

SUPPORT from page 1A

said Kevin Sweetman, U.S. Coast Guard Communication Supervisor at North Bend. “And that appreciation comes from all of our units, from all the way down to the California border up to Depoe Bay. All the local communities up and down the coastline have been overwhelming with their support. We greatly appreciate it.”

How much was donated to the nonprofit Chief Petty Officers Association of Coast Guard Sector North Bend, whose district includes the U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River, hadn't been completely tabulated as of Friday.

“We still haven't had all the units report everything they received,” Sweetman said. “A lot of stuff is being processed in the mail as well and being sent to units. I really don't want to

speculate.”

However, estimates could put the total amount of donations within the North Bend Sector in the hundreds of thousands.

The Siuslaw News collected more than \$30,000 in cash and checks from the community as support poured in for the Station Siuslaw River after a call for donations came from Florence Mayor Joe Henry and the Oregon Coast Military Museum.

As of last Thursday, \$9,100 alone had come in from the American Legion Post 59, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 3232, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Florence Chapter, the VFW Auxiliary, the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary and the Band of Brothers. However, additional funds have come in since that initial count, pushing the to-

tal donated by these veterans' groups above \$10,000. (See photo on A6.)

An additional \$20,000 has come in from community members looking to help, giving checks as high as \$500 and cash donations as small as \$5 — any amount that people could afford. Even coins made it into the mix, including a large jar of quarters donated by the Moore family.

This isn't counting the stacks of gift cards that came in.

“There have been a lot of gift cards,” Sweetman said. “A lot of food donated as well. It's incredible to see how much food has come in from everywhere. Not just from people, but from different businesses all over.”

Spruce Point gave free lunch to servicemen and their families, Darlings Marina and RV Resort gave 50 percent discounts to all Coasties and their

immediate family members, Cross Road Assembly of God offered assistance with gas, gift cards to Fred Meyer and utility bills, Domino's Pizza provided gift cards and 50 percent off at locations in Florence and Coos Bay, and Siuslaw Outreach Services provided assistance — among many others who donated anonymously.

“I've heard a lot of success stories of landlords and utility companies deferring payments, and credit card companies deferring payments,” Sweetman said.

Money poured in from around the state as well, including \$90,000 from the American Legion Department of Oregon, which wrote 60 checks at \$1,500 each through its Temporary Financial Assistance program.

While the current shutdown is coming to a close, many of

the long-standing issues that caused the government shut-down — including the funding of a border wall — have not yet been settled. The current agreement only provides a three-week reprieve for both sides to find a more permanent solution. If one is not found by Feb. 15, the government could be shut down again.

Because of that, Sweetman stopped short of expressing total relief for the current agreement.

“I don't have a grasp of the situation,” he said, stating he had not yet looked at the specifics of the deal. “From what I heard, it's three weeks. It's a relief for sure, but temporarily. I think we would all do a lot better when an actual budget gets approved.”

It is unclear when federal government will release funds for federal workers.



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www.shoppelocal.biz

HOUSING from page 1A

The local real estate market has rebounded over the past few years, with many long-time residents taking advantage of the robust market to sell their property. This presents a challenge to renters, and to potential home buyers, as the cost for both rental units and homes continues to rise steadily and the number of available places to live is rapidly diminishing.

This lack of available affordable housing has a ripple effect, in that employers have few options for housing for workers that they have hired for projects of all types. This shortage of housing would be less noticeable if there were more Florence area residents that were prepared to work in the construction industry. Unfortunately, the pool of skilled workers for almost all parts of the construction sector is nearly non-existent.

This means that workers have to be brought in from other locations and there are not enough places available to house these workers.

This shortage of places to house workers often delays, or even cancels, construction of all types from occurring.

The City of Florence is aware of this problem and has taken a number of steps to address this obvious need.

Florence City Council, in consultation with staff from the Planning Department, have made changes to the regulations builders must meet to make it easier to build with the hope that a number of homes can be completed and occupied quickly.

One of the most anticipated of these changes in zoning allows for much smaller homes to be built. These units are commonly referred to as Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) and they may provide a reason-

ably priced way to quickly add to the local housing inventory.

The city has put in place a streamlined planning process to assist builders in obtaining the necessary permits to build ADUs and one organization is poised to move forward focusing solely on the construction of ADUs, the Heart of the Coast Housing Alliance.

Eric Hauptman is the head of this new group, which has seen the changes in regulations and believes the construction of ADUs is a priority for the city.

“The housing alliance's plan is to market the advantages of ADUs to homeowners in our targeted areas. The Florence City Council has addressed the building of ADUs by fast tracking applications as well as waiving system development charges,” he said.

In June 2018, the State of Oregon required that counties and municipalities begin per-

mitting ADUs in every residential zoning district.

However, there are several variables to consider when applying for permits to build ADUs — including the availability of water and sewer services and available parking being primary among them.

The Heart of the Coast Housing Alliance also has plans to start a construction facility to produce ADUs in town, using local labor to produce the units. The group also intends on providing instruction to those wishing to learn a construction related trade.

Hauptman says the inclusion of a teaching component to the mix will provide some long-term options for young people in the area.

“It is also the intent of the alliance to construct ADUs locally in an enclosed production facility, which will include classrooms for instruction in basic construction technology skills reinforced by hands-on training on the production floor,” Hauptman said. “We also propose to enlist the support of journeymen and educators for our classrooms. The opportunity to learn by producing will be available to

interested students of all ages.”

The process of locating and securing a production and education facility are in the initial stages at this time but Hauptman is optimistic an appropriate space can be secured.

“We would prefer finding an existing building and converting it rather than having to build from the ground up. Challenges would be finding both a classroom facility and a manufacturing facility. Of course, financial support is crucial, as is support from the City of Florence,” he said.

Other needs include instructors, the selection of subject matter and classroom equipment, textbooks and tools.

The Heart of the Coast Housing Alliance also realizes this effort is only a small part of the needed solution to Florence's housing shortfall.

“Our objective is to, perhaps in a limited but effective way, address an issue that, left unchecked could negatively impact the economies of western Lane County for years to come,” Hauptman said.

For more information on the Heart of the Coast Housing Alliance, email info@heartofthe coast.org.

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