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Reynolds said. “We’ve been able to see the amount of revenue generated by startups grow and, most importantly, we’ve seen capital and mentorship grow in our area because of our efforts with RAIN.”

The event had more than 80 attendees, who ate dinner catered by Hukilau Florence while mingling with other entrepreneurs and community members who are part of western Lane County’s startup ecosystem.

Inside the cinema’s Chaplin Theater, Florence Mayor Joe Henry welcomed people to the event.

“If you’ll recall, we’ve progressed from our first meeting at City Lights, when we had maybe 25 people, and meetings at Homegrown with 10 to 15 people. ... We’ve been delighted to work with RAIN over the last four years, especially with our economic development efforts,” he said.

Henry then spoke about the city’s efforts to make economic development a city priority, especially in regard to skilled workers, jobs and housing.

“We’ve made a little bit of progress in all those areas, and we finally figured out that we had to have some help in some of them,” he said. “As far as entrepreneurs and developing businesses and jobs in our local community, the biggest successes we’ve had have been through RAIN.”

Reynolds continued this by talking about the importance of funding RAIN’s coastal venture catalyst, a position currently filled by Ariel Ruben, so that RAIN’s meetings with entrepreneurs and many events can be free to the public.

“This project has helped us create a long-term, economically stable system for new businesses and has helped ensure that our Florence startups are connected with statewide resources that are here, in Florence, and that we hope we can grow and keep those businesses here with resources from all over the state and nation,” Reynolds said.

Next, RAIN Executive

Director Caroline Cummings talked about the many partners working to fund or support RAIN and its efforts across five counties and in 21 rural communities. These included City of Florence, Lane County, U.S. Department of Agriculture, The Collins Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, Oregon Pacific Bank, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Siuslaw News, Siuslaw High School, Florence Makerspace, Oregon Coast Visitor’s Association, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and more.

“We exist to partner with small and rural communities to catalyze an entrepreneurial ecosystem,” Cummings said. “There are new economies being built on a regular basis, and it’s through the people in this room who are the job creators and are the people supporting those job creators.”

RAIN currently has three venture catalysts — Ruben on the mid-coast, Corey Wright in Linn and Benton counties and Raj Vable in rural Lane County — with plans to hire one more for Grant County. These people connect entrepreneurs with people, programs, physical assets and capital through RAIN.

“All of us venture cata-

lysts are entrepreneurs ourselves, and we know how hard it is and the struggles,” Ruben said. “Actually, Caroline Cummings was the CEO of two startups, and the first one failed. ... I know more about the failure because she says she learned so much about business and life through that failure. Entrepreneurship is hard — so we are here to be your biggest cheerleader. That’s what we do.”

Ruben then introduced the next portion of the night, when Florence entrepreneurs gave highlights about working with RAIN in the past four years. These included:

- Rick Dreiling of Oregon Float Homes: seeking to fill some of the area’s housing needs with tiny floating homes in a brand-new startup. He is currently looking for investors as he launches this new business.

- Patricia Immel and Sarah Butte of Rose & Crown Apothecary, 1845 Highway 126, Suite G: planning to continue to grow sustainable horticulture and sell natural healthcare and home products. In addition, they are rebranding and plan to launch an online store. “We’ve been busy bees,” Butte said.

- Kassy Keppol of Drag-on Art: continues to teach

art projects to all ages while offering subscription craft boxes with all the tools and supplies inside. A portion of every sale goes to supporting art opportunities for area youth.

- Patrick Looney of Florence Makerspace, which opened this summer at 1230 17th Place, Suite D: hopes to tie into the larger makerspace movement and bring on team members, as well as promote the workspace and tools to other “hobbyists, entrepreneurs and other do-it-yourself creative types.”

- Lyndsey Phillips of Meant Manufacturing, who won The Register-Guard Small Market Triumph Award in 2018: has one employee and wants to hire a second part-time employee, possibly through Lane Workforce Partnership. RAIN is helping her raise money through grants and angel investors now.

- Jayne Smoley of The Studios at Jayne Smoley Design, 1458 First St.: began RAIN with an idea for a

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FRESH CRAB



OYSTER STUFFING

INGREDIENTS:
Ingredients:
1 celery rib, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1/4 cup butter, cubed
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
1/4 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1/8 teaspoon rubbed sage
1/8 teaspoon pepper
3 cups cubed day-old bread
1 large egg, beaten
2/3 cup chicken broth
1 cup shucked oysters, drained and coarsely chopped

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1. In a small skillet, saute celery and onion in butter until tender; transfer to a large bowl. Stir in the parsley, poultry seasoning, sage and pepper. Add bread cubes. Combine the egg, broth and oysters; add to bread mixture, stirring gently to combine.

2. Transfer to a greased 1-qt. baking dish. Cover and bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Uncover; bake 10-15 minutes longer or until a thermometer reads 160° and stuffing is lightly browned.

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