



Siuslaw Senior Night

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Siuslaw News

128TH YEAR | ISSUE NO. 13

SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

FLORENCE PLANS TO START ITS OWN ‘REVOLUTION’

After failing to make Small Business Revolution’s top 5 towns, #MyFlorence prepares to carry on momentum



By CHANTELE MEYER
Siuslaw News

Yesterday, approximately 50 people attended an early morning live streaming of “Small Business Revolution — Main Street’s” top five town announcement at River Roasters in Historic Old Town Florence. The news that Florence did not make the cut was greeted with loud groans of disappointment.

“We will just have to show them our own small business revolution!” Tabitha Early, owner of Polished Boutique and Salon, commented — a notion that was shared by many people, both in attendance and online, who saw Florence’s recent efforts to support the local economy as a trend to continue into 2018 and beyond. Florence Area Chamber of Commerce’s Downtown Revitalization Committee and Chairwoman Ellen Huntingdon brought Florence to Deluxe Corporation and Small Business Revolution’s attention last fall. Huntingdon worked hard with the Deluxe Corporation staff to place

Florence first in the top 20 towns, then the top 10. This culminated in a brief site visit to Florence on Jan. 3 and 4, with more than 700 people attending a ceremony to welcome host Amanda Brinkman and the Small Business Revolution team. “You have already won,” Brinkman said at that time. “Honestly, being featured in the show isn’t the biggest prize. The biggest prize is the renewed sense of pride for your community, for your neighbors, for understanding how vital your small businesses are to the success of this town.” During the top 5 announcement — when the communities of Alton, Ill.;

Amesbury, Mass.; Bastrop, Texas; Martinez, Calif.; and Siloam Springs, Ark., were selected — online viewers nationwide waited with baited breath to see if their town was chosen for the next step in Small Business Revolution’s process. The final town, which will be the winner of a popular vote, will be announced in one week’s time. It will then be featured on the third season of “Small Business Revolution — Main Street,” a webseries showing on Hulu and www.deluxe.com/small-business-revolution, and will receive \$500,000 for its small businesses.

See **REVOLUTION** 9A

COLD WEATHER

Temperature drop prompts shelter opening

More than a dozen people show up for shelter and a warm meal Monday night

By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter opened its doors Tuesday night at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw as temperatures were expected to fall below 32 degrees. This is the second time the shelter has opened this season, and the first for 2018. The shelter previously opened on Dec. 20, 2017. “We served dinner to 16 people and had 10 people spend the night,” Pastor Greg Wood, president of the program, said. “We served breakfast for 15 people. We had a couple people camp in their cars overnight. They came in, had supper, warmed up and went back out.”

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, along with Florence United Methodist church, provided a warm meal for those taking shelter. “We had some really good homemade spaghetti with meat sauce, bread, chocolate cake, and a cheesy chicken and rice casserole,” Wood said. “It was good food.”

As a rule of thumb, the shelter opens when the temperature is expected to fall below 32 degrees on any given evening. While the temperature did not officially reach that low on Tuesday (the National Weather Service recorded 33 degrees) the expectation led to the opening.

It’s possible that the shelter may open once again next week. The forecast calls for cold weather Sunday through Tuesday, with temperatures dipping to 32 degrees, with possible rain.

“But, the weather forecasts are so changeable,” Wood said. “They’re up and down every day, but we’re ready to go if needs be.”

To find out if the emergency shelter will continue to be open through the week, the public can check the shelter’s Facebook page (Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter), sign up for its email blast or look for the shelter flag hung throughout the area, including at the Siuslaw Public Library and along Highway 101.

For those who cannot walk to the shelter, a pickup service will be available beginning at 5 p.m. with locations at the library, Safeway and Fred Meyer.

For more information, contact Wood at 541-991-8208.

Bursting into bloom for area Valentines

Those celebrating Valentine’s Day today in the Siuslaw region got a head start on finery with beautiful sunshine earlier this week and fragrant bouquets. Area merchants and stores have a variety of sweetheart-themed products for the special day. A wide assortment of flowers, gifts, candy and balloons are available across town for romance, friendship and appreciation. As Helen Keller once said, “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.”



MARK BRENNAN/
SIUSLAW NEWS

Boys & Girls Club contemplates financials

While not in crisis, the club sees possible funding shortfalls in the near future

By JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

The Boys and Girls Club of Western Lane County (BGC) is now at a crossroads.

After controversy embroiled the organization in 2015, the task of rebuilding the club’s image was taken on by various community members and organizations, including former executive director Chuck Trent, current director Jack Davis, BGC staff and board members, and multiple donations from the community with both sweat equity and cash donations in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“The community needs this club, and this club needs the community,” Davis said about how the club fits into the Siuslaw region.

The club’s programming is growing at an unprecedented rate, but so are the associated costs.

While the public’s opinion of the club has grown, BGC worries that the community believes the club no longer needs funding, cre-

ating the possibility of decreased donations. And current national trends may hamper the club’s ability to receive additional funds by the year’s end.

As the club reorganizes its image, financial difficulties remain.

Currently, BGC is in need of at least \$40,000 to make it through the summer, representatives said. The move planned for the Nan Osborne Memorial Teen Center (formerly the Quality Childcare of Florence building) is not fully funded by a “significant” amount, though construction has already begun.

The club is not in crisis, BGC representatives state, but the possibility exists.

“We don’t have a problem today, we don’t have a problem this month and we probably won’t have a problem next month,” Davis said. “We’re looking at the intersection of two issues. There’s higher overhead, and we’re looking at less income this spring than we did

last year by a significant amount. When those two meet, that’s when we’re going to have a problem.”

Current board members Michael Pearson, Jordan Nivilinszky and Harold Kinney, joined Davis to describe the challenges facing the club today.

Teen Center

In 2014, BCG merged with Quality Child Care of Florence (QCCF), another organization that offered child care and a learning environment designed to meet the needs of infants, toddlers and preschool children, in hopes to reduce overhead and increase efficiency, according to an official 2016 audit of the club.

But in 2015, QCCF closed, leaving BGC the building that once housed the program. Afterwards, the board decided to use the building as a Teen Center.

The current headquarters of the club, located at 1501 Airport Road in Florence, serves a combination of high school and junior high stu-

dents. As of now, Teen Center enrollment is down, but the board foresees a near future where the club will have to accommodate high school aged youth.

“If you look at all the kids in (Elementary Program Director Samantha Gauderman’s) elementary program, they’re moving up,” Kinney said. “It keeps growing. If we keep doing a good job there, then they’re going to move into the middle school and they’re going to come here, and pretty soon, they’re going to continue and be a part of the Teen Center.”

Part of that preparation is the QCCF building.

High school and junior high school youth have different needs and social aspects, Davis explained. While the club plans on having high schoolers mentor the younger members, it became obvious to the staff that the two cohorts needed the ability to spend time apart.

See **BOYS & GIRLS** 7A