoint

[hecetalighthouse.com/events#christmas](http://hecetalighthouse.com/events#christmas)  
**Ballet Fantastique’s “American Christmas Carol”**  
7 p.m.  
Tickets required  
Florence Events Center

**Community Chorus of Florence presents “Christmas Classics”**  
7 p.m.  
Open to public — donations welcome  
Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw

**Neal Grandstaff & Easy Money play**  
7 to 11 p.m.  
No cover  
Blue Bills Sports Bar & Tap Room  
Three Rivers Casino Resort

**Dec. 10**  
**Mapleton Lions breakfast**  
7:30 to 10:30 a.m.  
Breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, ham and eggs.  
Cost is \$7 for adults or \$3 for children ages 12 and under.  
Mapleton Lions Club

**Community Chorus of Florence presents “Christmas Classics”**  
2 p.m.  
Open to public — donations welcome  
Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw

**House Concert Series: John Paris**  
3 p.m.  
\$15  
RSVP/More info at 541-999-9720 or [kathypiano@gmail.com](mailto:kathypiano@gmail.com)

**Victorian Christmas Open House**  
4 to 7 p.m.  
Open to public — \$5 day-use fee required for parking  
Heceta Head Lighthouse

**Dec. 11**  
**Lane County Blood Bank Drive**  
11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Open to public  
Florence Events Center  
541-484-9112 or [lanebloodcenter.org/](http://lanebloodcenter.org/)

**SAPPSA Meeting**  
3:30 p.m.  
Open to public  
Siuslaw Public Library  
[sapssa@oregonfast.net](mailto:sapssa@oregonfast.net)

**SHS Band and Choir concert**  
7 p.m.  
Open to the public  
Florence Events Center

**Dec. 12**  
**Us TOO Florence**  
Prostate Cancer Support Group with Urologist Bryan Mehlhaff  
5 to 7 p.m.  
Open to public  
Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw  
541-999-4239

**Celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**  
5:30 p.m.  
Mass and refreshments  
St Mary, Our Lady of the Dunes Catholic Church  
85060 Highway 101  
541-997-2312

**Dec. 13**  
**Shoreline Christian School presents “A Gift for Jesus”**  
5 p.m.  
Dinner and show  
4445 Highway 101  
541-997-5909

**Jazz Kings present “An Old-Fashioned Christmas”**  
Hosted by The John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts  
7:30 p.m.  
Tickets required  
Florence Events Center

**Dec. 14**  
**Friends of the Library Meeting**  
11 a.m.  
Open to public  
Siuslaw Public Library

**Dec. 15**  
**“A Christmas Memory” and “Radio Re-Run”**  
Tickets required  
7 p.m.  
Class Act Theatre  
[Catproductions.org](http://Catproductions.org)

**High Street Band plays**  
7 to 11 p.m.  
No cover  
Blue Bills Sports Bar & Tap Room  
Three Rivers Casino Resort

**Dec. 16**  
**Santa Claus at the Elks Lodge**  
1 p.m.

Open to children and families  
Florence Elks Lodge

**Victorian Christmas Open House**  
4 to 7 p.m.  
Open to public — \$5 day-use fee required for parking  
Heceta Head Lighthouse

**“Christmas Memory, Radio Re-Run”**  
Tickets required  
7 p.m.  
Class Act Theatre

**High Street Band plays**  
7 to 11 p.m.  
No cover  
Blue Bills Sports Bar & Tap Room  
Three Rivers Casino Resort

**Dec. 17**  
**“Christmas Memory, Radio Re-Run”**  
Tickets required  
2 p.m.  
Class Act Theatre

**Victorian Christmas Open House**  
4 to 7 p.m.  
Open to public  
\$5 day-use fee required for parking  
Heceta Head Lighthouse

**Dec. 18**  
**Oregon Brass Christmas Concert**  
7 p.m.  
Open to the public  
Donations accepted  
Florence Events Center



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