



Virtual 113th annual Rhododendron Festival Grand Floral Parade

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HECETA HEAD LIGHT KEEPERS ATTEND 3RD ANNUAL RHODODENDRON FESTIVAL INSIDE — B

Lane County enters Phase I of reopening

Rights of employers, employees as Oregon reopens

What small businesses need to know

BY JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

After two months of stay-at-home orders, 28 counties in Oregon are slowly beginning to reopen this week as small business owners and their employees learn how to work in the age of COVID-19.

The shutdown has created economic devastation matching the some of the worst crises in American history, with rural communities being hit the hardest.

“We have the highest unemployment in the state on the coast because we are so tourist driven,” Oregon Sen. Arnie Roblan said last week.

Roblan, along with Lane County and Oregon RAIN (Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network) hosted a webinar on the ins and outs of reopening, including what’s expected of employees and employers in the first phase of reopening, along with what financial assistance is available for businesses still struggling.

The panel included Roblan, David Gerstenfeld from the Oregon Employment Department, Melissa Drugge from Business Oregon and Leah Horner from the office of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, and was hosted by Florence City Manager Erin Reynolds, who is also the incoming vice-chair of RAIN.

The focus was on small businesses with 25 employees or less.

“They have been the backbone of the economy and our state for a long, long time,” Roblan said. “We have to figure out ways we can support them.”

One of the most pressing questions businesses have had this week is whether or not they should open in the first place.

While businesses that have remained open through the

See **BUSINESSES** page 6A

Guidance from state, county shape Florence’s metrics for reopening



Many of Lane County’s restaurants are opening this weekend under Phase One of Oregon’s reopening. Diners are able to sit indoors and outside once more as long as tables are six feet apart, as they are at Off Bay Street Bistro in Historic Old Town Florence, and restaurant employees must wear facemasks.

STORY & PHOTO
BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The next stage in the rapidly evolving COVID-19 paradigm began Friday, May 15, following Gov. Kate Brown’s announcement Thursday that Lane County was one of the Oregon counties whose applications for a Phase One designation has been approved.

“It has been over seven weeks since I announced Oregon’s Stay Home, Save Lives order,” Brown

said. “Our success this far gives me confidence as we take these next steps toward reopening.”

The governor’s office received applications from 33 counties beginning May 8 seeking to enter Phase One reopening. According to Brown, the applications were examined and forwarded to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), where OHA’s team of medical and public health experts reviewed each application.

“In some cases, we asked for clarifying information and, after a thorough and detailed review, I have

approved 28 of these applications,” Brown said Thursday.

In each of these counties the state will continue to monitor testing rates, effectiveness at contact tracing, isolation of new cases, hospitalization rates and other metrics that are required to remain open during the initial 21-day Phase One period.

Brown was also clear on the specific guidelines regarding newly authorized reopening for segments of the business community which have been temporarily closed.

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Siuslaw School Board looks at budget, fiber

In a board meeting Wednesday night, the Siuslaw School District

discussed several issues, including the possibility of providing internet to low-income students for five years through a deal with local fiber optic internet provider Hyak. The deal, which would cost the district \$1.4 million, would ensure that a number of students would receive internet access at a reduced cost, while also ensuring access to students if social-distancing measures due to

COVID are still in place during the next school year.

The board decided to wait on a final decision, instead opting to review further options, including partnerships with local governments and nonprofits. But the discussions led to broader questions regarding distance learning as a whole, as board members and staff spoke on the issues teachers face with at-home learning, the shortening of the school year, budget issues, community support and the uncertainty of the future of all school districts beyond Siuslaw.

School Board President Guy Rosinbaum began the night by discussing the feedback he had received regarding the proposed project with Hyak.

“I heard a lot of people who are really excited about the project, I’ve heard some people that are really upset,” Rosinbaum said. “We even heard some people make some accusations about Hyak running out of money and they’re using their connections with the board.”

Rosinbaum stressed the latter was not the case.

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Representative shows how he ‘CARES’ by procuring millions for Oregonians

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio is the longest-serving Congress member in Oregon history.

First elected to represent Oregon’s District 4 in 1986, DeFazio has served as a member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee since 1987, and in 2019 was elected to the chairmanship of that committee.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has jurisdiction over the U.S. Coast Guard,

highways and transit, water resources, railroads, aviation and economic development.

DeFazio has previously served as the ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, where he focused on sectors of the economy including ocean, fisheries, federal lands and energy resources.

DeFazio had little to say to *Siuslaw News* regarding his May 19 primary challenge from Doyle Canning, instead focusing on what the congressman said he sees as the extreme danger posed

by the COVID-19 pandemic. All ballots are now due at Lane County ballot drop boxes. In Florence, can be dropped off outside the Florence Municipal Court, 900 Greenwood St.

In his role as chairman of Transportation and Infrastructure, DeFazio said he has been disappointed in the leadership provided by President Donald Trump during this crisis and has been very public with those criticisms. His most recent disagreement with the executive branch centers around airplane travel and the safety of

passengers that travel while ignoring Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines regarding personal behaviors related to hygiene.

DeFazio’s staff shared a letter the congressman sent to an airline trade association requesting a stringent mask-wearing policy on all American airlines.

“Who among the CEOs of your association’s members would want a member of their own family to be assigned to a middle seat between two potentially

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