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Siuslaw News

127TH YEAR | ISSUE NO. 100

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FLORENCE, OREGON

Siuslaw School Board considers upgrade options

Replacement of the high school is just one of the needed improvements

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw School District Board of Directors (SSD) met for its monthly meeting on Dec. 13. Directors first took care of the normal work of district oversight, accepting reports and approving changes to language dealing with dress codes and drug testing.

After the district's housekeeping items were addressed, directors turned their attention to the ongoing assessment of district facilities and the process involved in determining what improvements or replacements the board will decide to ask the public to support.

The main presentation of the evening was given by Curt Wilson, the district's project coordinator for Pivot Architecture in Eugene.

Wilson's presentation was comprehensive and detailed the cost estimates requested by the board for different levels of upgrades to the district's school buildings.

SSD has held a number of work sessions in recent weeks, at which Pivot design team members and SSD staff incorporated the specific needs of the district into the final recommendations and options presented at this meeting.

The numbers involved take into account many factors that will influence the final cost of repair or replacement.

As they stand, the estimated totals range from \$65 to \$131 million dollars to complete.

SSD Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak wants the public to know the current state of disrepair of the district's buildings and the real world costs that will be associated with completing necessary improvements.

"Right now, we are still at the 'facilities assessment' stage of the process," he said. "There is a balance between being able to handle the upcoming enrollment increases, ensuring that all programs have a home at the high school and that classrooms are designed for the modern learning environment."

See **UPGRADES 7A**

Be the 'change'

Siuslaw Elementary raises nearly \$3,000 for Florence Food Share with Penny Drive



(Clockwise from left) Siuslaw Elementary School students raise nearly \$3,000 for Florence Food Share during a new competition among grade levels. Siuslaw fifth-graders hear that they won a "bonus" class party for their donations. Florence Food Share Director Norma Barton tells students how far the money they raised will go — in terms of how many pizzas food share can buy.

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Students and staff at Siuslaw Elementary School have decided to help families in the area that avail themselves of services offered at Florence Food Share, not only by collecting food, but also by collecting pennies.

Principal Mike Harklerode, explained the shift in thinking.

"It's been a long tradition for the elementary school kids to participate in a canned food drive for Florence Food Share each year. This year, we heard from the food share that, while food items are always appreciated, their ability to stretch a dollar takes cash dona-

tions further to meet the needs of our community," he said. "We've always had an impressive turn-out of food and it presented a nice visual for the kids to see. We were afraid that changing to a coin drive fundraiser would not have as much positive energy."

Harklerode's concerns were laid to rest when the new format for collection began.

"Staff member Ella Glowacki did some looking around and found an interesting model for us to copy. Pennies and bills were each worth points. All silver change was worth negative points," Harklerode said. "In our grade vs. grade competition, kids could add pennies and bills to their

own bucket. All other coins were a face value deduction of points. Those would go into competing grade levels' buckets."

Glowacki said she was very pleased with the results achieved by the change and thought the students enjoyed the different approach to fundraising.

"We held a school-wide competition where grades competed against each other for a movie and popcorn party. Our competition ran for nearly three weeks," Glowacki said. "Our students have huge hearts and not only brought pockets full of pennies, but also coins and dollars they received from the tooth fairy and birthday gifts."

Totals raised in both pennies and food were impressive from Glowacki's perspective, signaling a new element of effort for Florence Food Share.

Glowacki said, "All in all, Siuslaw Elementary School raised \$2,963.03, allowing food share to access and distribute 103,705 pounds of food. Amazing! Our students brought in 59,278 pennies, plus countless silver dollars, coins and dollar bills."

In an assembly on Friday, Harklerode announced that the third grade won first place, and that the grade's totals balanced out to \$45.62. The bonus winner was the fifth grade, with the highest dollar value at \$710.37.

Dunes City swears in new councilor

Council meeting also covers water issues, law enforcement

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

Susan Snow was sworn in as a Dunes City councilor during Wednesday's city council public meeting, filling a vacancy that had been created with the passing of former mayor Rebecca Ruede. In August, Councilor Robert Forsythe was appointed to the role of mayor, leaving an unoccupied seat on the council.

"I like to be involved with the city where I live," Snow said.

She is not new to public service, having served on the board of directors of a homeowners association in her previous home, Alexandria, Va. She also volunteered with the Annandale Christian Coalition for Action, which helps provide early childhood care, education, food, rental assistance and other services to low-income families in the area.

Snow has familial roots in Dunes City, with her stepfa-



JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

Susan Snow (front) takes the oath of office as a new Dunes City councilor on Wednesday, Dec. 13.

ther and two brothers living in the area.

She and her husband, who both worked for the Pentagon previously, moved to Dunes City in 2016. They were not new to the area, however, as they bought one home within city limits in 2008, and another in 2011.

"I hope to make this a place that people enjoy living in," Snow said. "The residents are friendly and want to talk to

you. I want to keep it a nice, friendly place that people are happy to live in, and that there's no contention between residents or the cities around us."

As far as issues facing Dunes City, Snow stated that she has listened to the concerns of the residents, but would like to "do my homework before I can comment on anything."

Snow listed the outdoor activities that Dunes City provides as one of the key positives to the city.

"There are so many things in Dunes City.

You can occupy yourself with the sand dunes and go sandboarding. There's fishing, boating — you can do whatever you want and it's all within a few minutes," she said.

For her own enjoyment, Snow likes kayaking in the area and fishing the Siltcoos River, where she catches salmon and perch.

See **DUNES CITY 8A**

'Net' gain from FCC decision unclear

Thursday's reversal of net neutrality rules leave local internet service providers, users uncertain about impacts

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) repealed its own 2015 ruling on net neutrality Thursday, scoring a victory for large cable companies and leaving many skeptical about the future of a free and

BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD
Special to the Siuslaw News

open internet. The vote reflects a hotly debated claim that previous net neutrality rules were overbearing and stifling to the marketplace. Supporters of the previous regulatory system argue that net neutrality is necessary to protect consumers and small businesses from corporate manipulation.

Net neutrality is the principle that all data on the internet should be equally accessible and that internet regulators, such as governments or internet service providers (ISPs), should not be able to prioritize or degrade access to content.

The loss of these precepts in effect entrusts the cable and wireless companies to adhere to net neutrality standards on a voluntary basis.

And while major service providers had openly voiced their support for a free and open internet in the lead-up to this vote, not everyone feels inclined to take them at their word.

"We're gonna be screwed by the corporate-dominated telecom ISP industry," said Rand Dawson, a Siltcoos Lake area resident who relies heavily on internet access in his work. "I'm concerned about speed, access and cost. I'm concerned about all three of these func-

tions because these large corporate interests will find a way to manipulate the components of all three of those to maximize their return."

Others, like co-owner of OregonFAST.net George Rogato, have a more optimistic outlook.

"I'm not really worried about it," he said. Rogato believes it's possible to retain an open internet without all the regulatory baggage of the Title II classification.

"It's maybe a bumpy experience. There'll be something that will happen that will cause a lawsuit between the content providers and a carrier," he said, adding, "It'll get solved."

Robbie Wright, CEO of Siuslaw Broadband, predicts negligible affects, at least for a time.

"It will not have any effect on direct ISP consumers for years," said Wright. "ISPs are looking to provide the best value with the highest margins to consumers as possible and will try and find ways to maximize those two things."

Debate surrounding the principles of an "open internet" has its roots in the 1990s, but it wasn't until 2008 that the FCC made its first proactive move to enforce net neutrality, issuing Comcast a cease-and-desist order for throttling peer-to-peer networks like BitTorrent. The order was eventually denied in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and the next several years saw the FCC and internet providers struggling with how far the commission's regulatory authority should extend.

See **INTERNET 9A**

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