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Siuslaw News

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SERVING WESTERN LANE COUNTY SINCE 1890

FLORENCE, OREGON

Florence holds reception for retiring marshal

SVFR's Sean Barrett will be honored in a ceremony honoring his service, contributions

BY MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

Thirty years is a long time to do anything, especially if during much of that time you are risking your life to save others.

Sean Barrett has been a member of the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) for three decades and has recently retired from active duty with the district.

On Friday, Feb. 23, from 3 to 5 p.m. at SVFR Main Station on Highway 101, the fire district is inviting the public to a retirement open house to honor Barrett's years of service to the community.

Barrett was also honored at a January Florence City Council meeting when Florence Police Chief Tom Turner, Florence Mayor Joe Henry and City Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell gave feedback on working with him over the years.

Henry said, "When we moved here 19 years ago, you were here serving our community, and you're still here. I've always been proud of the things you've done."

"You have made our community safer by being fire marshal," FarleyCampbell said. "We will miss you, we thank you and we wish you luck on your adventures."

Turner thanked Barrett for being a resource for the police department over the years, and gave him a challenge coin.

"It has been a privilege of mine to work with such great people," Barrett said in response. "It makes the job go so much easier when there are good people around you."

In a wide ranging interview conducted with Barrett as he prepares for the next stage of his life, he



SIUSLAW NEWS FILE PHOTO



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Retiring Siuslaw Valley Fire Marshal Sean Barrett (center) is honored by Police Chief Tom Turner and Florence Mayor Joe Henry at the Jan. 8 City Council meeting. Barrett served with Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue for 30 years — as a volunteer, a part-time worker and as fire marshal, a full-time position. A public retirement open house for Barrett will be held Friday.

spoke of his tenure and experiences and also his hopes for the department in the future.

Barrett began his work with SVFR as a volunteer, moving to a part-time position and eventually a full-time role as the fire marshal.

Now, as he has weathered some serious medical challenges in the past couple of years, he has decided the time has come to step away from the day-to-day activities of being Florence's Fire Marshal.

"I've spent a total of 30 years as a member of the district. Eighteen years of that time was as a volunteer and 12 years as a paid employee of the SVFR. I first started working as a part-time maintenance person. I was taking care of all of the equipment and keeping the trucks and fire engines in service," Barrett said. "Then I was hired to work on special projects. One of those was the ladder truck, getting it ready for bid was a big project and it was a really fun project to be involved with."

The possibility of making a larger contribution to the district's efforts was appealing to Barrett, so when an opportunity to gain experience and training by working with an interim fire marshal presented itself, he took it.

"We hired a guy from California for a year as our fire marshal. Chief Buchanan said, 'If you are interested, work with this guy,' and I was, so I did," Barrett said. "I ended up getting a lot of the certifications I needed. Then I got hired on as a prevention specialist and, once I got my final certification, I was promoted to fire marshal, which was the best job I have ever had."

See **MARSHAL 6A**

Dunes City sets goals, holds town hall

In a string of meetings, councilors discuss future, roads and marijuana

In a Dunes City Council goal-setting meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 13, the council

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

laid out plans for the 2018 year with a wide variety of topics such as good

governance, financial stability and water quality.

One of the first topics covered was good governance. The council spoke of streamlining the Citizens Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission process, which reviews proposed city ordinances and provides recommendations. But the process can take time, as exemplified by the work done on the city's Title 15, which covers zoning and development within the city.

"Ten years is too long to be considering changes to Title 15," notes of the meeting read.

The importance of completing Title 15 on time was vital, the council argued, because regulating permits can be difficult to enforce.

Changes to the building and construction process would include a mandated preconstruction review meeting and developing checklists.

The council hoped that the city's Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed, laying out the groundwork for what ordinances should be written and passed.

The council also had interest in renewing the periodic newsletters Dunes City used to create, which covered various topics related

See **COUNCILORS 9A**

'For the dunes to exist, the sand needs to move'

Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative brings awareness to vanishing dunes

BY JARED ANDERSON
Siuslaw News

In 2014, the U.S. Forest Service created a strategy group tasked with developing an "Oregon Dunes Restoration Strategy." In October 2016, the Oregon Dunes Restoration Collaborative (ODRC) formed to continue the group's work. Now, ODRC has released a new book, "Restoring Oregon's Dunes: The bid to save a national treasure."

Developed as an image-heavy "coffee table" book, "Restoring Oregon's Dunes" tells the story of the coastal dunes that run from Florence to Coos Bay, their history, why they're disappearing and the partnership that has formed to try and save them from invasive species.

The foreign plants that threaten the dunes, such as European beach grass, were originally planted in the early 1900s to protect facilities like highways, jetties and towns from being overtaken by sand.

"The sand would blow over these and bury them," ODRC representative Bill Blackwell said. "(The plants) were a good thing at the start, but they

quickly became a problem."

The problem was twofold.

First, the invasive species began overtaking native plants, like the short-lived perennial Pink Sand Verbena.

"Species like the Western Snowy Plover need open sand to nest in, but they're losing to the European beach grass and Scotch broom," Blackwell said.

Second, the plants themselves are altering the natural geological processes of the dunes.

"For the dunes to exist, the sand needs to move," said Blackwell. "If you're out there, you can see it will look different from one day to the next. With the vegetation stabilizing things, the sand can't move, which stabilizes the dunes and simplifies processes."

Because of this, dunes have been altered drastically from where they were before the invasive species were planted. Aerial photographs from the 1940s compared to today shows that much of the open sand has disappeared.

In 2014, the Siuslaw National Forest, which manages the Oregon



NED HICKSON/SIUSLAW NEWS

The Oregon dunes once moved freely with the wind. Now, a variety of vegetation, including some invasive species, anchor the sand, permanently altering the changing nature of the dunes.

Dunes National Recreation Area, convened a group of stakeholders — recreation and tourism groups, environmental groups, tribal representa-

tives, elected officials, community members and federal, state and county agencies — to develop a strategy for tackling dunes restoration. It is

there that the ODRC was conceived.

See **DUNES 6A**

INSIDE Classifieds B6
Community A3
Community Voices A8
Kid Scoop B5

Library Tidings A5
Opinion A4
Records A2
Sports B

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Full Forecast, A3

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