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FLORENCE, OREGON

Putting on a critical thinking cap

Siuslaw School District voters invited to weigh all angles when deciding on November election

BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

Area schools are on the minds of community members lately, with a \$108 million bond measure for Siuslaw School District on the ballot in November and Florence City Council expressing interest in a Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Program that could bring important safety changes to the areas adjacent to the district's schools on Oak Street.

At the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce August Noon Forum, Chamber President Russ Pierson presented a lesson on critical thinking, especially in regard to the Siuslaw school bond.

He said he wore several "hats" to the meeting, as he represented a variety of interests in the community. These included his roles as chamber president, dean of Lane Community College Florence Center (LCC), past associate director of facilities management and planning at LCC, former construction professional and current member of the Siuslaw School Board's Bond Advisory Committee.

"The chamber doesn't intend to take an up or down position on the ballot measure, but we do think it is important that all of our chamber members have the best possible information," Pierson said. "There are wonderful reasons why some in this room might end up voting 'yes,' and there are wonderful reasons why some might end up voting 'no.' But we want you to have the best information so that you can make an informed choice for you, your family, your community and your business. Some of those values won't necessarily align, but again, it's complex."

He then invited the attendees to put on their critical thinking caps as they considered Siuslaw's bond proposal.

To best discuss the district's complicated issues, Pierson gave an update on the projected bond before inviting his colleague Gary E. Smith, an instructor with LCC who specializes in risk management and critical thinking, to walk people through the best way to come to a decision on the November vote.

The Bond Advisory Committee has started giving short presentations around the community on the bond, including at a July meeting of the Florence City Council. All the information that has been publicly shared at www.siuslaw.k12.or.us/o/Siuslaw%20School%20District/page/november-2018-bond has been vetted by the Oregon Secretary of State.

See CRITICAL page 8A

Oregon flags lowered to half-staff

On Tuesday, Gov. Kate Brown ordered Oregon's flags be flown at half-staff until sunset to honor U.S. Sen. John McCain, who passed away Aug. 25. In Florence, flags at the Veteran's Memorial Park along the Siuslaw River billowed in the coastal breeze. "We lost an American hero," Brown said in a proclamation. "Sen. McCain's maverick sensibility meant he faced disagreement from both sides of the aisle. But, regardless of where he stood, his colleagues always knew his style was deeply rooted in an unflinching commitment to our country."



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Goodwill looks to bring IDAs to rural Oregon

Individual Development Accounts can help Oregonians keep working, learn lessons in savings

BY JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

Since 1999, a statewide program designed to help people apply for Individual Development Accounts (IDA), has been helping those with low incomes purchase homes, start or expand a business, go to college, get job training, purchase a vehicle or repair a home.

IDAs give Oregonians the opportunity to get matching grants from anywhere from a 3:1 ratio to a 5:1 ratio.

It's free money, if someone is willing to put in the time to plan and save.

"IDAs are available nationwide, but they are not funded by the federal level," said Trysta Duquette, outreach and resource specialist for Goodwill Industries of Lane and South Coast Counties. "Oregon has the strongest IDA program in the nation and it is funded by Oregonians for Oregonians."

Duquette will be coming to Florence on Tuesday, Sept. 25, to speak about Goodwill's involvement with IDAs.

IDAs work this way: if an individual is looking to save up for a car to get to work, they can sign up for an IDA through Goodwill or various other entities throughout the state and begin a savings plan.

Over a specified amount of time (in the case of a car, 366 days), they save a minimum amount of funds in an IDA. After the probational savings period ends, the IDA matches the individual's savings by a 3:1 ratio. Longer savings plans will gain more dividends in matching funds.

IDAs are intended to help people increase their assets and earning capacity, get a stable home situation, repair their credit and gain employment.

The IDA program is funded through tax deductible donations, with the responsibility of doling out funds to a group of fiduciaries across the state.

Dream Savers is one such fiduciary, which employs the help of Goodwill to ensure applications are filled out and guides people to make the right choice in picking their IDA.

Goodwill's goal is to direct 70 percent of IDA funding to rural communities, where it can be more challenging to receive financial aid.

"We're very client driven," Duquette said. "What do you want to be? For some people, it's that they want a stable roof over their head. They've been homeless before. Some people don't have problems paying their bills, but they want to save for more and retire."

While there are multiple IDAs available, Goodwill focuses strictly on employment.

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Democratic candidates make case for voter support



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio came to Florence in support of Oregon Rep. Caddy McKeown yesterday, holding a town hall at Siuslaw Public Library.

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio and Oregon Rep. Caddy McKeown appeared at a joint town hall meeting Tuesday in the Bromley Room at the Siuslaw Public Library. The turnout for the event was high and many interested residents stood outside the Bromley Room waiting for a seat to open.

Both DeFazio and McKeown are current Democratic office holders that are running for

re-election this November and face credible challengers for their respective offices.

McKeown spoke first, mentioning some of her personal history and how those experiences have informed and motivated her work as the representative for District Nine.

She highlighted her long-standing commitment to education, pointing to her work across the state and with the Siuslaw School District overseeing and dramatically expanding the ASPIRE program. ASPIRE is

the state's mentoring program to help students access education and training beyond high school.

"I first started out because I have an interest in education. My kids were growing up and going to public schools, so I spent 11 years on the Coos Bay School Board and I've continued to be involved in education issues since that time," McKeown said.

She also shared the work she has done in the most recent legislative session at the

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