



SIUSLAW NEWS 2020 FEATURE PHOTOS  
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**Siuslaw News**  
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY  
VOL. 131, NO. 1  
FLORENCE, OREGON

**WEATHER**



Rain with a high of 52 and a low of 46.  
Full forecast on A3

**COMMUNITY**



Safe + Strong Oregon campaign  
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**LIFESTYLE**



Winter whale watching  
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**RECORDS**

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**SIDE SHOW**

Activities and comics every Saturday  
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**CLASSIFIEDS**

Listings and public notices  
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BY MARK BRENNAN & CHANTELE MEYER  
SIUSLAW NEWS

**2020** ended on Dec. 31, heralding the end of an unprecedented year full of firsts as people adapted to life under a global health emergency, shifted their social lives online, changed entire business models and ultimately found ways to make it through.

Even as we look ahead to 2021, Siuslaw News took time to look back at the past year. In this year in review, watch the progression of stories from regular Siuslaw Region life to living under lockdown as the novel coronavirus COVID-19 began to influence every part of our lives.

It was a tough year, but small victories were evident despite the abundant struggles. It was a year of politics and policies, supplication and support, fundraisers and even a little bit of fun. In addition, Siuslaw News spent the year celebrating its 130th anniversary.

Look how far we came in 2020. Now, we all get to look at 2021 with a little bit of relief and a lot more readiness.

**JANUARY**

**Rhododendron Court prepares**  
The 2020 Rhododendron Festival Court began five months of speaking in public, interacting with com-

munity members and representing Florence as ambassadors. This year's court was a "Blast from the Past" — this year's Rhody Days theme — as several members had past Rhody Royalty in their families.

**Florence holds fourth Women's March**

The Florence Women's March took place with the theme of "Women Rising." Coordinated by members of Florence OOrganizes, the event drew more than 100 members of the community. The march sought to emphasize the important work that needs to be done to assure the continuation of American democracy.

**Florence City Council begins contentious year**

The first Florence City Council meeting of 2020 included an apology delivered by Councilor Joshua Greene for what he admitted were some "poorly chosen words" previously directed at some of his critics.

This continued a number of heated exchanges between Greene and Florence Mayor Joe Henry regarding the future of the Public Art Committee, FURA, mayoral powers and other topics.

**Notable Mentions:**

- Dredge work begins at Port of Siuslaw
- Dee Osborne retires from Banner Bank after 33-year career in local banking

Community members support March for Life

• Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife tells Dunes City to stop feeding the wildlife

• Oregon celebrates the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment on Jan. 14, 1920

• OCHS Director Mark Curran announces resignation

**FEBRUARY**

**Florence holds State of the City Address, City Expo**

Hundreds of community members attended the State of the City and City Expo at the FEC. The event included booths of the many services the city offers. Florence Mayor Joe Henry presented the address, joined by City Manager Erin Reynolds and city officials.

**Community Gardens opens at new site**

The Florence First Harvest Community Gardens moves to Rolling Dunes Park at 35th Street and Siano Loop, next to the tennis courts. A parking lot, bathroom and other amenities make it easier for gardeners to get their hands in the dirt.

**Peace Harbor Foundation establishes new fund**

A group of 30 gathered at Florence Golf Links for an event benefiting PeaceHealth Peace Harbor's new Women's Care Fund. The event was a way to introduce the foundation's new program director of de-

velopment, Heather Quas-Annsa, as well as the Women's Care team at Peace Harbor.

**Siuslaw Awards honor residents, businesses**

Florence Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated the 2019 Siuslaw Awards at the Florence Events Center. Attendees indulged in hors d'oeuvres catered by event center staff and recognized two dozen businesses and nine area residents who were nominated for the chamber's 12th annual business awards.

**Notable Mentions:**

- Eugene-Florence Connector begins service between Eugene, Veneta, Mapleton and Florence
- Fraudville raises \$79,930 for Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Lane County
- OCHS continues search for executive director
- Three Rivers Foundation awards statewide grants to 46 organizations
- Siuslaw Watershed Council holds 21st annual Native Plant Distribution
- First Siuslaw Education Expo unites dozens of agencies who offer resources and services for children and families

**MARCH**

**COVID-19 hits Oregon**

The first case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was announced in Oregon on Feb. 28.

See IN REVIEW page 5A

### Lane County remains at 'extreme risk' as Florence's COVID numbers rise

SALEM — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced updates to county risk levels under the state's public health framework to reduce transmission and protect Oregonians from COVID-19. The framework uses four different risk levels for counties based on COVID-19 spread — extreme risk, high risk, moderate risk and lower risk — and assigns health and safety measures for each level.

Effective Jan. 1 through Jan. 14, 2021, there will be 24 counties in the  
See COUNTY page 8A

### SVFR responds to apartment blaze

Fire department also hires two career firefighters

It was another busy week for Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR). On Tuesday, the fire department responded to a structure fire which involved other local responders and proactive staff members of a local hardware store.

SVFR and Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD) crews responded to the Timber Apartments at 1750 Eighth St. in Florence on Tuesday at 11:29 a.m. for a structure fire.

"First arriving crews found smoke coming from one of the apartments and were able to quickly enter and extinguish a small fire in the bedroom of one of the units," said Fire and EMS Chief Michael Schick. "Prior to the arrival of emergency responders, employees from nearby True Value Hardware discharged multiple fire ex-



A fire broke out in the bedroom of a unit at the Timber Apartments on Tuesday. Firefighters were able to suppress the flames and clean up after staff from True Value Hardware responded with fire extinguishers. Firefighters helped contain the fire.  
See FIRE page 8A

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