

# Rhody Rendezvous



*with old friends and new at the Rhododendron Festival, May 16 to 20, 2018*

The 111th annual Florence Rhododendron Festival continues a grand tradition this week.

“Rhody Rendezvous,” this year’s theme, is intended to evoke a feeling of coming to Florence for an exciting gathering with friends and family and having a great time in Oregon’s Coastal Playground, according to Bettina Hannigan, executive director of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce.

“It’s our 111th year. After that many years, we’re pretty sure that several generations of Oregonians and other visitors have rendezvoused around our rhodies many times,” Hannigan said.

The Davis Shows Northwest Carnival opens on Wednesday afternoon at the Port of Siuslaw parking lot in Historic Old Town Florence; the Rhododendron Court Coronation takes place Thursday evening at the Florence Events Center; and the town begins filling with rhody enthusiasts on Friday.

Saturday features the 5K Rhody Run and Walk; the 26th annual Rhody Classic Car Show ‘n’ Shine from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Grocery Outlet parking lot; the Junior Parade and Kiwanis Kids Games at noon, and the Coast Radio Classic Car Cruise from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. through Old Town.

The Rhododendron Festival Grand Floral Parade is at noon on Sunday, May 20, at 27th Street and Highway 101. The parade will wend its way down Highway 101 to Kingwood Street, and from there down to Bay Street and Historic Old Town Florence. The parade ends at the Port of Siuslaw parking lot where the Davis Shows Carnival will be going strong.



“We’re looking to this year’s parade entrants to really step up again and rock the rhodies,” Hannigan said. “It’s one of the oldest floral festival parades in the west and we want every entry to have as many rhodies as possible.”

Rhody Days also includes a vendor’s fair in Old Town, a spectacular rhododendron show along with live music, art and other festivities at the Florence Events Center, and Three Rivers Casino Resort will host the annual Let It Ride motorcycle show and other events.

Each year during the Thursday night kick-off event at the Florence Events Center, officials crown Queen Rhododendra and The King of the Coast from area high schools as the event’s official ambassadors.

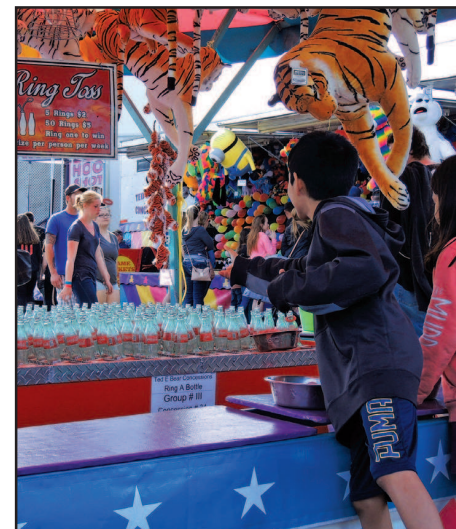
Seven Siuslaw High School stu-

dents make up the Senior Court this year — along with five young princesses from Siuslaw and Mapleton elementary schools.

Court members sell campaign-style pins for \$3 featuring the festival’s logo. Pins are available from court members, at the Chamber’s Visitor’s Center at 290 Highway 101 and around town. Proceeds go toward scholarships for members of the court.

Pins are also good for \$1 off a bowl of chowder at participating restaurants in May. The list currently includes Beachcomber Pub, Le Bouchon Café, Bay Street Grille, ICM Restaurant, Firehouse Restaurant and Homegrown Public House.

Hannigan said, “There’s always so much to do in and around Florence, and the Rhododendron Festival



adds even more fun to this place we call Oregon’s Coastal Playground.”

For a full listing of Rhody Days events, general information about the festival, parade entry forms, vendor fair applications or event schedules, check [FlorenceChamber.com](http://FlorenceChamber.com).