

NURSES ENDURE THIRD**ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS**

Peace Harbor Medical Center nurses and Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) union representatives met with PeaceHealth corporate representatives on Monday and Tuesday for a third round of negotiations to try and reach agreement on a new contract.

During a noon rally held Tuesday at the Peace Harbor cafeteria, RN Elaine Beers said, "Peace Harbor has been good to us. I don't want you to think that we have problems with the local administration."

FLORENCE MOVES FORWARD

Against the backdrop of the Siuslaw River Bridge, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown received a warm — though rainy — welcome from western Lane County representatives during her visit to Florence March 14. Brown heard about the area's economic vitality and recent efforts to increase development, create partnerships with regional organizations, improve infrastructure and more.

"I'm certainly committed to moving Oregon forward," Brown said. "We've made incredible progress over the past couple years, and I want to make sure we continue that forward march. Oregon is a place where everyone can thrive."

APRIL**PORT SPECIAL MEETING GETS CONTENTIOUS**

During the March 31 special meeting, several Port of Siuslaw Commissioners butted heads with Port Manager Steven Leskin on several unresolved issues.

Commissioners attempted to take Leskin to task on several issues, including inappropriate behavior relating to a report, anger management issues, unreasonable moorage rate charges and poor port staff attitude toward customers.

Later in the meeting, commissioners posed directives that the port manager declined to follow.

REGIONAL ICE CRACK-DOWN HITS FLORENCE

Federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents conducted a raid March 26 in Florence as part of a larger operation that took place in Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

A total of 84 foreign nationals were arrested, including four men from Florence.

According to the ICE website, 60 had criminal records, but 24 — almost one third of those arrested, including at least one Florence resident — apparently did not.

PARENT COMMITTEE CLARIFIES POWWOW CANCELLATION

The abrupt and unexplained cancellation of Siuslaw School District's annual Indian Education Powwow was addressed in a statement.

Committee members explained that due to an unknown loss of its 501c3 status under the prior volunteer treasurer, "...the recent discovery of this by the current volunteer treasurer of the Parent Committee, and the written threat of criminal prosecution, led to the extremely difficult decision to cancel the 24th Annual Indian Education Powwow in order to protect all parties involved with the powwow."

Following a unanimous vote, the Powwow was rescheduled for March 17, 2018.

SIUSLAW NEWS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Siuslaw News, Florence's No. 1 resource for print and online news, announces a brand-new look and more functionality coming to its website, www.thesiuslawnews.com. The website was launched April 10.

Siuslaw News General Manager Jenna Bartlett said, "This is something we've been looking forward to for a long time. Our new website will be more user friendly and allow us to provide even more content to our readers."

DUNES CITY ADDRESSES CANNABIS ISSUE

The April 13 Dunes City Council meeting had full attendance for the first time this year, as Mayor Rebecca Ruede returned from an extended absence due to

health concerns.

Councilors reviewed a pending resolution to prohibit the cultivation, for sale to distributors, of cannabis within the boundaries of Dunes City. At the close of a lengthy executive session, Dunes City Council emerged and chose not to adopt the resolution to prohibit the cultivation of cannabis.

MAY**CENTRAL LINCOLN COMPLETES \$6 MILLION UPGRADE**

After four years and a \$6 million investment, Central Lincoln PUD (CLPUD) completed its Florence-area Electric System Upgrade project to upgrade electric utilities in the Florence area. From adding a whole new substation in the Pacific View Business Park and replacing utility poles up Highway 101, Central Lincoln more than meets the area's projected growth rates for the next 20 years.

The upgrade was funded through savings and reserve funds set aside in the '90s for this project after an engineer looked at trends, and forecasted the need for another substation to serve the Florence area.

SPECIAL ELECTION**CANDIDATES ADDRESS 'OUR TOWN' AT FORUM**

Former Coast Radio News Director Bob Sneddon ended his 18-year career hosting the monthly Our Town broadcast Wednesday with a forum for many of the Florence-area candidates in the May 16 Special Election. The forum included candidates for the boards of directors for Lane Community College, Siuslaw Public Library, Siuslaw School District, Western Lane Ambulance District and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and the Port of Siuslaw Board of Commissioners.

Sneddon said, "They're sticking their necks out and they're the ones on the ballot running for something. If they're elected, they're going to be serving us."

FLORENCE POLICE**OFFICERS ASSAULTED, MALE SUSPECT DEAD**

On May 8, Oregon State Police troopers were notified of assistance needed at the Florence Police Department Jail. Troopers and officers responded and discovered Florence Officer Ken Larson and Corrections Officer Stephanie Sansom had been seriously assaulted while attempting to release 40-year-old David Brickey from the custody of the Florence PD jail.

As medics arrived, the male became non-responsive. Medics transported him to Peace Harbor Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. The two officers were transported to a hospital for their injuries.

On May 16, the Interagency Deadly Force Investigation Team found the action of the Florence police justified.

READY TO REIGN

Queen Rhododendra Claire Waggoner fulfills her heritage; Benjamin Cahoon becomes third King of the Coast

King of the Coast Ben Cahoon and Queen Rhododendra Claire Waggoner proudly took the stage at the end of the Rhododendron Court Coronation Thursday night at the Florence Events Center. More than 300 people attended the event, which featured a return to traditions of the past.

FLORENCE CARRIES ON TRADITION WITH RHODY DAYS CELEBRATION

Florence's 110th annual Rhododendron Festival wrapped up Sunday after a season of being "Always Ready to Rhody!" This year's festival theme borrowed from U.S. Coast Guard's motto to "Semper Paratus — Always Ready" and honored Station Siuslaw River.

Rhody Days officially ran May 19 to 21, but Davis Shows Northwest's Amusement Carnival opened the festival May 17 at the Port of Siuslaw parking lot. The Davis family's carnival has been coming to Florence since 1950.

PORT PLACES LESKIN ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

During a special meeting held Tuesday, Port of Siuslaw commissioners voted unanimously

to place Port Manager Steven Leskin on paid administrative leave.

Port of Siuslaw Board of Commissioners met in an executive session before the special meeting.

President Ron Caputo said, "You are being put on paid administrative leave while we check on a complaint we have concerning some sexual advances that (a woman) perceived that you made."

Leskin was hired as port manager in February 2016.

JUNE**LCC FLORENCE'S NEW****DEAN SHARES VISION**

In March, Lane Community College (LCC) Florence Center's former Interim Dean Russ Pierson was chosen from a field of candidates to become official dean.

Pierson, 59, was appointed interim director of the Florence Center March 9, 2015.

"I've tried to be as engaged and involved as I could be while not being here on the weekends. A lot of community kinds of things happen here on the weekends. Both Tammy and I are excited that we will now get to partake of those kinds of happenings as well," he said.

COMMUNITY RAISES MORE THAN \$30,000 FOR MALAKAI KIRK

On June 10, hundreds of Florence residents turned out in support for the "Gifts of the Heart Auction: An Evening of Giving," held at Siuslaw Middle School, raising \$30,886.

The event was created by concerned teachers and community members to assist the family of Siuslaw fifth-grader Malakai Kirk in preparing for the expenses associated with the youth's upcoming bone marrow transplant operation.

Malakai's mother Laurie Stone said, "I'm so blown away by the incredible generosity of our community and its commitment to helping those in need. What we have here is so special and we're so honored to be part of it."

FLORENCE ADOPTS FIRST BIENNIAL BUDGET

During Florence City Council's June 12 meeting, councilors voted to adopt the city's first biennial (two-year) budget, to begin July 1, in the amount of \$55,370,862

MCCLURE APPOINTED AS INTERIM PORT MANAGER

During a special meeting June 13, Port of Siuslaw commissioners voted to appoint Dina McClure as interim port manager while current manager Steven Leskin is on paid administrative leave, pending the outcome of a sexual harassment investigation.

McClure previously served as interim manager for approximately four months between 2015 and 2016.

NEW PRESIDENT MOVES CHAMBER FORWARD

Florence Area Chamber of Commerce welcomed new members and President Bobby Jensen to the board on June 15 during the chamber's annual meeting and installation. Jensen and the new board will lead the chamber for the next year in its efforts to promote business, networking and the Florence area.

Chamber Executive Director Bettina Hannigan said, "It's my job to help your business be successful so that you can help people. And that's the heart of the chamber. We're here to help people. We're here to help your nonprofits, as you expand your employee base, bring better resources to your employees and to help you be a resource in turn."

CARJACKER SHOT, KILLED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

An armed carjacking June 24 ended in a deadly shootout between law enforcement officers from Florence Police Department, Lane County Sheriff's Office and Douglas County Sheriff's Office and the carjacker near Highway 126 and North Fork Siuslaw Road.

Cameron Ollman, 37, of the Florence and Mapleton area, was pronounced dead at the scene.

During the incident, Ollman stole a late model Subaru four-wheel drive vehicle at gunpoint from Brandon Nivlinszky, approximately 15 miles up North

Fork Road.

JULY**SPECIAL 2-PART SERIES: ISSUES WITH 'HELPING' COMPLICATED**

On June 27, at the Florence Planning Commission meeting, a permit for Helping Hands to lease a commercial building at 1790 Highway 101 was denied.

The decision has brought to light some of the complex issues within the quiet retirement community of Florence. Over the years, the program has faced issues with finances, staffing and housing, but refused to give up.

MAPLETON SCHOOLS ENTER 21ST CENTURY

The year was 1957: Sputnik I was launched by the Soviets, the first electric watch was introduced and the Mapleton School District campus was built. While satellites and watches have vastly improved since then, the Mapleton schools have remained exactly the same. Until now.

From seismic improvements, decreases in water lead levels and changes to the flow of the entrances and gathering places, Mapleton's campus is moving into the 21st century.

Mapleton School District Superintendent Jodi O' Mara said, "Having students learn in a safe environment, where there's no lead based paint or asbestos, gives our kids a sense that they are worth this. That can carry on into how they do in school and where they plan to go in life."

POWER OF FLORENCE ENERGIZES COMMUNITY

The Power of Florence was on full display on Saturday, July 15. This brainchild of 17-year-old Kaylee Graham has grown from a small group of caring youngsters trying to help their neighbors to a citywide service event that engages hundreds in projects designed to improve the quality of life for all in Florence.

Organizers said, "At least 2,000 individuals were out working together to raise money for nonprofits and other causes, sharing and learning about nonprofits,

donating items to help with needs in our community and working together to make a difference for our community."

LANE COUNTY PROGRAMS WORK TO FILL SUMMER HUNGER GAP

Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County, in conjunction with other organizations throughout the Siuslaw region, is on a path to fill the food insecurity gap for area teens.

Boys and Girls Club Interim Director Chuck Trent explained the reasoning behind the move.

"While the general economy across Oregon has improved, and it has improved somewhat in Florence, the families that are coming in are basically minimum wage with no benefits and part-time work. They can't afford food," he said.

INAUGURAL JAM BRINGS WORLD-CLASS TALENT

The first Siuslaw Jam was held on July 7 and 8 at the Florence Events Center to rave reviews from audience members and performers. The audience responded to the professionalism and the technical virtuosity of the musicians. The musicians responded to the natural beauty of Florence, the appreciation of knowledgeable audience members and the chance to help create a lasting musical legacy for the area.

FIBER COMES TO FLORENCE

In a new pilot project announced this week, Siuslaw Broadband, doing business as Hyak, will install fiber optics to Florence's Pacific View Business Park and certain nearby residential and business areas.

"Siuslaw Broadband has been trying to get fiber off the ground for a while," owner Robbie Wright said. "We have been in Florence for six years, so we are in touch with the technology needs that people have."

AUGUST**BRINGING ART TO THE STREETS OF FLORENCE**

Members of the Florence Public Art Committee (PAC) want to bring the "wow factor" to Flo-

rence through increased visibility of murals, sculptures and other artwork.

Public Art Committee Vice Chair Susan Tive said, "We want arts to have an impact on everyone who lives in Florence and the community. It's as essential as the roads being safe and the water being good to drink. We want people to know it's for them. Public art is for Florence, not just the people who are visiting."

DETAILS GIVEN ON DRAMATIC RESCUE

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station North Bend and a host of other agencies played a vital role in the rescue of Heather Mounce Davison from a cliffside near Florence on Aug. 16 around 2 p.m. Davison sustained only minor injuries in her five days without food or water.

PEACE HARBOR NURSES APPROVE 3-YEAR CONTRACT

It was nearly a year in the making, but nurses at PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center voted 93 percent in favor of approving a new three-year contract with the hospital. The decision came after nine months of negotiations between 75 local nurses, represented by the Oregon Nurses Association, and representatives of PeaceHealth.

RUMORS OF NEGLECT, MIS-MANAGEMENT AT OCHS

PROMPT INVESTIGATION
A volatile combination of complaints, accusations and rumor swirling in and around social media and community conversation has raised questions about animal care and management at the Oregon Coast Humane Society (OCHS).

Recently, the nonprofit shelter has come under fire from dismissed volunteers, former board members and dues-paying members of the organization. Accusations of physical abuse of animals and even killing of animals at OCHS have been circulated through social media platforms and in anonymous letters received. These were largely unsubstantiated.

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