

CLIMATE *from page 1A*

climate issue on a global stage was prompted in late September when Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg spoke at the United Nations Climate Action Summit. Thunberg garnered worldwide media attention with her strident denouncement of the attention being paid to what she, and others, believe should be referred to as a genuine "Climate Crisis."

"You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones," Thunberg said at the summit. "People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction — and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you?"

Thunberg's condemnation of the current actions being undertaken to combat the climate crisis once again thrust science and the veracity of scientists into the media spotlight.

The response across the world and in Florence to the comments by Thunberg has re-ignited the often-contentious debate surrounding the changes in the environment caused by human activity and prompted some local residents to take to the streets with their concerns. Demonstrations on the corner of Ninth Avenue and the intersections of highways 126 and 101 are part of the strategy being employed by local activists to raise public awareness about the urgency to take concrete action to reverse the degradation of the environment before the damage is irreversible.

Mike Allen is a member of the Florence Climate Alliance, which has stepped up its activities since Thunberg's appearance and plans to take a more confrontational stance as the topic becomes a staple in the debates leading up to the 2020 Presidential election.

"Greta Thunberg ... set an example of how one person through persistence and direct action can mobilize an entire world," Allen said, who comes from a background of community organizing around disability issues in Colorado and New Mexico. "With my daughter, who has an intellectual disability, we effectively used direct action when those in power refused to listen and act on our demands. I am now convinced that we have reached that stage in America when change will only come when we take direct action directed at the powerful. This includes our mayor."

Allen said he is also willing to step up his direct-



Micahel Allen (left) with his wife, Pat Allen, protest in front of Florence City Hall.

tion campaign by attending city functions, most notably at local city council meetings, and is also committed to protesting at City Hall each Friday, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., as part of the Climate Strike with his signs.

To date, Allen has been at city hall with his signs — rain or shine — each week since the first Climate Strike rally on Sept. 20 — including one visit during a City Council meeting on July 15.

"Others have joined me with their signs, and we have committed to staying the course until we have a positive response from our mayor and city council," said Allen. "In the meantime, I am circulating my original request to others in the community for the mayor and city council to address the climate crisis and will again present it at a public meeting at some time in the future."

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) is one of the most highly regarded group of scientists in the world. NASA has an expansive toolbox consisting of the most advanced scientific equipment in existence, decades of long-term experimental data and the most advanced computer software for environmental modeling available in the world. All of these tools have led NASA to conclude the Earth is heating up significantly and humans are the reason for the increase.

For example, one impact of these changes can be seen in the decreasing numbers and size of glaciers around the planet. There is visual evidence of this diminution available for public viewing on the website of the United States Geological Service, (USGS) under the tab, "Repeat Photography Project."

As part of the project, the USGS went back through its extensive archives of photographic materials and

selected photographs taken during the last century and compared these previous images to images captured recently. The changes in the size and volume of the glaciers were dramatic. There were dozens of examples gathered by the USGS that show conclusively that major reductions — and in some cases the total loss — of glaciers is occurring.

"Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level

has risen."

—Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Another aspect of this discussion, of which there are many, is the impact rising temperatures have on the ocean. NASA reports that the oceans have absorbed much of the increased heat from warming and the top 2,300 feet of the ocean have risen by one half a degree since 1969.

Yet another concern regarding the oceans is the rise in acidity that has taken place in the last century.

Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 percent, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

This increase is the result of humans emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, hence more being absorbed into the oceans. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is increasing by about 2 billion tons per year. These increases have been directly connected to

What is most striking is that the majority of the warming has occurred in the past 35 years, with the five warmest years on record taking place since 2010. Not only was 2016 the warmest year on record, but eight of the 12 months that make up the year (January through September), with the exception of June, were the warmest on record for those respective months. Data for more recent years is not yet tabulated but initial data models for the past few years continue this trend.

"Climate change is a terrible problem, and it absolutely needs to be solved. It deserves to be a huge priority."

—Bill Gates

introduced and passed legislation that would allocate \$1.6 million to combat climate change in Oregon.

The money was awarded to Oregon State University and National Oceanic and NOAA, and Defazio said he is determined to work towards finding some type of solution to what he has called the "Climate Crisis."

"Combating climate change is one of the most important battles of our time. It is imperative we support initiatives that work toward reducing carbon emissions, combating rising sea levels and investing in renewable energy," Defazio said in a statement released last week. "The climate-related research happening at OSU will benefit communities across the country and will better prepare us to face the greatest existential threat to our planet that we have ever known."

In Part II of this special series this Saturday, we'll look at the arguments against the notion of climate change, and what ultimately what can be done to curtail the current trends of global warming and its impact.

While Oregon's Washington delegation has acknowledged the validity of the public's growing concern over climate change, the Florence City Council has remained mostly silent on the issue.

Rep. Peter Defazio, Chairman of The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, recently

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