

CITY from page 1A

The fifth accomplishment had to do with the City Council Goal of livability and quality of life. Henry referenced Miller Park's in progress updates, as well as the community effort behind the update to Singing Pines Dog Park, led by resident and local business owner Jolene Medeiros. Another park was also added to city, a river access park on the Siuslaw River with a view of the historic Siuslaw River Bridge.

The sixth Henry highlighted from 2019 was the relationship with the community. Henry mentioned two community events in their second

year, the Community Block Party in Historic Old Town and Florence Police Department's National Night Out, held at Miller Park.

"In 2018, we won the Rookie of the Year Award for our National Night Out from the National Association of Town Watch. How do you top that? Well, our 2019 event won the Outstanding Participant Award!" Henry announced. "We are one of 20 communities to win this award out of the 16,000 participants."

Other community events the city partnered with or participated in included the Rhododendron Festival, Power of Florence, Florence Holiday Festival, as well as

other events that specific committees or departments attended.

"There were so many more accomplishments in 2019," Henry said.

He encouraged people to stop by each of the city services included in the expo, as well as visit ci.florence.or.us and the city's social media pages.

As for 2020, "There are many things already in motion to support our City Council Goals and our workplan priorities," the mayor said.

Besides following the workplan's five goals of city service delivery, livability and quality of life, economic development, communication and trust, and financial and organizational sustainability, Henry gave six projects that the city will focus on this year. These include storm-water improvements in the Coastal Highlands neighborhood; water line replacement



Alizabeth Norton sings the National Anthem while the Color Guard from Coast Guard Station Siuslaw River presents the flags.

for Ninth Street; realignment and improvements for Rhododendron Drive from Wild Winds to 35th Street; addition of sidewalks to 26th and 27th streets, between Highway 101 and Oak Street, thanks to a Safe Routes to School Grant; support for the community effort to design a gateway park honoring veterans at the Florence Municipal Airport; and the addition

of three monuments at the points of entry into the city to welcome people to Florence and display the Coast Guard City designation.

"Wow, 2020 is going to be a busy year!" Henry exclaimed. "Florence really is a city in motion, and we're working every day, very hard, to become Oregon's Premier Coastal Community."

SERVICE from page 1A

Florence will have stops at Three Rivers Casino Resort and Old Town Park before ending the trip at Grocery Outlet.

The Florence to Eugene connector route has been a topic of discussion in both communities over the years, but the right combination of funding and customer demand have coalesced to make the project a reality this year.

Clarke said, "This started with a feasibility study that we started in 2017 to look at the feasibility of a bus route between Eugene and Florence. Through that study, we conducted a public survey, and we had a lot of public involvement with that. We had over 1,500 people respond to it, which is really great for that type of survey, and there was overwhelming support for the idea."

The grant application submitted by LCOG for funding approval is comprehensive and includes many reasons for the state to grant the money needed to initiate the route. This included a reference to the Florence Transportation Plan, which was mentioned by Planning Director Wendy FarleyCamp-

bell during the discussion.

"We have a very well thought out transportation systems plan, but we need the data updated and we would like to have the council reconsider some decisions that were made by the previous council to see if that is still the public will," she said to the Transportation Committee.

According to Clarke, the timing of the decision was good to pursue the needed funding for the establishment of the connector service since Oregon has a new program that might support the request.

"As we wrapped up the study, the state had just authorized a new payroll tax called the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan," Clarke said. "As that tax was coming into play, and how to apply for funding was being solidified, we were able to roll the findings from our study into our grant applications."

The grant application also pointed to the broad cross-section of the community which sent letters of support for the project and the grant application.

Organizations listed as supporters in the paperwork sent to the state included the City of Eugene, the City of Florence, Oregon Coast Visitors Association, Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, Lane Community College

and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians.

The application also highlighted the need for options for seniors who cannot or choose not to drive on Highway 126, as it annually ranks as one of Oregon's most dangerous and deadly roads.

Clarke thanked the Confederated Tribes for its decision to donate the use of a transit bus for the initial stage of the program. She also stated that a new bus, purchased specifically for the Eugene to Florence trip, will be added in the future.

Transportation Committee members also asked that Clarke consider extending the connector route to the Eugene Municipal Airport. This would be done primarily to facilitate travel from Florence to the airport.

Clarke was open to exploring the possibility, but also felt the early timing of many of the flights leaving Eugene would present a logistical problem to the implementation of the idea.

The cost for a one-way ticket on the new line is \$5 and the trip will take under two hours.

Runs from Eugene to Florence will begin at the Amtrak Station at 7 a.m. and at 4:10 p.m. and leave Grocery Outlet for Eugene at 9:06 a.m. and 6:06 p.m.

For more information, visit www.lcog.org.

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Jim Hoberg is a Florence native, and has been working in Real Estate since 1989. He has served as a Realtor for over 30 years. He has obtained several designations that require continuing education, which keeps him on the cutting edge of the industry and he is constantly looking for ways to expand his areas of expertise. Recently he has earned the NAR Green designation and the Senior Real Estate Specialist designation. Jim enjoys helping people find solutions to their real estate needs and discovering why Florence is such a great place to live.

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