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"This is a huge act of support," said Hannigan. "Banner Bank just proved, in a very tangible way, that they value the Chamber and care about small businesses in our area. This is a tremendous testimony to their community involvement and how they deliver on their company values."

With local events that draw visitors to the Florence community being cancelled, both leaders sought a way help the business community and replace some of the Chamber's lost income. Banner Bank re-allocated its event sponsorship funds to fund the contribution.

"I strongly encourage other financial institutions to follow suit and find a way to help local communities while supporting their chambers, as we all know cancelled events and social distancing has truly impacted our chambers throughout Oregon," Yahyazadeh said. "When you have a little bit of help from several different sources, it all adds up and becomes significant help. I am certain that, moving forward, our community is and will continue to support our businesses and non-profits to keep Florence

stronger than ever."

The Chamber advocates for businesses with local, state, and national elected officials to promote solutions for businesses; provides exclusive referrals to mem-

local small businesses that define us as a community. Tess and I are very aware of the overwhelming-ly difficult decisions and financial burdens many of them are facing. This keeps the many benefits of

ribbon-cutting ceremonies and instant credibility. A Business Partner receives an estimated \$800-plus per year in direct benefits. As membership levels increase, so does the value of the membership up to an estimated \$18,000 in benefits.

"Some join the chamber to support business in Florence even if they don't avail themselves of all the membership benefits," Hannigan said. "In Florence, the Chamber is a powerful catalyst for business growth, convener of leaders and influencers, and a champion for a stronger community. Those are good things for all residents, and that's why memberships for individuals are available too. Why every business in town is not a member is a mystery."

Florence Area Chamber of Commerce released a special "Power of the Chamber" publication through Siuslaw News this June. This can be found at issuu.com/siuslawnews/docs/chamber_2020.

For more information on joining the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce, the membership dues matching program, or to volunteer, contact Hannigan at 541-997-3128 or bettina@florencechamber.com.

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— Tess Yahyazadeh,

AVP/Branch Manager at Banner Bank in Florence

bers from those who ask which businesses to buy from; hosts free seminars on business operations, security, leadership training, and marketing; and connects members through networking events.

According to Hannigan, "Banner Bank's very generous contribution provides important financial relief for up to 100 Business Partner level members to maintain their very valuable memberships, and guarantees \$10,000 in dues revenue to the Chamber. Members who are feeling the greatest impacts of these economic times are the same

membership flowing their way."

Yahyazadeh added, "Bettina and I had several conversations regarding helping our local businesses maintain their memberships during these hard times. I want to see businesses flourish and be able to walk away from this knowing Banner Bank cares about them, whether they are clients or not. A collaboration like this aligns with our mission to be connected, knowledgeable, and responsive."

Benefits of being a member of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce include mailing lists,

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perspective was a huge asset to the district. Plus, John brought a unique Human Resources perspective to the school board, which helped broaden the way we look at employment and contracts. His voice and vision will be missed. However, I'm sure we'll still see him cheering on the sidelines at football games and in the stands for volleyball and basketball."

In her interview for the position, Milbrett stated that the greatest strength of Mapleton was the family atmosphere the small school

district can provide.

"Yes, sometimes the kids can be a small handful and the staff is so small, everyone knows each other — but it has its greatness and comforts," she said. "The kids take care of each other, and they love each other. They feel it with the staff, they feel it with the younger kids and the older kids."

Being inside the education system has also allowed her to see first-hand some of the challenges Mapleton will be facing in near future. Just hours before her interview, the state released information on different

school districts and what requirements will be needed.

"I got a little scared after reading what came down," Milbrett said. "It's going to be a lot of time consuming stuff. I don't know what we're in for, but it may be easier than we think. There are many decisions that need to be made, and it's still yet to be seen how intense it's going to be."

While the challenges for students today are different than what they were four months ago, Milbrett said that the core goals of education don't change, including

equity for students.

"We have to make sure we're reaching all the students," she said. "You have all the different learning levels, and making sure each kid is getting the attention needed. Making sure we give them extra attention, one on one. Make sure they're being challenged."

While Milbrett stated she knew there would be challenges ahead, she believed that the school board would be able to face them.

"I've watched you work over the years with different people," she said to the board members. "It's not the easiest thing to do by any means. You have long hours and lots of big decisions to make. I have a better understanding every year."

This is the second time Milbrett has applied for the position.

Also applying was Jesse Beers, who works with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) in the cultural resources department. He is also a current member of the Governor's Cultural Items Task Force, which identifies tribal resources within state agencies.

"I have two kids at school in Mapleton, and a long history of family going to the district," Beers told the board, stating that he would like to get more involved. "It's a way to further the goals of the district, make a more positive experience for youth and, if it all, improve educational resources."

He stated a big goal was assisting school districts with Oregon Senate Bill 13, which requires districts to create Native American curriculum in schools.

"I'd like to be able to see that come into fruition in Mapleton and other school districts as well," he said.

According to Beers, he has worked with multiple boards and projects from various entities, including federal, state and tribal. Not only has he worked on creating curriculum for cultural programs, he also has a history of writing grants for multiple projects.

However, he stated he did not have any experience in sitting on a school board, and wasn't exactly sure what it would entail.

"When I first got on the board a million years ago, it took me a lot of time to figure out what's going on," said school board member Michelle Holman. "There's a learning curve with so many acronyms. Don't ex-

pect to just hit the ground. You'll spend a lot of time listening."

As to what he felt were the best aspects of the district, Beers also referred to its small size.

"A lot of people think it creates these cliques. For me, I think it's the opposite," he said. "You have to be friends with everybody. And it makes you, I would argue, broader minded. Right now, that's really important. I think we could go with a little more hearing people and conversing, which is something I learned to do at Mapleton."

While the four-person school board thought both candidates were excellent, they ultimately chose Milbrett because of her previous experience in schools.

"Jesse brings some really great skills and an indigenous sensibility which could only help us, but in weighing two candidates, I think she's more qualified right now," Holman said. "There will be another opportunity for Jesse."

Board member Marilyn Fox veered toward Beers, particularly for his work with Senate Bill 13.

"I think Jesse has a lot of information we could use if we want to do that right," she said.

But Milbrett's connection with another school district was a bright spot for school board member Mary Ellen Mansfield.

"He does offer a different perspective, but I like Andrea's experience. Her involvement with working in another school is something that we could tap into her knowledge," she said.

Board chair Mizu Burruss agreed that both candidates were of high quality, but that Beers still needed some time.

"I'm hoping that Jesse will be able to help us with that as a community member, board member, a parent or tribal member," she said. "Whether or not we choose him, I know we'll be able to really benefit from his expertise."

But with Milbrett's experience with the Mapleton School District itself, and education as a whole, Burruss found her to be the better candidate at this time.

"I think also I also agree that Andrea, with her sustained interest in being involved, is telling. You don't get a lot of that, and I really appreciate it," Burruss said.

Holman, Mansfield and Burruss voted yes for Milbrett, with Fox abstaining.

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Wed. Ministries 1-8 Grade 7 p.m.
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Link to our website
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All other platforms will be update after the service.
florencecrossroadag.org
office@florencecrossroadag.org
- FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - SBC**
1935 25th St. – 997-7660 • Pastor, Ron Allen
Services on Facebook live
Sunday's at 11:00 am
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All Bible studies held at the church including Sunday morning, Thursday Ladies study, and Children's Programs are suspended.
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