

Mural from 1A

"It was nice to see such a great turnout to celebrate the new mural. It is hard work to accomplish big community projects and Florence has many underway," Westlund said. "I can't remember a time in the last 25 years where I've sensed as much momentum, civic pride and optimism. It really feels different, from the new City Hall and public art projects, to the new streetscape.

"Florence is looking and feeling like a place that is cared for by its residents. That makes it an even better visitor destination and I'm certain that visitors will reflect that pride and enthusiasm during and after their stay. Congratulations to all the organizations working so hard to make Florence look and feel so good."

Henry made a brief opening statement praising the work done by the Public Art Committee and thanking the artists, Angelina Marino and Joel Heidel, for their work and turned the microphone over to the Chairperson of the Public Arts Committee, Harlen Springer.

Springer and City Councilman Joshua Greene have been deeply involved in the multi-year process to bring art to the city as part of an expanding overall public art program. Springer quickly recapped the process used to arrive at this point in the mural's creation, focusing on the many culturally affiliated elements of the two panels of the piece.

"Thanks to the hard work and dedication of Public Art Committee members which started four years ago with a vision to celebrate art and integrate art into the commu-

nity, this is our tenth project — and what we believe will be a valuable part of stimulating economic activity by making our city more vibrant," Springer said. "Thanks to all who helped us, especially the City Council and staff, our Public Works department, FURA, Central Lincoln PUD, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, and a special thanks to the Oregon Community Foundation for the grant to help us pay for it all."

The artist responsible for the design and content of the mural, Angela Marino, spoke briefly, thanking the Public Art Committee and the City Council for the opportunity to contribute to Florence's public art collection. Marino said she was initially surprised by the controversy surrounding the work but has been pleased with the response of the public

now that the mural has been finished.

Rickbone, who has been involved with the development of the Public Art Program in Florence for a number of years, told the audience she was very happy with the results.

"Harlen Springer called me four or five years ago. We knew each other from FRAA and other art-related organizations. He reached out and said a Public Art Committee was being formed, and that they would like to pick my brain to get some ideas on how to proceed," Rickbone explained. "So, we provided some documentation and some advice — and now to see the mural on the wall, years later, is very exciting.

"I was really happy with the great community interest and it was very nice to see that many people attend the dedi-

cation." Perhaps the most meaningful moment of the dedication took place during the ribbon-cutting ceremony when both Greene and Henry put aside past personal differences and warmly shook hands to the delight, surprise and applause of the crowd.

State Representative for District Nine, Caddie McKeown, was unable to attend the dedication but forwarded remarks that Springer read to the crowd. He explained that McKeown supports the idea that public art can be an economic driver for Florence and other communities within her district.

"Public art is especially important in small towns. It not only enriches the aesthetic of our communities for visitors and locals alike to enjoy but requires that leaders and community members come to-

gether to craft a plan to make their shared home more beautiful," McKeown said in her statement. "Under the leadership of the Florence Public Arts Commission, this community has done just that. You should be proud of the collaboration and history that this mural represents, and I am so sad I had to miss its dedication ceremony today.

"This mural will communicate to those who view it a sense of what Florence values as a community — the 85-year-old Siuslaw River bridge and its vital function as a gateway to the ocean, the local flora and fauna that make Florence one of the most beautiful destinations on the West Coast, and the deep-rooted cultural traditions of the Native Americans. Congratulations on a wonderful addition to your community."

Parenting from 1A

well as maternity clothes and supplies," said Kirby.

An additional benefit offered by the programs at the PPC is the opportunity for parents to learn while accumulating credits that can be exchanged for soon-to-be-needed baby supplies.

"Our program at the PPC is an 'Earn While You Learn' program," Kirby explained. "As moms and dads, women and men take individualized classes, they earn baby credits which they can use to get items from our Stork Boutique, and there are other ways they can earn baby credits as well."

There are also other services that PPC offers especially for pregnant women.

"We also recognize that women facing unplanned pregnancies may want a safe place to talk about their options. We provide non-judgmental, compassionate support and information for women facing an unplanned pregnancy," Kirby said. "All our services are free and confidential and offered to people of all walks of life."

Kirby and the volunteers at PPC also offer some post-birth options for parents that include a chance to meet other new parents and their babies through a play group on Wednesdays, from 9:30 to 11 a.m.

However, the time for the play group will change beginning Sept. 4, and be from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Kirby hopes parents and particularly women in search of answers about pregnancy will visit PPC, regardless of their religious affiliation or marital status.

"We recognize that family life can be tough, and we want to be a place of support and education for parents seeking to grow in their parenting skills.

"We are here to help moms, dads, and families grow strong," she said.

PPC is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and interested moms and dads can just drop in to find out more about the services offered at PPC or call 541-902-2273 to make an appointment.

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