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TIPS TO STAY HEALTHY WHILE STAYING HOME
 INSIDE — A7



Caravan of care

Mapleton School District held a “We Miss You Caravan” Thursday afternoon, as teachers, administrators and staff decorated a school bus with pom poms and well wishes.

STORIES & PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON SIUSLAW NEWS

Superintendent Jodi O’Mara. Cars with phrases such as “Hang in there” and “We honor the class of 2020” followed the bus as it wound its way through the upriver communities, passing through

“The caravan gave us a way to say ‘hi’ to our families and our students and let them know we missed them. Although I’m not sure if the students enjoyed it more or the staff,” said Mapleton

Swisshome, Deadwood and Brickerville. “We had such a great time getting out into the community, saying hi to our families, and letting them know we are still here,” O’Mara said.

‘The coast has been relatively unscathed...’

County, Peace Harbor look at current state of COVID-19 and the Siuslaw Region

BY JARED ANDERSON SIUSLAW NEWS

On April 28 on his public Facebook page, Western Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich posted, “25 of 36 counties have had zero deaths. The two deaths and 48 of 50 cases in Lane County were in the Eugene-Springfield metro area. Just two cases were located outside in the rest of Lane County and therefore the chances are that zero cases were ‘confirmed’ in coastal Lane County but testing is so limited that there are probably unconfirmed cases all over. It does seem that the coast

has been relatively unscathed and that reopening should begin as the damage to people from the closure is now starting to outweigh the damage from the virus.”

Oregon has lost 360,000 jobs due to the pandemic, equaling 18 percent of all jobs in the state. The state predicts massive losses in tax revenue that will affect the state long-term, while nationally there are signs the U.S. has already entered into a recession. Locally, the shutdown has already cut deep as businesses have shuttered and major local economic events, such as the 113th Rhododendron Festival, have

been cancelled.

However, the commissioner did not recommend reopening without restrictions.

“It should be done thoughtfully, like allowing campgrounds to host fully contained RV campers but not tent and car campers that need to share bathroom facilities,” Bozievich wrote. “Maybe allowing a rural single-chair hair salon to re-open with precautions like both staff and customers wearing masks and sanitizing the station, equipment and hands between customers.”

Finally, he stressed that local input on reopening is crucial.

“I think maximizing local control of the reopening is important as each locality understands their community’s risks better than higher levels of government,” the post said. “I also believe business owners and their customers can be the best judges of personal risk.”

The importance of getting the community behind reopening is crucial to the health of businesses that take the financial risk of reopening; they could face the possibility of reclosing if clientele do not feel safe enough despite easing restrictions.

See COAST page 6A

Utility outage, repair info remains unconfirmed by CenturyLink

BY MARK BRENNAN SIUSLAW NEWS

Many Florence CenturyLink customers are experiencing an ongoing lack of services related to a major repair project on Maple Street. The outage was first reported to the *Siuslaw News* on April 23, by a CenturyLink customer who continues to be impacted by the extended outage. Since then, several others have reached out looking for answers.

“Mine has been out since Wednesday (April 22). When I called in by cell to report the outage, and after going through voicemail hell to reach a real person, I was informed a repair guy would come by Thursday and would call my cell before arriving,” said Florence resident Larry Bacon. “No call, no repair guy.”

See UTILITY page 5A

United Way of Lane County’s COVID fund benefits community organizations, four local groups

BY MARK BRENNAN SIUSLAW NEWS

The widespread nature of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 has closed businesses of all types across America, throwing the lives of families from every walk of life into turmoil. More Americans are out of work now than at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s, when 25 percent of the work force was idle. As a result, the inability to provide for basic necessities has had repercussions for not only families and individuals, but for organizations dependent on the financial support of the community to provide needed services.

Fortunately for many of these groups, which are often organized as nonprofits, there is monetary support available from one of the region’s most effective philanthropic organizations, the United Way of Lane County.

The organization, in addition to the hundreds of thousands of dollars already distributed this year, has recognized the unprecedented level of need at this time and established the United Way COVID-19 Community Response Fund.

Noreen Dunnells, president and CEO of United Way of Lane County, said that the scale and scope of the pandemic required quick action.

“Several weeks ago, as the pandemic expanded to our area, United Way of Lane County developed a survey for nonprofit health and human service agencies in the county to hear about their immediate needs and concern,” Dunnells wrote in an email to *Siuslaw News*. “Simultaneously, we established the COVID-19 response fund and hosted weekly virtual meetings for continuous communication to learn about emerging needs.”

The fund was established with the specific goal of directly assist-

ing those most financially at-risk due to the pandemic.

United Way of Lane County announced at the end of April it had distributed almost \$100,000 from the newly established fund, with four Siuslaw area organizations chosen among those to receive these grants.

“What we know is that basic needs of food, general rental assistance, technology equipment for communication, and general financial assistance are the most pervasive needs here in Lane County, as they are in other parts of the U.S.,” Dunnells said. “We also know that this pandemic has disproportionately impacted people in poverty or those previously struggling to make ends meet, including immigrant families and our unhoused communities.”

Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS), a primary emergency support agency in the Florence area, See FUND page 5A

Siuslaw News
 NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
 VOL. 130, NO. 35
 FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



Rain all day with a high of 55 and a low tonight of 44.
 Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



Port tears down blue barns
 INSIDE — A3

LIFESTYLE



Farmers Market prepares to reopen
 INSIDE — B

RECORDS

Obituaries & emergency response logs
 Inside — A2

SIDE SHOW

Activities and comics every Saturday
 Inside — B4

CLASSIFIEDS

Listings and public notices
 Inside — B5

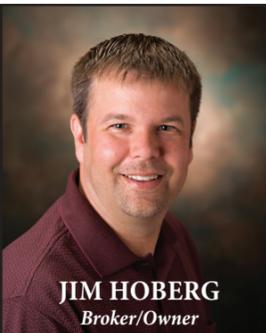
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