

MAPS from page 1A

one of Florence's main streets, to go online and check the county's newly posted Flood Plain Maps.

"Property owners along Bay Street will want to have a look, as they are impacted most by this map update. Please visit the (county link) for the background on how and why FEMA created new flood maps for Florence and Dunes City and Lane County. At the bottom of the webpage the proposed map panels for Florence are available," she said. "The Lane County Floodplain comparison mapping tool link is handy for seeing the before and after, 1999 to 2018."

Ratte reinforced FarleyCampbell's observations and agreed with her suggestions to residents.

"Some property owners will find that the updated flood hazard areas now include their property. If they have federally backed mortgages, lenders may now require that they carry flood insurance. But even if properties are not in the FEMA-mapped high-risk flood zones, lenders could require owners to purchase flood insurance," Ratte said.

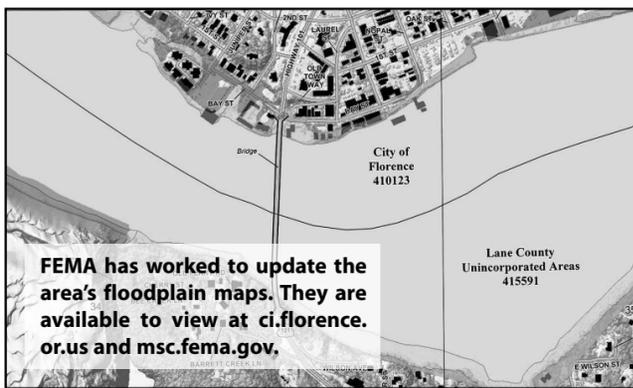
He added that some properties may have been shifted

out of the flood hazard boundaries. He suggested that these property owners still consider carrying a flood insurance policy — "given that numerous flood claims apply to properties located outside of the FEMA-mapped high-risk flood zones."

The use of enhanced data gathering software, primarily from satellites using Lidar, a mix of light and radar, provides significant new information for not only homeowners but for FEMA and private insurance companies. These detailed, high-resolution images will be used to provide insurance companies and property owners with the most up to date and technically advanced geographic information available on the Lane County coastal floodplain.

This process will result in changes to what can be built, insured and used commercially or residentially, on many pieces of property in the coastal areas of Oregon.

"Overall, the updates show reduction in exposure of properties to areas of high-risk flooding," Ratte said.



"Hopefully, this update provides residents of Florence, Dunes City and coastal Lane County with more information on flood risks so that they can make informed decisions on protecting their interests and collaborating with each other and local, state and federal entities to reduce potential damages from future flooding events."

The release of these newly created maps by FEMA is the most recent step in a process that was designed to not only improve the mapping of coastal areas, but to also clarify what actions will need to be taken from an insurance perspective, due to changes in the flood designation of a plot of land.

According to FarleyCampbell, if property owners have questions or a dispute with the updated designations,

there are options to "appeal changes in flood zones, floodways, and base flood elevations, based on scientific or technical issues."

Ratte hopes the new information will make the decision-making process for homeowners clearer and ultimately provide information to safeguard their property and obtain the needed insurance coverage in case of a major natural disaster.

"Readers are encouraged to share this information with their neighbors, review the available data as described below, ask questions to community officials, and provide comments during the comment and appeal period," he said. "Additionally, if property owners have data and analysis indicating that the results published by FEMA are inaccurate, then we encourage

that they submit to community officials or directly to FEMA." updated Flood Plain maps for Lane County's coastal region, visit www.lanecounty.org/femamapupdate.

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SERIES from page 6A

As word got out that we were interviewing people, accusations came out of the woodwork. In the space of one week, dozens of tips came in about problems with both campaigns. People who were for Miltenberger agreed to talk to us, but with grave reservations because we "weren't a 'liberal' newspaper."

Lucio supporters talked to us on a whole host of issues, but often refused to be on record, stating that we were "too liberal," or out to destroy the conservative candidacy. There were also veiled threats to sue us from both sides if we got information incorrect — something made difficult because, in many cases, we couldn't use their comments on record.

Lawsuits were not the only threats we received on "Chaos." Before anything was published, Hickson received anonymous phone messages and notes stating we better be careful with our reporting, "or else." Hickson said it was one of the few times in his career when he actually felt concerned for himself or his reporters' safety.

News was evolving rapidly, even up to deadlines. As one reporter was writing Part I the night before deadline, another reporter was at a public city council meeting, where Lucio supporters called for Lacer and Greene's resignation.

Just over half of Part II was written in a three-hour period before deadline because campaign volunteer Terry Tomeny, who had initially asked Lucio to run, talked to us that morning, shedding light on issues we had been previously unable to verify.

He said he talked to us because he was afraid for Lucio's safety.

This one was a hard piece for the news staff, who live, work and play in the Florence area like many of you. We like everyone who was involved. We've dined at their houses, hung out with them at social events and, for those of us with hair at least, have gone to their barber shop. These were not only our neighbors and leaders, but in some cases our friends. In all honesty, when the facts first started coming out, some of the reporters refused to believe it.

We had long discussions about every time we dined with them, gave them a friendly hug. Was that the right thing to do? If all this "chaos" was going on, why

didn't we see it?

Much like in the film "The Post," we asked ourselves "Are we too close?"

Today, locked away in the office is information we didn't include and a list of questions that went unanswered regarding the events surrounding our "Chaos" series. Some of the questions we openly asked in the series, others are based on "off the record" comments we couldn't divulge. There's only one copy of the document. All the reporters covering city events have read it so that they can keep those questions in mind moving forward.

In the end, one question we should keep in mind as a community is this: To what degree — if any — should partisanship play a role in our local elections? Is what happened merely a symptom of the current national political climate, or something else entirely?

We learned an important lesson with the "Chaos" series about political writing. People will be okay with getting hit, as long as you hit the other side as well.

We want the community to know our Chaos series was never about "going after" someone or some group: it was simply to say, "This is what we currently know about the election, and it is a mess."

In the two months since the November elections, we have heard from councilors that they will work to put partisanship and the election behind them. The city can't afford it. And at the December city council meeting, it was as if the chaos surrounding the election was nothing more than an interesting — though disappointing — historical footnote. The councilors got along, they worked together, they joked around.

Perhaps the ugliness of the election was just about that: The election, and nothing more.

We can only hope.

Future series

While the above articles received the most pageviews online, there were a number of 2018 series that we were proud of. "In their own words: Latinos in the Siu-slaw" was a unique and intimate look at a minority that is often politicized, but seldom understood.

"Plight of the Pollinators" was a fun and popular two-part series on how honey is made and the ramifications of a world without bees and other pollinators, and "The

business of Marilyn" showed a side of the art exhibition world that never gets talked about, even in the national press.

"Intolerance" was an opportunity to explore an ex-white supremacist and how racism can be instilled into youth through punk rock music. We had actually planned to turn that into a longer series covering multiple aspects of intolerance, but two of the subjects we had planned to cover dropped due to possible controversies. Just as we were about to regroup, "Chaos" hit.

There were also series that never materialized, such as an ambitious, five-part series on mental health in the Siu-slaw region. We had a frank and eye-opening discussion with Peace Harbor staff about difficulties in getting treatment and had begun work on studying the reasons for — and effects of — suicide in the region.

As we head into 2019, we've begun to reevaluate the place of special series writing. While they have certainly made for some interesting conversations, some readers have voiced that they are too long and unwieldy to digest.

Why the series are so lengthy can be best described by a conversation we had with a reader, who said, "God, they can be hard to get through. But, by the end, I feel I really understand the subject."

A series is our chance to truly examine all of what we know about a broader issue and try to suss out what it all means. And when we're dealing with complex issues that can sometimes span years of information and multiple points of view, a 500-word article isn't going to cut it.

In fact, not including information can sometimes make things worse.

We continue to value your feedback as we begin our 129th year of the Siu-slaw News, and are grateful for the readers who stuck around for the series, as well as the readers who let us know they didn't. Whether long or short, multi-part or 300-word report, we consider it an honor to write for this community.

These series, among others, can be viewed online at TheSiuslawNews.com under the Special Series Archive page.

The town-hall debate on guns can be viewed on our Facebook page under the video section.



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