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Crash claims life of Mapleton woman

Weekend's icy conditions cause fatality, severe injuries

By JARED ANDERSON

SIUSLAW NEWS

On Saturday, 52-year-old Jamie Jones of Mapleton died due to injuries sustained in a car accident, a result of a collision located just north of Honeyman State Park on Highway 101 at milepost 193 at approximately 11:07 a.m.

The accident occurred during a particularly severe bout of snow and ice that hit the region over the weekend.

"The road was absolutely slick from Rhododendron all the way up," said Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Interim Chief Director Steve Able. "It just went from a little mist of rain to hail."

According to investigators, the green 1999 Ford Explorer driven by Jones was northbound on Highway 101 when the vehicle lost control on the snow and ice-covered roadway, crossing into the southbound lane of the highway. Jones' Explorer collided with a white 2015 Isuzu delivery truck for American Mattress, operated by 25-year-old Daniel Crump of Reed-sport, which had been southbound on Highway 101.

"The crews were actually out at that end of the district training when the call came in, so the crews responded immediately," Able said about the response, which found two units responding. "The first unit arrived on



COURTESY PHOTOS



scene and saw that we had two vehicles, one blocking, one in the ditch, and people trapped in both vehicles."

Crews first administered attention to Jones, who was unconscious. Her companion dog, Loki, was found deceased at the scene.

See ACCIDENT page 9A

On the morning of Feb. 9, Jamie Jones of Mapleton was driving north on Highway 101 toward Florence when slick road conditions after the day's rain, hail and snow caused her vehicle to cross into the southbound lane. Her Ford Explorer collided with an American Mattress delivery truck, occupied by Daniel Crump and Nicholas Housego. The two men "remain in stable but serious condition," according to Western Lane Ambulance Chief of Operations Matt House.

'A small picture of homelessness'

The difficulties in serving the region's homeless community

By JARED ANDERSON

SIUSLAW NEWS

"Last year we would pick up a dozen people or more with the van," Pastor Greg Wood said. "The four nights we've been open this year, I think we've picked up two people. Three people is about the biggest night."

It was Monday, Feb. 4, at 5:30 p.m. It was 36 degrees at the moment and would dip to 30 by midnight. Wood, who is the president of the Florence Emergency Cold Weather Shelter, was driving around Florence, picking up homeless guests from various locations to bring to the Presbyterian

Church of the Siuslaw for a warm meal and the chance to spend the night out of the bitter cold.

But on Monday, Wood was having difficulty finding people. The Fred Meyer pickup station, which usually brings in people walking from the north, was empty. So too were the Siuslaw Public Library and Safeway pickup locations.

Wood ended his drive without any takers.

"I just don't think there's as many people living out there right now," he said. "I could be mistaken about that. There just doesn't seem to be the same number of people living

on the streets."

Is the homeless population in the Siuslaw decreasing? The fact is, no one really knows. The search for the answer to this pressing question brings up a whole host of issues when it comes to helping the homeless — The difficulty of tracking the population, federal versus local laws, difficulties with promoting services,

"It matters what they're doing. If it's a matter of city ordinance, then they get citations. If it's a criminal offense, then they could get arrested or give citations. It matters what the situation is. If it's something we can handle and not have to take them to jail and it won't happen again, then we're not going to take them to jail."

— Commander John Pitcher, Florence Police Department

perceived prejudices against the homeless community and the current state of housing.

While the conversation begins with an inquiry surrounding numbers, it ends with a debate on what the future of homelessness in the region will become.

By the numbers

One of the major problems facing those who work to alleviate the issue of homelessness is finding exact numbers, as demonstrated by the Lane County Point in Time Count, which looks to create a count of unsheltered individuals

in rural and urban areas.

The county has just finished the 2019 count and is still working on the data — set to be released in May — but staff was able to provide 2018's numbers for the Siuslaw region: one sheltered homeless and 22 unsheltered.

"But I will caution you that it is all volunteer-based, as far as how many surveys we get back," said Human Services Supervisor Alexandria Dreher at Lane County Health and Human Services. "The Point in Time count is a snapshot, and the best snapshot we can get. It's only a small picture of homelessness."

As to why the count is not more robust, Dreher said, "Sometimes the people trust government. If they're homeless, and they're in a crisis and not interested in completing a survey, or they don't trust the system, it's not worth it to give information."

The county has only begun reporting region-specific numbers in 2018, so Dreher was unable to see if there was a downward trend in the Siuslaw's homelessness by press time.

"But I do know that between 2017 and 2018, all across Lane County we saw a seven percent

See DIFFICULTIES page 8A

New bill seeks major changes to Oregon's gun laws

By MARK BRENNAN

SIUSLAW NEWS

The introduction into the Oregon Legislature of a bill primarily crafted by students in Lake Oswego has created a firestorm of debate that is quickly sweeping through the nation.

Senate Bill 501 was introduced in January by District 19 Democrat Sen. Rob Wagner and has drawn the attention and ire of gun rights groups in Oregon and across the country. Cosponsored by fellow Democrat from District 38, Rep. Andrea Salinas, the bill would require any individual that wished to purchase a firearm to obtain a permit before receiving a gun of any type.

However, most controversial about the proposed law is that it would also severely restrict the number of rounds an individual could purchase each month.

The legislation was written with input from Ceasefire Oregon, a student-led advocacy group that is working to reduce gun violence. The group was formed in 1994 and has re-emerged as a national voice on the subject of gun violence.

Of concern for gun owners is the rollback of laws that have been in place since Oregon adopted its constitution in 1857. The National Rifle Association's (NRA) Institute for Legislative Action has targeted SB 501 as "the worst of the laws introduced since the seating of legislators elected in the 2018 mid-terms."

According to the NRA's online analysis, "In Oregon, we see just how extreme the anti-gun legislative agenda has become, thanks to Sen. Wagner and his proposal, which ... seeks to enact a number of draconian restrictions on Oregon's law-abiding gun owners. ... When you turn over the responsibility of creating new laws to children, you can expect some real doozies — and SB 501 delivers in spades. This truly extreme bill, should it become law, would establish magazine capacity limits and ammunition restrictions that only a child with little knowledge of the practical, lawful use of firearms could envisage."

One of the most contentious elements of the legislation would require anyone that wished to purchase a firearm to fill out and submit an application, which would then be investigated by a member of the local sheriff's department. The loose protocols and flexibility that the legislation gives to the investigating officer to reject an application is also of particular concern to gun rights supporters. If the investigation revealed no cause for rejection, of which there are many, then the applicant could buy one hand gun.

This process seems to many gun owners to be clearly unconstitutional, as it restricts the right of citizens to arm themselves as they see fit.

There are also major concerns with sections of SB 501 that require valid state identification to purchase ammunition and limit legal purchases of ammunition to 20 individual rounds per month.

See GUN LAWS page 6A

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