

Marshal from 1A

"I really loved it," he added. SVFR Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Pete Warren has worked closely with Barrett over the years and greatly appreciated the professional attitude and composure Barrett brought to the job. "One event I recall came on the heels of a wildland fire, which the majority of the department was battling. The gang was just starting to return from the field when a rapidly burning house fire was tapped out to us. Sean arrived on scene as houses bordering the structure were in serious jeopardy, too," Warren said. "He knew it would be longer than normal response time from our teams. You could almost detect a bit of concern in his voice over our

radios, as it seemed like he was 'willing' his crews to arrive in time. "Not taking any chances, he requested Mutual Aid from another fire department. It all worked out fine as crews arrived in time to minimize the damage. I'm sure his pulse rate rose a bit more than normal, but he was rock solid and in command." While Barrett was a strong presence in the field, his other responsibilities as fire marshal were perhaps the most enjoyable aspect of the job. His duties included public education, code enforcement and fire extinguisher training. Barrett also enjoyed working with students at the Siuslaw School District and with senior citizens, educating them on fire safety and effective methods of fire prevention.

"I just love working with the public," he said. "Helping people with problems or situations they might have at their business or restaurant was one of my favorite parts of the job. Teaching folks how to prepare for an emergency was also an important part of my job and I enjoyed it a lot." Another aspect of Barrett's job that he found extremely rewarding was the camaraderie and friendships he developed over the years with his fellow firefighters. "The person right next to you, the people you are working with, may have to save your life. They are backing you up and you are backing them up. So you are responsible for each other — and that's more than just a regular working relationship," he said. Barrett's decision to retire

from the district was one that was made primarily due to serious medical issues he was facing, not a diminution of his enthusiasm or love for the job. He underwent an involved procedure to remove a tumor from his brain and the resulting damage has been a significant hurdle to regaining his health. "Unfortunately, it wasn't a planned decision to step away and it wasn't a decision I made lightly. It was a medical decision," Barrett said. "I have undergone some serious procedures and I just wasn't recovering as fast or as fully as I had hoped." He added, "I'm going to be OK. I have suffered some brain damage from the tumor and there are some cognition issues that have affected me. I still get really tired, but I am determined to work my way through

them and get better." He described the decision as "one of the hardest of his life." Barrett commented on his future plans as he eases into a well-deserved retirement and he encourages others to consider volunteering at the SVFR as a way to help their friends and neighbors. "I plan on doing different things in the district as a volunteer, helping out when I can. I'm not ready to give it up, but I am ready to take it a little easier," he said. "If people think they might want to volunteer at the SVFR, they should try it. If it doesn't work out for them, that's OK. "Many people think they can't do it or it's not the right fit for them and then they get in there and they are hooked." Barrett said he is prepared for the challenges that await

him in his health situation and the changes that are on the horizon for the fire district in the future. "I like change. I'm a change person and I think change needs to happen. In the 30 years I have been involved with the district, I have seen four fire chiefs and a lot of changes in the department," Barrett said. "And as far as the merging of WLAD and SVFR, we work together already and most of our calls are medical in nature, so we work together a lot. "It's just the next step in what seems to be a natural progression. Merging the two departments seems like the right thing to do as we move into the future."

Dunes from 1A

"One of the things the collaborative did was identify our priority areas for restoration and get rid of the invasives," Blackwell said. "Obviously, next to Highway 101 would not be a priority area. We don't want to cause the roadway to get buried. It's more out in the open where we've done restoration work already, like the Oregon Dunes Overlook."

The ODRC regularly has students from the Siuslaw School District cutting scotch broom at the overlook, as well as at Heceta Beach north of Florence. The methods used to get rid of the plants has involved mostly hand treatments, including pulling the plants or cutting them down. "There have also been some areas where the Forest Service has done mechanical treatment with bulldozers and excavators," Blackwell said.

The Siuslaw National Forest is currently involved in environmental assessment to look at specific areas on the beaches, and how best to treat the area. Blackwell and the ODRC hope that the book will help raise awareness for dune restoration. "The Oregon dunes are a special place for many of us," Dina Pavlis, ODRC member and author of "Secrets of the Dunes," said. "If we do nothing, they will be lost forever.

That's why I've been a part of this effort. I'm hoping this book will help others see that all of us working together is how we can save the dunes." The book is available on request at the ODRC's new website at SaveOregonDunes.org. There, the public can also see aerial photographs of the dunes from different decades to see the progression of the invasive species and the loss of open space.

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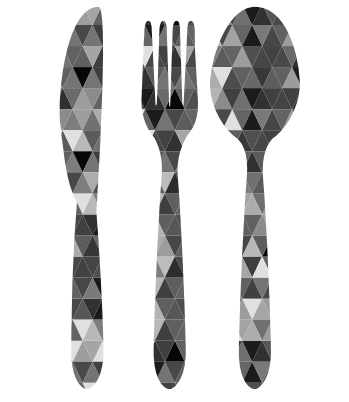
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