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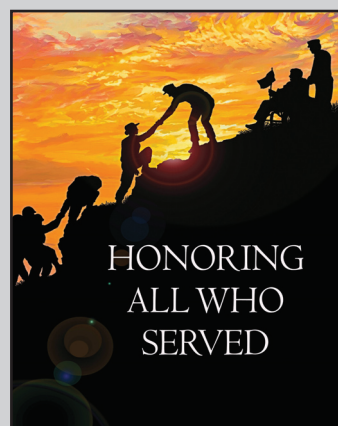
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Social Section Inside

Local, state vote approves old, new faces and measures

Mayor Joe Henry wins another term, Sally Wantz and Bill Meyer join city council

By NED HICKSON & MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

After the final votes were tabulated and made official by Lane County Elections, Florence voters had chosen Joe Henry (2,819 votes/50.89 percent) for another term as mayor, with Henry narrowly defeating Florence business woman Jo Beaudreau (2,694 votes/48.64 percent) by a narrow 125-vote margin.

When the new city council is

sworn in this January, Henry will be joined by budget committee member Sally Wantz, who was the top vote getter with 31.96 percent (2,737 votes), and port commissioner and FURA Chairperson Bill Meyer (2,652 votes), who was a close second with 30.97 percent of the vote.

“I am honored that the citizens of the City of Florence have again

“The close race bears out the fact that our city is divided and I will work diligently to help bridge that divide.”

— Florence Mayor Joe Henry

placed their trust in me by electing me Mayor for another two years,” Henry said in an email to *Siuslaw News*. “I will do my best to continue to guide the efforts of the city council, remaining focused on our work

plan and making Florence a better place to live for everyone.”

Henry added that he was particularly grateful for “the loving support of Pamela, my wife, and for all those who supported my limited campaign in many ways.”

Henry said he chose not to spend any money campaigning, feeling that his record of accomplishments

See **ELECTION 6B**

Siuslaw News

NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY

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WEATHER



Clouds and rain with a high of 52 and a low tonight of 39. Full forecast on A3



Due to the Veterans Day holiday next week's Wednesday edition of *Siuslaw News* will be published Tuesday, Nov. 10.

LIFESTYLE



Teen Giving Tree
INSIDE — B1

RECORDS

Obituaries & emergency response logs
Inside — A2

SIDE SHOW

Activities and comics every Saturday
Inside — B4

CLASSIFIEDS

Listings and public notices
Inside — B5 & B7

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2 SECTIONS | 18 PAGES
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Florence PD begins use of new body cams

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

The Florence Police Department (FPD) began the use of new body cams by all on-duty, uniformed officers last Monday, Nov. 2. The Florence City Council approved the use of the new video equipment at the Aug. 17 council meeting and entered into a five-year contract with the police support company Axon.

Axon produces an array of cameras, software and tasers to assist law enforcement agencies nationwide through the increased use of non-lethal technologies and will handle technical support and data storage during the length of the contract.

Florence Police Department Commander John Pitcher said he believes the expanded capabilities of the bodycams add to the positive relationship his department has with the residents and leaders of the Florence community.

Additionally, the FPD and the city believe the technology allows for increased transparency of police procedures and can improve the quality of communication between officers and the public.

Prior to the council's approval to purchase Axon's equipment and support services, FPD activity had been recorded — when possible — from vehicle-based video systems which had inherent limitations to full

See **POLICE 8B**



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw Middle School sixth-grader Dakota Aaron with his second-place wood shop flower box.

Hands-on learning

By MARK BRENNAN
Siuslaw News

The Siuslaw School District has been trying to keep students involved with their education in new ways since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many classes are now online, and the parents of students have been acting as part-time substitute teachers since school reconvened in September. One of the chal-

lenges to this plan has been that not all classes are easily transferred to a digital learning platform.

The introduction of a distance-based educational experience has made learning new skills and techniques that normally require a literal “hands on” approach extremely difficult.

To that end, one of the most popular programs, woodworking, has been reimaged to

allow students to work on projects designed by instructors but that can be completed at the student's home.

Siuslaw Middle School Woodshop teacher TJ Wilson and his students have been working on a simple but useful project during the last few weeks — designing, painting and constructing a planter box.

See **BOXES 5B**

50 years of Florence's (in)famous 'whale tale'

Nov. 12 marks the 50th anniversary of the globally recognized 'Exploding Whale'

By SIUSLAW NEWS STAFF
Siuslaw News

The legend began on Nov. 12, 1970, when an 8-ton sperm whale, 45-feet in length, washed up on shore just south of Florence. It was a curiosity for residents and beachcombers at the time, but soon became a bit of a problem as the stench of rotting whale began to overtake the dunes.

Since Oregon beaches are a public right of way (the speed limit is 25 mph, with pedestrians having the right-of-way), the Oregon State Highway Division (now the Oregon Department of Transportation) was tasked with cleaning it up.

The idea of burying the whale was floated but turned down: The ocean tides would surely uncover the beached beast. It could have been cut up to pieces, but who would want to do that? So, according to

the Oregon Encyclopedia, Assistant District Highway Engineer George Thornton consulted with a U.S. Navy munitions expert about the issue and decided to treat the carcass as a boulder, using half-a-ton of dynamite to blast it to smithereens.

Scavengers such as seagulls, crabs and “whatnot” would gulp up the remainders.

KATU television news reporter Paul Linnman showed up to cover the event and interviewed Thorn-

ton just before the whale demolition.

“Well I'm confident that it will work,” Thornton said. “The only thing is we're not sure just exactly how much explosives it'll take to disintegrate this.”

“Is there any chance it might be more than a one-day job?” Linnman asked.

“If there's any large chunks left,”

See **WHALE 7B**

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