

Workforce from 1A

A 2015 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City found that close to 10 percent of 35 to 39 year olds and seven percent of 40 to 49 year olds were living with parents. In 1980, these numbers were 3 percent and below.

"Things don't work out where the people are at, and they need a place to stay, so they come and stay with family members here," Easton said. "Or, a lot of times, it's an elderly parent that they come here and take care of."

The young workforce isn't coming just to provide amenities to the retirement community — they're coming to support, or be supported by, the retirees themselves. But when those younger people come here, they find a sometimes-unstable job market that affects both employees and employers.

For Fred Meyer, the problems begin with the Rhododendron Festival.

"In a perfect world, we would be fully staffed by May 1," Easton said. "Because from Rhody Fest, we go into Memorial Day, and then boom. We're in the thick of it."

In the summer, Easton estimates that her store needs to hire 30 percent more employees from her baseline. Except, she can't.

"That's when everyone else starts to hire," she said. "The casino is ramping up at that time, and all the little restaurants around town are looking for people left and right. We can't get enough people in here employed."

When Easton is able to hire during that time, it can be chaotic.

"When you hire them on July 4, nobody has any time to train. So, you just kind of throw them in, sink or swim," she said.

It's only during the slow periods that Easton really takes time to train.

"When you find a good associate, you want to do the best possible

"Is Coastal Living in Jeopardy?"

This 10-part series covers the current housing and employment crisis facing the Siuslaw region. Through in-depth interviews with government officials, volunteer organizations, property managers and employers, the series examines the problems facing the region, the solutions that the community is working on and what the community can do to help.

All parts of the series are available online at the-siuslawnews.com, or in print by request.

Series List

- Nov. 15: SOS
- Nov. 22: State of housing
- Nov. 29: How we got here
- Dec. 6: Time to step up
- Dec. 13: Volunteer economy
- Dec. 27: Jobs and workforce

Upcoming topics include economic development, education and the future of the Siuslaw region.



table. His first real job was at Siuslaw River Coffee Roasters as a barista, then the Florence Events Center as the building manager and supervisor. He couldn't get the pay he needed there, so he became a bartender, building a reputation for himself in the food industry.

All the while, he was taking courses in computer science, majoring in networking.

"I was just about to go through finals when I was approached by a friend of mine who said, 'Hey, Kelly's Cantina is for sale,'" Khufu said.

His first response? "No way." But his family and friends were now rooted in the area, and his computer science degree seemed useless in the area's job market at the time.

"Either I try and find a job with computers that pays well, meaning moving to Eugene or Portland, or I stay here with family," Khufu said. With blind confidence, he jumped in.

"Oh my God, I had no idea what I was in for," Khufu said.

Khufu had managed restaurants before, but actually owning one was an entirely different beast.

"Chaos," he said. "First off, licensing. Insurance. Then comes building the menu. Then comes stocking all the food. Learning about payroll. Using Excel and QuickBooks. I have a very thorough education in computers, but not with Excel or QuickBooks. I'm still putting in a formula by accident and not knowing how I messed up all my paperwork."

entrepreneurs in the service industry when winter hits.

"I had no idea what I was in for"

Khufu was gobsmacked by the lack of work and low wages when he moved in the region in 2003. A new father, he was finding prices in San Francisco too high, and his wife was tired of life in the city. So, their eyes turned to Swisshome.

"It's where my wife's family was from," he said. "When it came time for raising the kids, she wanted to be closer to her family center."

He hustled for work where he could, picking weeds and painting homes. This is common for many people in the area during the winter months, working for cash under the

thing to keep them here," she said. "The hiring process is lengthy and it's expensive. When you invest in somebody, you don't want to say, 'It's not working, see you.' We have a small pool that we're fishing from. If you find someone who you feel is a great employee, you're going to try and get them into the right position."

Fred Meyer also invests in benefits. Health insurance coverage begins at 30 hours, and many of the store's positions pay salaries well above the national average, particularly with the 30 management positions available in various departments.

But Easton has found it difficult to get people to advance in her store.

"To be honest with you, we've had a hard time filling a lot of full-time positions because we're people's second jobs. They're not looking for that career," she said. "A lot of times, people work for the school district and in the summer, they need a supplement. We have quite a few people who work for the casino, and then work for us."

In her experience, Easton finds that people have second jobs because

of the high cost of living in the area.

"I would say it's just to be able to afford housing and cover basics," Easton said. "With the average rent, and just your basics — I don't know how people do it, to be honest. We hire above minimum wage, depending on experience. But even at that, it's tough."

And with the store as a "second job," turnover is high at Fred Meyer, according to Easton.

"Sometimes we get someone who moves to Florence who has been here for two weeks, and they applied everywhere. Well, the first to (hire them) would be Fred Meyer. I bring them in, hire them at part time. But then someone down the street offers them more hours, so they end up taking that job. Then I'm back to square one as far as the hiring process goes."

There are other reasons her employees leave.

"The ones we lose quickly are the ones who didn't realize what they were getting themselves into when moving to Florence," she said. "They can't find a place to live."

Easton could try and hire from places like Eugene or Newport, but Florence's geographical isolation prevents it.

"If you can find the same job at the same wage where you're living, you're going to take that job there," she said. "Or even for a little less money, you'll take that job. No matter what, a commute to Florence is at least an hour in every direction."

But the employee attrition does have an upside. Easton has never had to lay anyone off and rarely cuts hours. She also states that the economic health of Florence's Fred Meyer is extraordinarily positive.

It's not like that for everyone, though, particularly for untrained

See **WORKFORCE 8A**

MORE HD CHANNELS, FASTER INTERNET AND UNLIMITED VOICE.

Speeds up to 60Mbps
Unlimited data • no data caps

SPECTRUM INTERNET™
AS LOW AS \$29.99

Blazing fast Internet is available and can be yours with Spectrum Internet™ With speeds starting at 60 Mbps

125+ CHANNELS
UP TO 60MBPS
UNLIMITED CALLING

SPECTRUM TRIPLE PLAY™
TV, INTERNET AND VOICE
FROM \$89.97

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORIZED RETAILER
855-613-2321

Spectrum

*Bundle price for TV Select, Internet and Voice is \$89.97/mo. for year 1. Standard rates apply after year 1. Available internet speeds may vary by address. WiFi, equipment, activation and installation fees apply. Services subject to all applicable service terms and conditions, subject to those Services not available in all areas. Restrictions apply. All Rights Reserved. ©2017 Charter Communications.

Watch
"In Search of the Lord's Way"
Sunday, 7:30 AM
KMTR Channel 12

Then visit the
Florence church of Christ
1833 Tamarack
Florence, Oregon

and experience the joy and simplicity of
pre-denominational New Testament Worship. (Romans 16:16)

Bible Study: Sunday, 10:00 am
Worship: Sunday, 11:00 am

www.churchofchristflorence.org

KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS

Sponsored by
St. Mary Our Lady of the Dunes
Knights of Columbus
Assembly 3656
Florence, Oregon

DINE LOCAL

Enjoy great food and good times.

MEATLESS MONDAY
Healthy vegan and Vegetarian expertly prepared meals!

WINE WEDNESDAY
Enjoy a palate-pleasing variety of half price wines by the bottle!

ALL YOU CAN EAT COD THURSDAYS 5-8PM
Enjoy all the hand-battered, golden fried cod and chips you can eat!

CULINARY CELEBRATION WEEKENDS
Ask about our featured specials!

Wine | Beer | Martinis | Small Plates | Seafood | Dessert

BRIDGEWATER
OCEAN FRESH FISH HOUSE

Zebra BAR

1297 Bay Street Florence • 541-997-1133
www.bridgewaterfishhouse.com

SAVOR THE Flavor

Homestyle Comfort Food
New Fall Menu
Including:
Shepherd's Pie & Meatloaf & Mashed Potatoes

Fall/Winter Hours:
10am-5pm Daily

THE GRILL RESTAURANT & LOUNGE
AT SANDPINES
1201 35th Street at Kingwood, Florence
Highway 101 & 35 St. 541-997-4623 ext. 5

Open Daily for
Breakfast 10am-1pm
Lunch 10am-5pm
Daily Happy hour 2-5pm,
Beer, Wine, Cocktails

Mo's Restaurant

GRILLED OR BLACKENED
COD FISH SANDWICH
FOR \$9.25

and for dessert...
MARIONBERRY OR PEACH COBBLER
FOR \$4.95, ALA MODE FOR \$1.00 MORE.

Mo's Old Town, Florence • Daily 11 am - 8 pm
Serving Bowls of comfort for Over 50 Years

ALL NEW DINNER SPECIAL!
2 Entrees FOR \$20.00
Sunday - Thursday 4pm-6pm

AND Don't forget our
2 FOR \$16.00
Breakfast and Lunch Menus
Monday - Friday

Surfside Restaurant
Call: 541-997-8263

Where good friends & great food come together!

1285

RESTO BAR

PIZZA PASTA SEAFOOD

Wednesday dinner special:
10 oz. Prime Rib and Salad,
with your choice of
Pasta or Potatoes!

Great Food

Happy Hour • Monday-Friday 3:00pm to 5:00pm
Enjoy discount food and drink specials at the bar!

1285 Bay Street in Old Town Florence • (541) 902-8338