



SEPTEMBER ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT — INSIDE —

Postal Customer
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VOL. 129, NO. 70
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



Partly sunny with a high of 72 and a low tonight of 58.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



Torch passes through Florence
INSIDE — A3

SPORTS



Sports start in Mapleton, Siuslaw
INSIDE — SPORTS

RECORDS

Obituaries & emergency response logs
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SIDE SHOW

Activities and comics every Saturday
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CLASSIFIEDS

Listings and public notices
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Longtime Siuslaw teacher Scott Anderson dies



Scott Anderson

BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

Grief support for students, community planned through September

Summer came to a sudden halt for the Siuslaw School District on Sunday as it was announced that longtime middle school teacher Scott Anderson had apparently died by suicide. At just 48, Anderson had a loving wife, two caring children and a district full of students who loved his classes. While an investigation is

ongoing, Oregon State Police Captain Timothy Fox, public information officer, stated Anderson suffered a fatal wound that “appeared to be self-inflicted.”

Oregon State Police, Western Lane Ambulance District, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and the fire and EMS districts’ Community Support Team responded to a call-out in Dunes City

around 4:50 p.m. last Sunday, Aug. 25, for a death investigation.

“We were dispatched to come out for an unresponsive male and determined that resuscitation would not be possible,” stated Western Lane EMS Operation Chief Matt House. “Any time there is an unwitnessed death, it has to be investigated, as per state

statute.”

The Lane County Medical Examiner’s Office will continue to investigate.

“When people are involved, emotions are involved, especially for such a seminal event in the community,” House said. “Our patients now are the people left behind.”

See DEATH page 7A

Bears present problems to homeowners

ODFW, Oregon State Police kill four bears locally

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The summer is slipping way and, as output from wild plants and berries decrease, the number of sightings and actual encounters with the area’s hungry, wild neighbors is on the rise.

Jason Kirchner is the District Wildlife Biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and his office, in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Oregon State Police, reports that these agencies have recently killed four bears in the Florence area.

Additionally, one homeowner shot and killed a bear that was on his property attacking his dog. “These were all aggressive bears and they had no fear of humans,”

See BEARS page 10A

Siuslaw welcomes the new school year

More than 35 new staff members join school district

STORY & PHOTO
BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

On Thursday, nearly 240 teachers, administrators, faculty and staff met for the Siuslaw School District All Staff Meeting and 2019-20 Kick Off at Siuslaw Middle School.

“Welcome back to the 2019-20 school year,” said Siuslaw Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak. “We have a lot of new faces in the crowd.”

For the meeting, Siuslaw Food Service Director David Bitner led his staff in the creation of a breakfast for people to enjoy. Additional tables eventually had to be set up due to the number of attendees.

To start the presentation, Grzeskowiak introduced the Siuslaw School Board, including Paul Burns, Dennis King, Suzanne Mann-Heintz and Bob Sneddon who were in attendance, as well as John Barnett, Dianna Pimlott and Guy Rosinbaum. He also introduced the Siuslaw Budget Committee, consisting of Brittany Hornung, Cameron Jagoe, Megan Messmer and Cindy Spinner, and said that there are currently three open positions.

“If you know someone who is interested in the budget, send



Siuslaw School District gathered for an all-staff meeting and breakfast Thursday as a chance to welcome new staff, celebrate years of service and introduce goals for 2019-20.

them to the district office,” Grzeskowiak said.

This was followed by Florence Community PTA, which presented its new leadership for the year, naming Crystal Osburn as new president, Cori Hanson as vice president, Jasmine Lewis as secretary and Diane McCalmont as treasurer.

“We can make every child’s potential a reality — but I need more believers,” Osburn said. “I need you, and I know how much time and effort that you all put into this for everyday school. ... Believe in

us and what we have to offer you.”

She declared a desire to sign up 100 new staff into the PTA’s membership. More information and registration forms are available at www.florencepta.org/home.aspx.

On Friday, Florence Community PTA announced that 135 new members signed up on Thursday alone.

Members of the group also created a display featuring buckets of apples for the staff: “Roses are red, apples are too, we look forward to spending this school year with you!”

See SIUSLAW page 11A

New law changes funding for fighting wildfires

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Wildfire season is upon us and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) is prepared to assist other fire districts — as they have been doing for more than a decade — with fire emergencies across Oregon, Idaho and California.

Equipment and personnel from SVFR have participated in controlling wildfires at major conflagrations that have sometimes taken weeks or even months to bring under control.

Last year’s Chetco Bar Fire was a wildfire in Oregon’s Kalmiopsis Wilderness. It was caused by a lightning strike and burned 191,125 acres between July 7 and Nov. 4, when it was declared contained.

In 2017, the federal government spent more than \$2 billion on fire suppression efforts, through the U.S. Forest Service alone, with many additional millions of dollars spent by individual states and rural fire districts.

SVFR members were heavily involved in both front-line suppression, structural protection and other types of support efforts during the Chetco fire and were lauded by on-scene incident commanders for their commitment and professional approach to the difficult work done to control the blaze.

However, the costs associated with sending crews to other locations can become substantial

See FIRES page 12A

National Suicide Awareness Month

Resources for Lane County and Florence

(Editor’s Note: Following our special four-part collaborative series with the Cottage Grove Sentinel, Newport News-Times and Creswell Chronicle last April focusing on suicide awareness and prevention, we had been planning this story on the Suicide Survivors Support group for the beginning of National Suicide Prevention Month next week.

The tragic loss of a long-time Siuslaw Middle School teacher earlier this week to suicide sadly underscores the importance of talking about this subject, the resources available to those who are suffering and, in the event of loss, the services available locally for those coping with that loss.)

BY VICTORIA SANCHEZ
SIUSLAW NEWS

September is National Suicide Prevention Month, which means all month, mental health advocates, survivors, family and community members, prevention organizers and allies come together to raise awareness and promote prevention of suicide. This is particularly vital to discuss in Florence, as the community has the highest suicide rate in Lane County; for the past decade, Florence has endured a suicide mortality rate three times higher than the Lane County average.

Lane County Health and Human Services put together a report with 16 years’ worth of data trends, risk

See PREVENTION page 8A

Food Backpack for Kids 2nd Matching Funds Campaign September 1 - November 30, 2019

Help us kick off our 8th year of feeding local kids at risk of hunger on school year weekends!

All donations will be spent on food during the 2019/2020 school year. Your donation will be doubled, up to \$40,000.00 by the following Core Donors:
Oregon Pacific Bank • Peace Harbor Hospital • River Roasters • Florence Kiwanis • One Anonymous Donor • David & Linda Lauck Trust

Resurrection Lutheran Church • Cross Road Assembly of God Church

We also thank the Western Lane Community Foundation and the Chamber Family Foundation for their generous grants.

We estimate over 90 students in Florence and Mapleton schools will face hunger when they leave school each Friday this year.

YOUR DONATION WILL BE DOUBLED...THANK YOU

Please send your tax-deductible check to Food Backpack for Kids, P.O. Box 3347, Florence, OR 97439



Children should be happy, not hungry.

Together, No Child Will Go Hungry



www.foodbackpackforkids.com