

**MOMENTUM** from page 1A

"We did do a lot of thriving this year," Hannigan said. She described the formation of a new committee to represent all of Florence's revitalization, instead of the separate Downtown, Uptown and Old Town committees. The chamber worked with the Siuslaw Vision and the City of Florence for the project.

"What a legacy we can leave our community that we have one committee that represents the beautification and revitalization of our entire Florence area," Hannigan said.

In addition, community stakeholders, including Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the city, Siuslaw High School and local government agencies, convened to develop workforce studies and opportunities for local students.

Outgoing 2018-19 President Russ Pierson talked further about the ReVision Florence Streetscaping Project and how its construction timeline will continue to affect businesses and residents in the Highway 101 corridor from the Siuslaw River Bridge north to Highway 126.

"We've managed so far without too much drama, thanks in no small part to the leadership of Florence Mayor Joe Henry, the fantastic city council, City Manager Erin Reynolds and the excellent Florence city staff and all of you, our chamber members and friends, residents and visitors to Florence, many of whom have made it a special point of civic pride to be sure to visit the businesses that have been directly impacted," he said.

Pierson thanked the outgoing members of the chamber board. Retiring members are Martin Alletson, Driftwood Shores; Nancy Bosket, Oregon Pacific Bank; Lynda Colter-Bergh, Bottom Line Consulting; Bobby Jensen Jr., Breen Marine; and Susy Lacer, Susy Lacer Consulting Services.

Pierson then paraphrased President John F. Kennedy, saying, "Ask not what your chamber can do for you, ask what you can do for your chamber. Your chamber really is a remarkable organization and I just want to highlight what should be an obvious



PHOTOS BY RUE SCHERTELL/FLORENCE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**Above, Florence Chamber Executive Director introduces the theme for 2019-20, "Keeping Momentum." Left, Board President Neil Ecker assumes leadership.**

building relationship.

"That is time that has become so important for us as a chamber," Palmer said. "You cannot buy the value of that hour a week doing something silly, going around town and encouraging neighbors to be good neighbors to each other."

He also talked about the importance of other chambers and economic partners for events like the Cottage Grove Business Challenge, which encourages the growth of new and existing businesses.

"I encourage you to leverage partnerships like that. Don't always count on someone else coming in, ... but think about what you can create through partnerships," he said.

Palmer then installed new board members and welcomed to the stage the 2019-20 Florence Area Chamber of Commerce Board: President Neil Ecker, Past President Russ Pierson, President Elect Shauna Robbers, Secretary Janet Engel, Tom Basset, Jason Hawkins, Rich Colton and Dan Lofy, along with newly sworn in Chris Nystrom, Al Rojas and Bonnie Stone, who will be treasurer.

"These people really take their membership and involvement to a whole other level," Palmer said. "The chamber gets more out of its officers than they probably will ever get out of us. It's a thankless job — we thank them when we can — but it's a very important job and it makes us all better for what they do."

Next, new president Ecker stayed on stage. He thanked chamber members, volunteers, sponsors and staff, as well as the community, for their work in making the chamber strong.

"Without them and all their dedication, the wonderful events and programs the chamber does for our business community would not be possible. Thank you to each and every one of you," he said.

Ecker stated this year's theme will be "Keeping Momentum." After looking at social media, he realized how much the area had accomplished with ReVision Florence, public art and the new park on Rhododendron Drive.

"I realized that this community is indeed 'A City in Motion' and we're thriving and growing. ... I realized that we need to keep up our momentum," he said. "All of you, along with the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and the City of Florence, have built up tremendous momentum that is leading the way for great changes and growth for our city — and we need to keep it going. Ya'll have built a wonderful place to work, stay and play as Oregon's Premier Coastal Playground. Every day I talk to fellow business owners and they all say the same thing: 'We're busy and having a great year.'"

According to Ecker, the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce is moving from parties, pageants and parades to catalysts, conveners and champions.

"We're bringing the tools, people and connections needed to help your business succeed. Your chamber is dedicated and focused on helping businesses in the community develop, grow and succeed," he said. "In the next year, I hope to help your chamber keep its momentum and work with fellow businesses and Bettina to champion some new programs that bring more value

to your membership and help your business succeed. We're a strong, passionate and loving community and together I know we can keep it going stronger."

For more information on the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, volunteering or joining a committee, visit FlorenceChamber.com or stop by the Florence Visitor's Center, 290 Highway 101.

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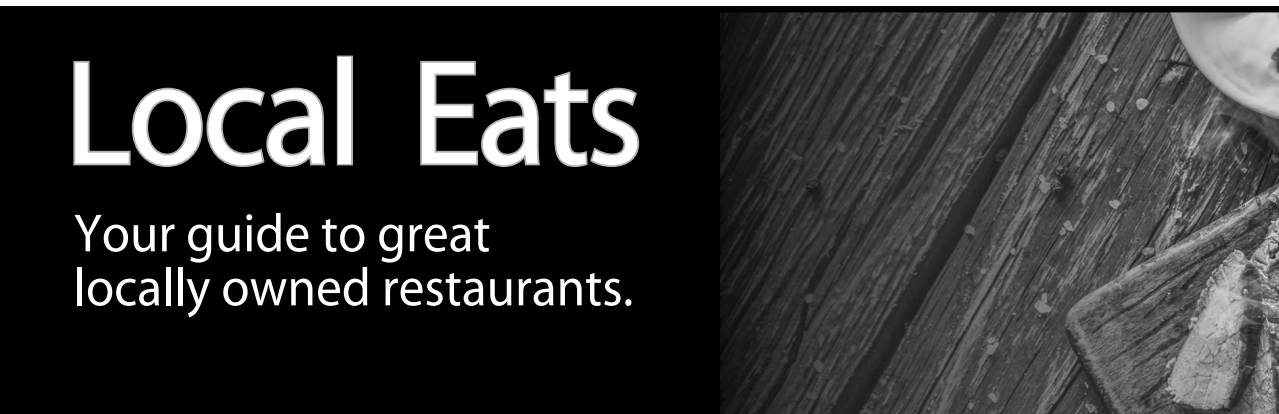
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