

Florence Chamber encourages residents to 'Shop Where You Live'

Florence has made a number of adjustments to its annual holiday festivities to comply with COVID-19-related regulations while still offering some festivities to preserve commerce in the small town.

Postponed to next year are Santa's celebrated arrival, hayrides on Bay Street, the mayor's tree lighting, the cocoa and cookie trails, and live music.

This year, in their place, the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce is inviting those who shop to vote for the best decorated of more than 15 participating shops and galleries, then drop off their ballot to enter to win a valuable "swag bag" full of goodies and certificates from Florence-area merchants.

The free ballot is available beginning Nov. 27 at

FlorenceChamber.com under the events tab. Completed ballots are due Dec. 26 at the Chamber's Visitor Center, 290 Highway 101 in Florence, to be entered for the drawing.

"Florence shops and galleries are full of those kinds of things," said Bettina Hannigan, president/CEO of the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce. "We need to rally together to save small

businesses in Florence. Stores and other businesses will be putting up their most festive holiday décor — inside and out — in hopes of earning shoppers' votes for the best overall displays. At stake will be a special trophy declaring them the winner."

Hannigan said she recognizes there are logistical concerns about going out in public, so she strongly rec-

ommends wearing a good mask, keeping a 6-foot distance from others, carrying a small bottle of hand sanitizer and using it regularly.

"Please follow protocols while getting around to our many shops and galleries for your holiday shopping, and while doing so, be merry and cheerful toward other shoppers and shopkeepers," she added. "Shop Small Saturday, the day af-

ter traditional Black Friday, is now a month-long celebration of local businesses in Historic Old Town Florence and around town.

"Instead of spending all your funds online, come spend them finding precious, unique gifts for friends and loved ones — something truly unique and special for family and friends — in Florence."

City from 1A

Works staff.

"We will be putting lights up at all of our facilities, just like we do every year. We'll be decorating the Siuslaw River Bridge

Interpretive Site, Gazebo Park and the restroom area at Maple Street," Messmer said.

Originally scheduled to start on holiday décor this week, Public Works staff members have been hard at work to mitigate damage

from the recent series of storms.

"As of today, it still has the pumpkin, understandably," Messmer said Wednesday of the interpretive site on Bay Street. "Their plans got a little shifted, so they're going to be very busy over the next several days."

after the storm.

As part of the decorations, Public Works will also be installing a collection of holiday displays that will be set up around town. These will be places for people to take pictures and give them an excuse to look at the holiday decorations around town.

Messmer said the lighting contest was spearheaded by Morgan.

"She was all for it and kicked it off. ... Thank you to Habitat for helping us. It's a lot of work, and Habitat has been a really good community partner in this," she said, also thanking Coast Radio KCST/KCFM and Siuslaw News for supporting the event.

Interpretive Center for kids of all ages to drop off their letters to Santa. People who leave a return mailing address will get a hand-penned letter from Santa's local representatives.

"Who knows how many letters we're going to get?" Messmer said. "It depends on how many people participate. It should be fun."

Get Results...List With Crystell.



Crystell Wise
Broker, SRES
541 991-9487



TR HUNTER
REAL ESTATE
541-997-1200



9700 Bernhardt Creek Rd – Country estate along Sweet Creek in Mapleton! Features two homes, gardens, fruit trees, barn, and private dock. Main home is 3230 sqft with an infinity pool and large wrap-around decks. The cabin comes fully furnished and is 940 sqft. \$989,000. #3121-20170603

1749 Highway 101 • 541-997-1200

We are open and ready to assist you!



Johnston Motor Company
Since 1939

2150 Hwy. 101 • Florence
(541) 997-3475 • 1-800-348-3475



The interpretive site is also the home of Florence's living Christmas tree, which was installed in 2017. The tree gets decorated with lights and decorations by Public Works staff utilizing a lift.

"The main question we're getting is about a tree lighting festival. That will not be occurring," Messmer said.

The second part of the city's holiday celebration is a partnership with Florence Habitat for Humanity on the 2020 Holiday LED Light Contest.

According to the event's Facebook page, "Many of our traditional community celebrations have gone dark. We have plans to make the holidays bright in Florence!"

Habitat Administrative Assistant Ivy Rash said, "We've spent a lot of hours finding ways to be positive and encourage the community. It's too easy to be gloomy this time of year."

Hence the lighting contest and Habitat's numerous other events listed at florencehabitat.square-space.com. These include a holiday raffle, gingerbread house contest, an upcycle challenge, Ugly Sweater Party and business-oriented events at the Habitat ReStore, 2016 Highway 101.

"We're just trying to do something fun, because it's not been the most fun year," Messmer said. "All of these activities are pretty much designed for you to do on your own, as a community. You decorate your house and then drive by, and both of those things are individualized yet everybody can see them and do it. Same thing with writing a letter — that's a pretty physically distant activity. And the holiday photo ops are also something you can do with just your little group or family."

That's not to say that Florence won't still be full of the holiday spirit. In addition, the tree will be lit, just not in a public presentation.

"Usually the majority of Public Works staff help with the light displays at some point," Messmer said. "Some of the things take more hands, like getting the big tree decorated."

The city worked with Habitat staff and Executive Director Janell Morgan to plan the two categories of the contest — residential and commercial — and subsequent prizes. Lights included in the displays must be LED.

Now through Dec. 10, people can sign up their homes and businesses for the contest. All decorations and all lights must be up by Dec. 10 and remain on display through Dec. 25.

"We know we can't do things face-to-face this year, but we wanted to come up with ways to lift the community up and bring us together," Rash said.

The city's third holiday activity is a way for kids — and kids at heart — to interact with the North Pole and its famous resident.

"They aren't really things that necessarily feel like they're COVID related, but are things you could do every year. It just fits in nicely with the physical distancing," Messmer said. "I would imagine a lot more people are staying home, who may otherwise be traveling. So maybe that'll give them the opportunity to decorate their own homes. And you can win a prize!"

In addition, staff will be decorating Florence City Hall, the Florence Justice Center and the Public Works Facility.

Public Works also teams up with Central Lincoln PUD to install the snowflake displays on utility poles.

"Those will start appearing soon depending on our weather," Messmer said.

"It's for the whole community. You don't have to be a chamber member and you don't have to be in the city limits," Messmer said. "There will also be prizes and people can vote on it."

People can sign up at TheSiuslawNews.com, which is hosting the contest online. That is also where people can vote and view a map of participants.

"We're going to have Letters to Santa," Messmer said. "We are putting North Pole Express mail drop box in Old Town. And then we'll have our elves write responses to those."

From Nov. 25 to Dec. 20, the North Pole Express mailbox will be available at the Siuslaw River Bridge

For more information on the City of Florence's holiday activities, visit www.facebook.com/CityofFlorenceOregon and ci.florence.or.us.



Holiday LED Light Contest
DECORATE YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS!

Light entries must be on display by December 10th and remain up through December 25th.

Details	Prizes! Prizes! Prizes!
ENTRY DEADLINE REGISTER BY DECEMBER 10TH	RESIDENTIAL VISA GIFT CARD 1st: \$250 2nd: \$150 3rd: \$100
YOU GET TO CHOOSE THE WINNERS!	COMMERCIAL UTILITY & ADVERTISING CREDITS 1st: \$250 City, \$250 KCST, \$250 Siuslaw News 2nd: \$150 City, \$150 KCST, \$150 Siuslaw News 3rd: \$100 City, \$100 KCST, \$100 Siuslaw News
ONLINE MAP & BALLOTS www.thesiuslawnews.com	All winners will receive signs to show off your award to the community!
VOTING December 12th through December 19th at Midnight	
More Info: www.ci.florence.or.us/2020holidays	

* Lights must be LED. Non LED characters are acceptable. * Open to all residents and businesses in the Florence area.



WEST COAST REAL ESTATE SERVICES, INC.
Readers Choice Voted #1 Realtor

Jim Hoberg, ABR, CRS, GRI
BROKER / OWNER

During these uncertain times, we are accessible by phone, email and by appointment only. We are conducting business as safely as possible for our clients as well as our staff.

541-997-7653
Jim_hoberg@hotmail.com



WE'VE GOT WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR NEXT GATHERING*

Tables & Chairs
Linens & Full Place Settings
Punch Bowls & Chafing Dishes
Video Projection & Sound Equipment
...and things you didn't know you needed!



FLORENCE EVENTS CENTER

541-997-1994 • EventCenter.org
715 Quince St.

*Following all pandemic protocols for safe pickup/delivery.