

• COVID-19 restrictions affect theaters, large gatherings. CROW postpones and then cancels "Mary Poppins." LRP cancels "Based on a True Story." Dozens of other events aren't held.

• Coast Guard, police and EMS rescue stranded hikers from the rocks by Heceta Head Lightstation

• Three Rivers Casino Re-sort reopens with new safety measures

• May Primary Election passes bond for Lane Community College

JUNE

OHA confirms first Florence COVID case

OHA begins reporting cases of COVID-19 by zip code and confirmed the first case of the virus in zip code 97439. Statewide, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reaches 4,302 as of June 2, with 131,508 tests having been conducted throughout Oregon.

Vigil recognizes national anguish for George Floyd's death

After the death of 46-year-old George Perry Floyd on May 25, national politics shifted to civil rights. Community members from the area began gathering to acknowledge — with signs and banners — the importance of national conversations at a local level.

Lane County approved to enter second phase of re-opening

Lane County was approved to begin Phase Two, including opening pools, zoos, museums, movie theaters, bowling alleys and arcades; some additional office work; allowing recreational sports; loosening current restaurant and bar curfew restrictions and expanding outdoor gatherings.

Oregon PTA names Siuslaw teacher the Teacher of the Year

Music teacher Amanda Sarles is named the Oregon PTA Teacher of the Year after being nominated by Florence Community PTA. In addition, fourth-grader Claire McNeill received the Student Service Award from Oregon PTA.

Boys and Girls opens again

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Lane County was authorized to reopen as an emergency childcare center. Guidelines included strict physical distancing measures, requiring all students to stay six feet apart from each other, within their own cohorts.

Notable Mentions:

- Siuslaw and Mapleton school districts hold graduation parades for the Class of 2020
- Gov. Brown "presses pause" on reopening due to fast spread of the virus in Oregon
- Salvation Army holds "Christmas in June" kettle campaign to raise money for the community
- Dunes City considers ordinance on short-term rentals
- 50 community members hold rally in support of law enforcement in Florence and across the country
- Florence commemorates Juneteenth for first time

JULY

Local couple perishes in tragic capsizing

Florence mourned the loss of Amber and Kyle Novelli, owners of Novelli's Crab and Seafood, who passed away June 29 as their ship Aquarius sank off the South Jetty Beach.

Soon afterward, Novelli's opened once more at its location on the Port of Siuslaw docks in Old Town to serve

another pot of chowder as community members gathered to share their regards and memories.

COVID, Siuslaw and sports

The Siuslaw School District placed a temporary hold on voluntary summer sports practices after a student reported flu-like symptoms. The summer program has not been cancelled but has been placed on hold.

Planning Commission begins hearing on development on Rhododendron Drive

The Florence Planning Commission held a hearing about a development proposal submitted by 3J Consulting Services on behalf of the property owner, APIC Florence Holdings of San Francisco, Calif. The proposed development would include 31 single-family detached homes, 49 single-family attached homes and 46 multi-family homes.

COVID affects Florence businesses

The COVID pandemic definitely lands in Florence as multiple businesses close to test employees for the virus. The businesses reopened after full disinfection.

Notable Mentions:

- Siuslaw holds town hall on return to school
- Public Art Committee selects next round for Art Exposed rotating gallery
- SVFR Firefighter Dave Beck retires
- Emergency response agencies field 100 calls over July 4 weekend
- Rallies and protests continue across the Siuslaw Region, including pro-Black Lives Matter rallies in Florence and Deadwood and pro-police rallies in Florence
- Safe Shelter for Siuslaw Students partners with local, county groups on community initiative to house students
- Power of Florence celebrates its 10th anniversary
- City modifies parking in Old Town to allow restaurants to expand outdoor seating
- Local Census response rate higher than expected as people respond online
- OSAA Executive Board decides to push the start of high school sports to late January 2021

AUGUST

Sports seasons shift under new OSAA schedule

The OSAA released information on when sports programs could begin in the 2020-21 school year. While practices could possibly be allowed, actual contests would not begin until January, starting with the traditional winter sports of basketball, wrestling and

swimming. From there, shortened seasons for all remaining sports will be spread out throughout 2021.

Morgan named to Florence Food Share leadership

Florence Food Share announced that staff member Colin Morgan was installed as executive director. Morgan started volunteering in the warehouse when he was 13 years old. He then became the warehouse team leader in 2014, then the operations manager in 2017.

Florence celebrates a century of suffrage

People from all walks of life participated in Florence's Centennial Women's Suffrage Parade which ended at Siuslaw Pioneer Museum. There, Last Resort Players and the Siuslaw Pioneer Museum's John Quay Heritage Players read speeches from notable suffragettes.

Notable Mentions:

- Florence City Councilor Geraldine Prociw officially resigns Aug. 18, leaving a vacancy that will be filled by appointment by the 2021 council
- Siuslaw News begins an investigative series based on the division and partisanship in the Siuslaw Region
- Boys and Girls Club holds socially distanced Air Academy
- Port of Siuslaw increases full-service sites on campground
- Oregon RAIN holds accelerator to help businesses "make it rain"
- The U.S. Forest Service, Siuslaw Watershed Council and other partners near completion on the Five-mile-Bell Creek restoration project
- Community holds rally in support of the U.S. Postal Service

SEPTEMBER

Regional fire crews battle 500-acre fire near Mapleton

Oregon Department of Forestry firefighters, along with Lane County Sheriff's Office, WLAD and firefighters from Mapleton, Swishome/Deadwood and SVFR, responded to reports of multiple wildfires along a three-mile stretch of Sweet Creek Road near Mapleton. The Sweet Creek Milepost 2 Fire grew into a 500-acre wildfire near Hadsell Creek Road, prompting multiple levels of evacuation notices for area residents and an upswell of community support.

In addition, thick smoke blanketed the region and a series of unrelated small fires also kept response agencies busy.

Districts begin the school year in comprehensive distance learning

As the 2020-21 school year opened, both Mapleton

and Siuslaw school districts instructed students online. School officials met regularly with representatives from Lane County Health to determine when they could begin a hybrid model, with limited in-person instruction on campus.

Water in Mapleton undrinkable

Since August, Mapleton area residents have been advised to boil all water obtained from district sources for drinking and cooking.

Residents reported little communication or guidance from Mapleton Water District until a letter indicated that the district was working with representatives on a solution.

Candidates for the Nov. 3 Election gather

Nearly 200 people had

a chance to meet and hear platforms provided by candidates running for seats in the Oregon House and Senate during a special forum sponsored by Lane County Republicans. In addition, all six of the non-partisan city council and mayoral candidates for the City of Florence participated.

Notable Mentions:

- Planning Commission passes Rhody Drive development on to Florence City Council
- Latest round of Florence Public Art Committee's "Art Exposed" Rotating Art Gallery installed
- Florence Environmental Management Advisory Committee announces it will not discuss the climate and keeps references out of its workplan

See LAST YEAR page 7A

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Oregon Coast Humane Society
relies heavily on volunteers.
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