

VETERANS from page 1A

However, the commissioner assured those in attendance he would take their concerns to the commission.

“I can advocate with the director of the Health and Human Services Department and I can advocate with the county administrator, and they can look into it and see if there is any possibility, or see what the resources are,” he said. “To actually direct a change and have the budget to cover that change, is probably going to take a vote of the full board.”

Paul Gargis and Jerry Hernandez are very active in veterans-related issues of all types. They initiated the letter-writing effort that prompted Bozievich and Reiley’s visit.

The situation is clear cut to the two Florence representatives, who said they felt the county should provide additional support for veterans in this area.

“We have a great number of veterans living here and there is only one VSO, once a week. This makes it very hard for a veteran or veteran’s spouse to file a claim. In a lot of cases they simply quit trying. To file a claim here in Florence, a veteran has to get up by 5 a.m. or earlier, to go to a small office and hopefully be the first one there. ... Sometimes, the VSO



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich and Lane County Veterans Services Program Supervisor Joseph Reiley meet with area veterans.

office is closed, leaving no prior notice,” Hernandez wrote in his letter to Bozievich.

VFW Post 3232 Commander Tom Benedict also shared his experience with the commissioner and supervisor.

“I myself finally gave up trying to get the service I needed here and went to the Veterans Affairs office in Eugene,” Benedict said. “Shannon (Johnson), who has been serving as our VSO, has been doing an outstanding job, but because of the logistics I was unable to go down to his work space in time to be seen early, nor could I spend time waiting.”

While Reiley, who leads the veterans service programs for Lane County, understood the concerns expressed at the meeting, his response was less

than encouraging.

“We recognize the need that is out here, and we are trying to figure out the best way to serve our constituents ... I don’t believe we have enough funding currently to have a full-time service officer out here,” he said. “I am hearing you though. ... There is a need and it’s a concern and we want to address it. We just have to figure out the best way to do that.”

One of the ideas considered at the meeting was utilizing volunteers to work with veterans that are seeking some type of assistance from the county.

These individuals would help with some types of claims while leaving others to the VSO. If some of the paperwork required to file a claim

could be prepared without the assistance of a certified and paid VSO, there could perhaps be more veterans served.

Reiley said some of this has been considered in the past, but there were concerns with non-accredited volunteers doing claims work or assisting in that area.

“Well we started down that pathway ... and what we found was those issues are so intertwined with private information regarding claims issues, that we felt we were not utilizing that time efficiently, so that didn’t work out the way we had hoped,” he said.

The answers that Reiley provided to the vets were not what the men had hoped for when they entered the meeting, but the concern and caring he expressed helped to soften his thoughts on the likelihood of an increase in VSO time for Florence.

“With regards to the meeting, most felt that meeting went well and was productive,” said Gargis, who summed up the feelings of the group after the meeting. “I feel that we were told that under the present situation there is a lack of funding that would enable the county to provide for additional time here in Florence

for a VSO to meet with our Veterans.”

He added, “Commissioner Bozievich recommended that we approach the city and request that the city help fund this position, as is done in oth-

er municipalities. That would be nice if the City of Florence were willing to do that for us, as we have no choice at this point but continue our quest of obtaining help for our deserving veterans.”



See Jim for your auto sales needs!

JOHNSTON

MOTOR COMPANY

2150 Hwy. 101 • Florence
(541) 997-3475 • 1-800-348-3475

Get Results...List With Tim.

Tim Sapp
Owner /
Principal Broker
541 999-8230

TR HUNTER
REAL ESTATE
541-997-1200

958 1st St – Riverfront, 3 bdrm, 2 bath home with stunning, unblockable views of the Siuslaw River and southern exposure from the back deck and main living areas. The open-concept great room offers high ceilings, fireplace and numerous windows. Nice landscaping and backyard, plus a 2-car garage. **\$465,000.** #2918-18384659

1749 Highway 101 • 541-997-1200

MEASLES from page 1A

Measles is a highly contagious virus that can cause a high fever, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. Two or three days after symptoms begin, tiny white spots may appear inside the mouth, an early sign of infection. This is followed by a rash of flat, red spots which cover the body and are accompanied by a high fever.

The rash and fever will typically run their course after a few days, though in rare cases it can cause encephalitis (infection of the brain), pneumonia, and low birth weight in babies born to infected women.

Because the virus lives in the nose and throat of an infected person, it can spread to others through coughing and sneezing.

“We actually don’t have any confirmed cases here in Lane County,” said Jason Davis, Lane County Health and Human Services Public Information Officer. “Our efforts right now are really preventative in nature.”

But because of the highly contagious nature of the virus, Lane County’s threshold for declaring an outbreak is a single confirmed case.

“If we even get one case, we’ll declare an outbreak,” said Davis. “And we’ll send out a press release confirming that case and also letting people know where that person has been in the last two weeks.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “measles is so contagious that if one person has it, 90 percent of the people close to that person who are not immune will also become infected.”

Those infected with measles can spread the virus four days before and four days after the rash appears.

As such, it is recommended that individuals who display symptoms call their local health authority before visiting a doctor’s office or hospital.

Protection against measles can be substantially increased through vaccination. The MMR vaccine, which includes vaccination against the viruses mumps and rubella, is generally administered to children once between nine and 15 months of age and again before reaching six years old.

MMR vaccine refusal, however, has been on the rise over the last decade.

Controversy surrounding a 1998 report which linked the

MMR vaccine to autism and later celebrity endorsement of the claim has been the genesis of a rise in skepticism about the safety of the vaccine, though this opinion has been widely rejected by the CDC, the National Academy of Medicine and other major research institutions.

Medical authorities have associated the phenomenon of vaccine refusal with increased risk for those who are not vaccinated as well as those who are.

Among the 35 cases of measles in Clark County this year, 34 were reportedly unimmunized.

The LCPH alert comes as visitation limitations were implemented on Friday by PeaceHealth’s Eugene hospital Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend.

The hospital has restricted visitation to labor and delivery, mother-baby and neonatal intensive care units, citing the rise in measles and influenza cases.

Visitations are restricted for individuals under the age of 21 or those who demonstrate any of the following symptoms:

- Fever (100 degrees or higher)
- Cough

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Redness or swelling of the eyes
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose
- Vomiting

As with measles, the spread and effect of the influenza virus can be mitigated with up-to-date vaccinations. Washing hands regularly and covering one’s mouth when coughing or sneezing can also help prevent its spread.

Sick individuals are encouraged to stay home from work or school.

Restrictions on hospital visitation have yet to make it as far as Cottage Grove or Florence.

“We don’t have any visitation restrictions in place at Cottage Grove Community Medical Center,” said Catherine Kroll, Director for Infection Prevention at PeaceHealth. “We’re evaluating the situation daily and would make decisions about visitation based on what type of spread is happening in the community.”

Information on exposure locations and the measles investigation in Clark County can be found online at www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/measles-investigation.

Local Eats

Your guide to great locally owned restaurants.

Where good friends & great food come together!

1285

RESTO BAR

FRIDAY & SATURDAY
CAST IRON SCALLOPS

Served with a pesto cream and wild mushroom risotto.

Happy Hour • Monday-Friday 3:00pm to 5:00pm
Enjoy drink specials at the bar!

1285 Bay Street in Old Town Florence
(541) 902-8338 • 1285restobar.com

BEST OF FLORENCE

Enjoy great food and good times.

MILITARY MONDAYS
Monday - All veterans or active service people get 10% off their entree

Wednesday - Wine Wednesday - 50% off all bottles

Thursday - All you can eat cod & chips from 5:00 to 8:00.

BRIDGEWATER FISH HOUSE
1297 Bay Street Florence • 541-997-1133
www.bridgewaterfishhouse.com

Surfside Restaurant

Come get your Loyalty Card!

Call: 541-997-8263

Surfside Restaurant Loyalty Card

5 Stamps: Free DRINK ON your next visit

10 Stamps: Free LUNCH ON your next visit

Thank you for being a Loyal Customer

Mo's Restaurant

WE ARE CLOSED FOR REMODELING.

Mo's will reopen on Friday, February 15th.
We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.
Thank you.

Mo's Old Town, Florence
Serving Bowls of comfort for Over 50 Years