

# Community News

## Siuslaw Elementary to host student item pick-up

When school was suddenly dismissed in March in response to the governor's executive order, many Siuslaw students left personal belongings in classrooms. About half of all Siuslaw Elementary students have already picked-up their materials. For those who haven't, SES has set aside Wednesday, May 27, for students and families to

pick up any items left at the school. SES staff will be on hand from 3 to 7 p.m. to return these items to families. All items will be gathered in the Siuslaw Elementary School breezeway, the bus pick-up area, at 2221 Oak St. Families can drive-up and school staff will locate the bag with students' belongings.

## Florence Habitat continues local bottle and can drive

Is your storage bring overtaken by empty bottles and cans? Help the environment while supporting the local Florence Habitat for Humanity. Florence Habitat will be hosting a bottle and can drive Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. People can bring return-

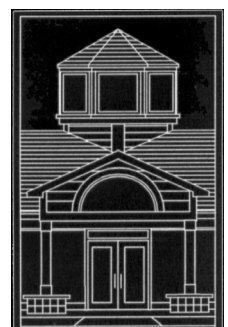
able bottles and cans to the front of Florence Habitat ReStore, 2016 Highway 101, in the Florence Grocery Outlet parking lot. Volunteers will be on hand to unload donations from each vehicle. This is a social distancing drive-thru event. For more info, visit [www.florencehabitat.org](http://www.florencehabitat.org).

## SOS to help with energy assistance

The Siuslaw Outreach Services Low-Income Housing Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is taking sign-ups for those who have not received energy assistance already this year. Funds will be dispersed as long as they are available. LIHEAP is an energy as-

sistance program designed to help low-income individuals and families during the colder months. Sign-ups may be done in person at Siuslaw Outreach Services, 1576 W 12th St., or via phone at 541-997-2816. For more information, visit [florencecosos.org](http://florencecosos.org).

## Library Tidings



### News about the Siuslaw Public Library

**Library Tidings, a regular feature of the Siuslaw News, features news about upcoming Siuslaw Public Library programs for adults and children, new books and videos, and other library news of interest to the community.**

**Library Tidings by Kevin Mittge**

### Book Review "Fire in Paradise" by Alistair Gee and Dani Anguiano

There is no precedent in postwar American history for the destruction of the town of Paradise, Calif. On Nov. 8, 2018, the community of 27,000 people was swallowed by the ferocious Camp Fire, which razed virtually every home and killed at least 85 people. It displaced tens of thousands of people, yielding a refugee crisis that continues to unfold.

"Fire in Paradise" is a dramatic and moving narrative of the disaster based on hundreds of in-depth interviews with residents, firefighters and police and scientific experts.

Alastair Gee and Dani Anguiano are California-based journalists who have reported on Paradise since the day the fire began. Together, they reveal the heroics of the first responders, the miraculous escapes of those who got out of Paradise, and the horrors experienced by those who were trapped.

Their accounts are intimate and unforgettable, including the local who left her home on foot as fire approached while her 82-year-

old father stayed to battle it; the firefighter who drove into the heart of the inferno in his bulldozer; the police officer who switched on his body camera to record what he thought would be his final moments as the flames closed in; and the mother who, less than 12 hours after giving birth in the local hospital, thought she would die in the chaotic evacuation with her baby in her lap.

This is the story of a town at the forefront of a devastating global shift—of a remarkable landscape sucked ever drier of moisture and becoming inhospitable even to trees, now dying in their tens of millions and turning to kindling. It is also a story of a new kind of fire behavior that firefighters have never witnessed before and barely know how to handle.

What happened in Paradise was unprecedented in America. Yet according to climate scientists and fire experts, it will surely happen again.

### Book Returns and More!

This week, on Tuesday and Friday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., the library has begun accepting the return of materials checked out before the

library closure in March.

Next week, the library will begin accepting returns Monday through Friday.

Also next week the library hopes to begin providing curbside service, notifying patrons of holds waiting for the past two months, as well as beginning to pull requested books for patrons. At this time, we are asking Mapleton patrons to drop off any materials they might have at the Florence library.

Patrons are asked to please be patient while we transition to this limited public service in the coming weeks.

### Creativebug

The library is pleased to present access to Creativebug, a site offering arts and crafts instructional videos.

After logging in with your library card number and then registering for free, you will enjoy unlimited access to thousands of online art and craft classes. Watch the classes anytime, anywhere. Since the classes never expire, you can start and stop projects at your own pace.

These classes are for all skill levels. Videos are produced by renowned artists and creative experts. Check it out!

## United Way invests over \$300,000 in short-term COVID-19 response

### New phase of funding will address longer-term recovery efforts

Two months after launching its COVID-19 Community Response Fund, United Way of Lane County has now granted a total of \$309,040 to Lane County-area nonprofits working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last week, United Way announced the recipients of its fourth and final round of "response" funding: 34 programs will receive a total of \$77,195 this week. Among those is Boy & Girls Club of Western Lane County, DevNW and St. Vincent de Paul of Lane County, who each will receive \$2,500 in response funds.

Similar to previous rounds of funding, United Way grant dollars will help meet the immediate, short-term needs of nonprofits

and those whom they serve, providing food boxes, rental assistance, family supports, and more.

However, the short-term needs are not diminishing, and the need for longer-term solutions and systemic change is clear.

"While many in Lane County may be experiencing some relief in our community beginning to open back up, there is a vast portion of our community, often unseen, who are still in precarious situations — fearful for their health, their housing and their overall ability to weather the many struggles that have been exacerbated by this pandemic," said Noreen J. Dunnells, United Way of Lane County's President and CEO.

Given this, United Way of Lane County is expanding its current fund to become the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. Dollars raised moving forward

will be invested in the community's most urgent and immediate needs, as well as efforts to address health, educational, and economic inequities. These grants will be larger in scope than the original response fund grants and will still be directed toward nonprofits serving the needs of those most impacted by the pandemic.

This new phase of funding is possible thanks to a partnership with the newly formed Lane Community Health Council — which not only contributed to the original response fund but is also making a significant investment in the expanded response and recovery fund.

"We know that when it comes to health, access to care is only one factor in determining outcomes for our community," said Rhonda Busek, Lane Community Health Council's

Executive Director. "Lane Community Health Council is committed to investing in the many other vital supports necessary for the health of our community — affordable housing, access to food, and more — all of which have become increasingly urgent amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. United Way of Lane County is a trusted leader in this work, and we are thrilled to partner with them in this way."

More details about this new fund and how nonprofits can apply will be released on June 16, when United Way kicks off LIVE UNITED Week, an online event featuring series of videos and stories about the strength and passion of our community. Those interested in contributing to United Way's COVID-19 Response and Recover Fund can do so at [www.unitedwaylane.org/covid-19-fund](http://www.unitedwaylane.org/covid-19-fund).

## Oregon Employment Department reports on processing claims in Oregon

Oregon is facing unprecedented unemployment and hundreds of thousands of Oregon families are counting on unemployment benefits to pay for

their basic needs.

While the Oregon Employment Department (OED) has paid a record number of Oregonians within two to three weeks, for too many Oregonians, their claims are in a backlog. Department staff knows how frustrating it has been for those who are trying to reach them about the status of their claims and have been unable to get through.

That is why the OED is launching Project Focus 100.

The goal is straightforward: to process 100 percent of the 38,000-claim backlog as quickly as possible and get Oregonians the relief they need.

The department will use four successful strategies:

1. Continue surge hiring. The department has made good progress getting the staff it needs to process claims quickly, increasing by six times the number of people processing claims than were in place before COVID-19 closures began.

"We continue hiring and training new employees to ensure every Oregonian gets the benefits they're owed in a timely fashion," said OED Director Kay Erickson.

2. Further focus its experienced professionals on the oldest and most complex

claims. For two weeks, from May 29 to June 12, OED will increase its outbound calls to resolve claims for those that have been waiting the longest. To do this, the most experienced employees will take time away from answering the phones.

OED will also temporarily reassign job center employees to take incoming calls to help resolve questions, in all languages, relating to:

- Address/Phone number changes
- Looking up customer ID (CID) numbers
- Re-setting PIN numbers
- Issues with claiming a week of benefits online, including taking weekly certifications

- Filing a new claim or processing an internet initial claim (except those with military, federal, or out-of-state wages)

- Re-starting a claim
- Checking the status of a claim (if unable to use the online claim system)

3. Increase proactive contact and communication. OED is piloting new ways of contacting Oregonians to let them know where their claims are in the system and to solve problems. It now has pre-recorded phone messages and emails that confirm that OED has received a PUA claim. The de-

partment is also working to add a customer service chat bot to the website.

4. Use technology to close gaps and improve service.

"We have identified strategies that move claims out of processing traps that can hang them up," Erickson said. "That has already moved thousands of claims through processing. We will continue using these strategies to speed up processing and get Oregonians whose claims have been stuck the benefits they're owed."

People with questions about their unemployment benefits should go to [www.oregon.gov/employ/unemployment/](http://www.oregon.gov/employ/unemployment/).

There, OED continues to add new metrics to the online dashboard so that Oregonians can watch its progress.

"We'll continue to be transparent about where we are and our progress toward our goals," Erickson said. "Navigating this crisis is a collective effort, and Oregonians know how to work together to overcome hard challenges. We'll get through this together."

Auxiliary aids and services available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Contact 503-947-1794 or call 711 Telecommunications Relay Services.

## OLD SCHOOL FURNITURE

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WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
MAY 27	MAY 28	MAY 29	MAY 30	MAY 31	JUNE 1	JUNE 2
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Rain	AM Showers	Few Showers	Showers
69°F 51°F	69°F 53°F	67°F 52°F	58°F 49°F	61°F 50°F	61°F 50°F	61°F 50°F

## Health is our #1 Priority!

At Shervin's we are taking extra precaution in order to ensure that our customers and staff are kept safe and healthy during this quickly changing situation.

- 1 **Car Sanitation** - All cars are wiped down with a sanitizer before and after the service. We wipe down any areas in the interior where employees have touched, such as door handles, the steering wheel, keys, shifters and power window panels.
- 2 **Hand Sanitation** - Our staff will continue to wash their hands throughout the day and change gloves after each car they service.
- 3 **Give Customers Options** - We will pick up and deliver your vehicle to your home. You may also drop your key in our secure mailbox for drop-offs to avoid or minimize contact.
- 4 **Employee Illness is Serious** - We are encouraging employees not to shake hands. We are practicing "personal distancing" and encouraging employees to stay home if they feel under the weather.
- 5 **Wipe Down High Touch Points** - We wipe/spray counters, credit card machines, door handles, phone handles, kitchen areas, and chair arms and tables in waiting area multiple times a day. We continue to be focused and committed to working with each of you to ensure we continue to meet and exceed your expectations. We are here for you.

We thank you for your business and more importantly, your friendship. Please be safe and exercise extra precaution during this challenging time.

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