



PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON & MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

“Look, Mama! It’s shooting stars!” One three-year-old said when the big fireworks show began Wednesday on the Port of Siuslaw Boardwalk. Families gathered together for patriotic events all day in Florence and surrounding communities. More festivities continue tomorrow with Oregon Coast Military Museum’s third anniversary celebration and the eighth annual Wings and Wheels event.



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The weekend will bring together entrepreneurs and startup enthusiasts to share ideas, form teams and learn what it takes to launch a business venture.

“Dozens of cities worldwide have created these Startup Weekends,” said David Youngentob, Coastal Venture Catalyst for Oregon Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network (RAIN).

In fact, more than 139,000 people have created more than 23,000 teams in 150 countries at over 2,900 Startup Weekend events. And that’s only since Startup Weekend began through Techstars in 2007.

“There is a long list of companies that got started through Startup Weekend that later went on to become recognized or bought by another business,” Youngentob said.

These include LootCrate, Rover, Foodspotting and Eventup.

Youngentob himself went through a Startup Weekend as he and his partners worked on several ideas.

“It’s definitely more fun to ‘do’ a Startup Weekend,” he said. “You get to bring all your ideas out and the event helps you get to the great idea.”

Now, he is planning the Oregon coast’s first Startup Weekend.

“RAIN is excited to lead the organizing to make this happen for the startups here,” he said.

The event is produced by Oregon RAIN, LaneSBDC, City of Florence and Pure Organic Energy; is supported by the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and Techstars; and sponsored by Oregon Pacific Bank, Lovejoy’s Restaurant & Tearoom and Surftown Coffee Company.

Florence City Manager Erin Reynolds said, “This is an exciting new milestone for our region’s economy. A Startup Weekend is unheard of in a community of our size. However, Florence entrepreneurs and stakeholders are exceptionally eager and willing participants, and it’s a credit to them that we can endeavor to host this event.”

Entrepreneurs from RAIN’s other coastal communities, including Lane, Lincoln, Linn and Benton counties, will also be encouraged to come to the event.

“The Startup Weekend pulls people in a community into the same space to listen to ideas and band together,” Youngentob said. “The goal of the weekend is about acting on those ideas.”

RAIN Communications Specialist Matt Hollander said, “Entrepreneurs have a tendency to work in isolation until they feel like their project is ‘just right.’ However, working with others and their differing ideas, experience and expertise can help you develop further. They will help you see the solution you can’t see yourself.”

Startup Weekend Oregon Coast begins on Friday, July 13, at 6:30 p.m. with a dinner catered by Lovejoy’s.

After dinner and networking time, participants will gather to pitch business ideas.

“The premise is to bring out ideas, push forward with a product and seek validity in the marketplace,” Youngentob said.

Attendees will then vote on the best pitches and form teams based on which project they want to work on.

“The challenge is really how to find that great idea,” Youngentob said. “To do that, you have to start with a lot of ideas.”

Startup Weekend peers and mentors will help launch that great idea forward.

“There will be mentors there the whole time, many of whom can be recognized from RAIN’s other events on the Oregon coast,” Youngentob said.

These include Mike Webb, vice president and commercial relationship manager for OPB’s Florence branch; Jack Hannigan, Oregon Coast Humane Society board president; and Brad Attig, who provides alternative financing guidance to early-stage companies through RAIN’s Venture Catalyst Program.

On day two, teams will learn from the local mentors as they

develop a prototype of their business.

Youngentob said this will include creating a business model, defining goals and getting to a ‘concluding arc’ — where the entrepreneur team will build out a pitch presentation that shows what the startup could become.

The event concludes Saturday night when teams present their projects to the audience and a panel of experts.

“There are many potential benefits of a startup weekend,” Youngentob said. “Of course, we may see a team that leaves the event with plans to launch a company. But each and every participant will meet other innovators who could become future business partners, network with experienced entrepreneurs and truly learn what it takes to launch a business venture.”

When Youngentob went through Startup Weekend with one of his business ideas, he learned several valuable lessons. Ultimately, he began supporting other startups through his work with FertiLab and RAIN.

“The important part of every Startup Weekend is meeting like-minded folks and making

those connections to help you move forward,” he said. “The goal is to experience core process of business discovery, from company concept to customer research and initial business prototyping. It can happen in just over 24 hours, and it will at this event for all our attendees.”

Startup Weekend tickets are on sale at go.startupweekend.org/florence. Admission includes three meals, benefits and discounts, expert speakers, networking opportunities and unlimited internet and coffee.

For more information, visit www.oregonrain.org.

Siuslaw News readers can take advantage of an exclusive offer for a free ticket to Startup Weekend Oregon Coast.

To claim a free ticket, visit go.startupweekend.org/florence, select a ticket and enter promo code: SiuslawNews

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