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VOTING INFORMATION  
INSIDE — A3

# City of Florence celebrates 5 years of RAIN

Partnership emphasizes economic development and entrepreneurship

BY CHANTELE MEYER  
SIUSLAW NEWS

The nonprofit Oregon RAIN (Regional Accelerator and Innovation Network) held a virtual commemoration of its five-year partnership with the City of Florence on Oct. 21. Held over Zoom, the meeting brought together some of the people that have made the partnership possible over the years, including officials from RAIN and the city and representatives from the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Florence.

As people logged into the chat, one person said, "This feels like a family call!"

"This is so fun," Coastal Catalyst Ariel Ruben agreed. "We've got to do



In this Siuslaw News photo from October 2015, City Lights Cinemas hosted the first large-scale event for Oregon RAIN and the City of Florence, leading to a five-year and beyond partnership.

this more often."

The group in attendance was small, just under 30, with many people announcing their connections and RAIN Executive Director Caroline Cummings greeting most by name.

She started the celebration by saying, "Thank you so much for joining us for the five-year anniversary of RAIN being invited into the Florence community. I can't believe it's been five years. ... And even with COVID and the fires slowing things down, I still feel like time is flying."

The partnership between the two entities started in October 2015 with a meetup at Homegrown Public House, and a "Call of Interest" event at City Lights Cinemas on Oct. 28.

See PARTNERS page 6A

# EcoGeneration takes out the recycling

Florence's Sunday event accepts No. 1, 2, 4 & 5 plastics

BY MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

The nonprofit EcoGeneration, based in Cottage Grove, will be hosting a Recycling Take Back Event at the Florence Events Center (FEC) parking lot, 715 Quince St., on Sunday, Nov. 1. This will be a free opportunity for Florence area residents and businesses to bring their clean, dry, label-free recyclables for collection.

The event will take place between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., with the first hour specifically designated for residents over 65 years of age.

Florence Master Recycler and City of Florence Environmental Management Advisory Committee member Britte Kirsch is helping to coordinate the Take Back. She emphasized the need for properly prepared items, but also wanted to remind people masks must be worn.

"Masks are really important for this event. The FEC is requesting that we follow all state mandated safety protocols to ensure the health and safety of staff and volunteers. If you are not wearing a mask, we will not be able to help

you," Kirsch said.

The items that will be collected include not only No. 1 bottles but also 2, 4 and 5s. For the first time in Florence, health and beauty containers will be accepted.

This is a major addition to the recyclable take backs and will allow for more materials to be reused.

"One of the cool things about the addition of the health and beauty items is you don't have to remove the labels. They are going into a completely different stream. They have to be cleaned and dry, like all of the items, but they don't have to be label free," Kirsch said.

EcoGeneration was formed two years ago by Lane County Master Recycler David Gardiepy with the mission to safeguard and improve ecosystems where humans exist. An additional focus of the volunteer group is the protection

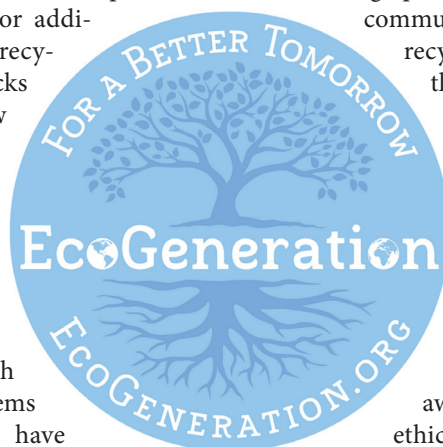
of biodiversity in and around the Northwest and the reduction of waste materials entering the traditional trash stream.

"We are very excited to be teaming up with the Florence community to provide recycling events through 2021 as we grow as an organization," Gardiepy said.

"We also are looking for community sponsors to help build local awareness about ethical waste management and help protect the coastal environment."

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted many recycling options for the public, but there has been some movement to expand the items which can be accepted. For example, EcoGeneration is including No. 1 plastics for bottles, jugs and tubs, though this excludes clamshell containers, cups and to-go boxes.

See RECYCLE page 9A



# Florence Public Art Committee finalizes goals for next biennium

BY MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

The City of Florence Public Art Committee (PAC) met remotely Oct. 26 with the task of working towards finalizing the committee's suggested City Workplan. The end result of this work will be presented to the Florence City Council for consideration at its Nov. 16 meeting, when all the city boards and commission will submit their proposals for the 2021-23 biennium.

PAC chairperson Harlen Springer opened the meeting with a preview of what the group would be working on to present to the council and then turned the recap of the reworking of PAC priorities over to Sarah Moehrke, Economic Development Catalyst.

Moehrke reviewed the progress made on accomplishing goals set out in the previous workplan, highlighting the Art Exposed Rotating Gallery program, which is now entering its second cycle of art, and the completion of the mural on Quince Street as examples of PAC's successes.

However, one of the challenges faced by PAC has been a sense in the community that the decisions made the group — primarily in regard to Art Exposed and the Quince Street Mural — that there has not been enough regard given to the perspectives of residents when selecting art to display under the auspices of PAC.

PAC member Peggy Meyer has been involved with the committee, as both a critic and an advocate, and offered a suggestion on improving that relationship.

"Maybe we should think about where we could work more with the community in the areas of private murals or private sculptures put up by businesses or people in the community," Meyer suggested. "So that it wouldn't be an adversarial relationship, and people would see

See COMMITTEE page 8A

# WLFEA discusses COVID-19 and contracts

BY MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Western Lane Fire and Emergency Authority (WLFEA) took place as scheduled via teleconference on Thursday, Oct. 22. WLFEA is made up of board members and first responders from both the Siuslaw Fire and Rescue (SVFR) and Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD), and joint sessions of both boards have been common over the past year.

Fire/EMS Chief Michael Schick led the meeting and first sought approval for the agenda and consent items, which he received and then moved to staff reports.

The agenda for the meeting included staff reports submitted

to the boards of directors, updating them on issues related to COVID-19 policies, finances, personnel and community support.

Schick updated the boards on a Lane County COVID policy change and included a warning to both EMS and fire first responders.

"We anticipate that Lane County may be moving to an increased monitoring level (very high) in the near future, which would indicate our healthcare facilities are at — or near — full capacity. Positive patients at Peace Harbor will be transferred to Eugene, which increases our exposure. But our crews are very diligent in wearing the proper PPE and disinfecting equipment following transports," Schick said. "Within our response area, we continue to see a slow in-

crease in the number of positive patients, at least those who we are aware of."

Schick explained that a travel policy for all employees and volunteers is being developed and that the agencies will be strongly encouraging anyone who travels to a high-risk area to self-quarantine for 14 days upon their return.

"We have put into effect a policy to restrict access to anyone outside our organizations from entering any crew or staff areas," said Schick. "Vendors and visitors were being allowed to enter areas which should have restricted access, which creates an unnecessary risk of exposure for our personnel."

There was also an important update related to the currently stalled WLAD labor negotiations.

See WLFEA page 8A

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NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY  
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FLORENCE, OREGON

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Sunny with a high of 62 and a low tonight of 44.

Full forecast on A3

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