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tendrils of the labyrinth extend outwards. His team takes the swirls and curves that Dyke highlights on the sand and makes them deeper and connects them to hubs of shells, driftwood and other beach materials. After the design is drawn and raked to differentiate the flat sand from the paths, walkers become walkers and traverse the interconnected paths in a quiet, respectful manner.

Dyke always begins the second stage of the "Circles" process by saying a few words at the start of the walk. These are usually short and simple, asking walkers to protect and

appreciate the beauty and bounty of Planet Earth. The words are few, but the impact they have on the crowds is amazing as people connect to a feeling of calmness and continuity.

Dyke has spent a great deal of time thinking about the COVID emergency that is impacting all of the Oregon coastal towns where he creates his drawings, and is well aware that the need for a safe, worry free walk was central to the enjoyment people feel when participating in Circles in the Sand.

The events, which have gained in popularity and prominence over the years, have been on a hiatus, but the public demand for the



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Denny Dyke is the mastermind behind Circles in the Sand. He creates each unique labyrinth directly on the sand of coastal beaches. His team then helps to outline the designs before people can walk through.

drawings and accompanying walks continue to increase. In addition, the desire for the events at small coastal towns, not just in Oregon, made the need for a safe, updated process necessary.

Dyke and his team have been coming to the beaches by Driftwood Shores for the past three seasons and had concerns the pandemic might prevent them from making the trip this

year.

"I thought about it for a quite a while and I was trying to figure out a way to do this safely, and what we decided to do was extend the length of the labyrinth, making the path a little thinner and stretching out the overall length of the labyrinth, making it less crowded and allowing people more room as they walk," Dyke said.

The concept of mind-

ful walking is one of the central elements of Circles in the Sand. Dyke and his team wanted to retain the qualities of thoughtfulness and appreciation of the earth of pre-COVID days and the extended trails make that more likely.

Beth Patrick is one of "Circles in the Sands" senior team members and has enjoyed the previous drawings done on the long, flat stretch of beach on the west side of the Driftwood Shores Resort.

"We are excited to share our labyrinth walk with our neighbors to the north. Tides and time make this

a sunset walk," she said. "We have a full volunteer grooming staff set to assist us with highlighting the labyrinth path. There will be some fabulous shell and sand art accents."

The team expressed gratitude from its sponsors Sand Master Park, the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce and Driftwood Shores Resort and Conference Center, as well as its newest sponsors, Sea Lion Caves and Mo's Seafood and Chowder.

For more information, visit Circles in the Sand online at www.sandypathbandon.com.

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