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information or answers to other service-related issues, and local vets were often unable to see a VSO in a timely manner.

The county currently sends one VSO to Florence one day a week. The travel time to and from Eugene is included in the VSO's work day, meaning perhaps seven hours of available time for vets that live in Florence, each week.

However, this availability of VSO's is about to change as the county has been able to adjust the scheduling and will increase in the days and times vets can see a VSO in Florence, according to Reiley. These changes were a direct result of Reiley's meeting with Florence vets.

"I'm happy to report that our Veteran Services budget has a projected surplus from state veteran pass-through funding and we have determined that we are be able to internalize the costs of the increase in services to Florence for the remainder of this fiscal year and for next fiscal year," he said. "Due to weather impacts the last couple of weeks, your VSO is yet to actually go out to Florence twice a week, but he should be out there this week on both Tuesday and Thursday. We're really hoping that this will address the need in West Lane County but obviously will be gathering data in order to plan on how to best move forward."

Jerry Hernandez is the head of the Florence Chapter of the Disabled America Veterans (DAV) and he believes the change will mean a lot to local vets.

"It's important because the veterans we have in town had to be there at 4 or 5 in the morning to sign up, then they would have to go home and wait for a call, if the VSO had time to see them," he said. "Our veterans are get-

ting older and this means we can see more vets and help them with their paperwork or medical issues that have come up for them."

The news of the increase was well received at Monday's meeting by the Band of Brothers, which is a collection of retired vets from all five services that have come together to assist where needed in Florence and the surrounding communities.

The group represents local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion and DAV that served from WWII to the most current conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The discussion at the weekly meetings often center around the latest local group that has approached the Brothers for assistance.

Many of the "Brothers" are also members of the Florence Elks Lodge and this connection is central to the work they do in both raising and distributing tens of thousands of dollars to organizations and individuals, all year long.

The assistance provided by this grizzled group of former soldiers depends on what the situation calls for.

Last year, there was a need expressed by the Siuslaw School District for a way to keep emergency supplies stored at school facilities dry and usable. The national focus on preparedness had brought attention to the unacceptable conditions the emergency supplies were in at the district and the money to accomplish this important project was not in the budget.

The Brothers decided to help and collected the money through various ways, including poppy flower sales, bake sales and donations. Then, members designed a series of storage cabinets that held water proof tubs and installed them at the middle



school.

They then built these cabinets, from scratch, and installed them. There is now a viable system in place that will store water and food for the students at all three schools in case of a natural disaster.

When a talented local student musician was presented with the opportunity to travel to Europe to perform and learn, the Brothers, wives and friends raised much of the \$7,500 needed to make the trip.

The most recent example of the type of work being done by the Brothers is service related, an area for which all of the vets have a special affinity. The challenge was in helping fellow service personnel get through the federal government shutdown.

The answer from the perspective of the 100 or so men and women that make up the Brothers was simple:

Raise some money to help. The decision to financially support Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River during the shutdown was agreed upon and the Brothers, along with their support team from the Elks Lodge, started raising money.

More than \$50,000 was collected through the many local efforts throughout the area to support the Coast Guard, and was used to help servicemen and women and their families stationed along Oregon's coast.

The end result of these efforts was so significant that this Monday, Senior Chief Joseph J. Nilles, Officer in Charge of Station Siuslaw River, presented members of the Brothers and Elks with medallions from the Chief Petty Officers Association thanking them for their assistance during this difficult time.

"What it comes down to is the community of Flor-

Members of Band of Brothers and Ladies of Elks were given coins as a show of appreciation from U.S. Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River.

ence — folks like yourself — teamed up to help us make it through six weeks of a pretty miserable time," Nilles said. "It was the crews and the families and the wives and kids that didn't know where food was going to come from, where fuel was going to come from, and many of you in this room — and many outside this room — stepped up and came together to help us."

Nilles shared stories that made clear that the shutdown

could have been far worse if not for the efforts of the Brothers and the larger Florence area community.

"One glorious day I was able to walk into the station and thanks to your hard work I was able to hand every single person an envelope. Inside every one of these envelopes was \$300," Niles said, visibly moved by the memory. "There is no place I would rather be in the Coast Guard during this time than Florence."

Nilles received a long-standing ovation from the Brothers and the group then turned their attention to the next assistance project the group should undertake.

Siuslaw News

garage sale

GUIDE

Saturday Only
3/16
9am-5pm
85408 Glenada Road
Major Spring Cleaning of shop, hobby room & house.

ESTATE SALE
3/15-16,
9AM-3PM
FLORENTINE ESTATES
Total liquidation of beautiful home on behalf of executor. Quality furniture, sectional, sofa bed, dining set, dressers, desk/office units, W/D, collectibles, household goods, heavy duty storage units in garage, lots of misc.
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- **ARE YOU READY?
- **SENIOR CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS
- **DOCUMENTATION AND INSURANCE

In addition to the classes, the WLEOG.ORG website has extremely useful information on **NATURAL HAZARDS** and **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**. Each of these has videos on various topics that explain the hazards the Pacific Northwest faces, and how to prepare for them.

For more information, visit these websites:

- AMERICAN RED CROSS — WWW.REDCROSS.ORG
- CITY OF FLORENCE — WWW.CI.FLORENCE.OR.US
- FEMA — WWW.READY.GOV
- LANE COUNTY — WWW.LANECOUNTY.ORG
- SIUSLAW VALLEY FIRE AND RESCUE — WWW.SVFR.ORG
- WLEOG — WWW.WLEOG.ORG

We often consider the physical dangers of emergencies – injuries from flying debris or car crashes, for example – but can overlook the mental impact associated with such incidents.

Crisis situations can result in loss of loved ones, debilitating injuries or traumatic stress that can change lives forever. And because these events are few and far between, they can be hard to deal with when they occur. Experts urge people of all ages who may be experiencing psychological distress as a result of natural disaster or incident of mass violence to seek the help of trained and caring professionals.

THE SIGNS

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) identifies the following physical and emotional reactions as being warning signs for seeking professional assistance.

- Irregular sleeping patterns.
- Painful stomachaches or headaches.
- Anger or edgy attitudes.
- Overwhelming sadness.
- Increased worry or guilt.
- Lack of energy or always feeling tired.

- Drinking alcohol, smoking or using tobacco more than usual.
- Using illegal drugs.
- Eating too much or too little.
- Not connecting with others.
- Rejecting of help.

HOTLINE HELP

SAMHSA has set up a free hotline to assist United States citizens dealing with a traumatic event in their lives. The hotline is staffed by trained counselors from a network of crisis call centers located across the U.S. They are trained to provide crisis counseling for those who are in emotional distress caused by any natural or human-caused disaster, information on how to recognize distress and its effects on individuals and families, and tips for healthy coping. The hotline's counselors can also provide referrals to local crisis call centers.

The confidential and multilingual hotline is available via telephone (1-800-985-5990) and SMS (Text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746).

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