

RAIN, Hatfield Marine Science Center, hire state’s maritime first innovation catalyst

RAIN (Regional Accelerator & Innovation Network) has hired Laura Furgurson to be their Blue Economy Innovation Catalyst—their first industry-specific catalyst.

Oregon State University (OSU)’s Hatfield Marine Science Center (Hatfield) and RAIN recently received grant funding through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a joint three-

year project titled “The Oregon Coast Blue Economy: Advancing Marine Technologies and Partnerships Through Rapid-Prototyping and Ecosystem-Building.” The purpose of this project is to develop blue economy tools and technologies to promote a sustainable future contributing to ecological health, thriving communities, and economic growth in the developing Oregon Coast

Blue Economy sector.

A key milestone to launch this effort was hiring the Blue Economy Innovation Catalyst who will work on the Oregon Coast to help accelerate the growth of marine technologies and build the marine innovation ecosystem. Furgurson will host events to help activate a culture of marine innovation, including: educational workshops and panels, pitch events, meetups, and marine innovation showcases. She will connect entrepreneurs to the Hatfield iLab, other resources and programs, mentors, and

investors. Furgurson will also identify and engage blue economy stakeholders, develop an Asset Map of the Oregon Blue Economy; and foster a strong connection among Oregon’s coastal communities and Hatfield’s iLab.

“I am thrilled to join the RAIN team and support OSU’s Hatfield Marine Science Center in their efforts to build the Blue Economy on the Oregon Coast. This new role fits perfectly with my passion for coaching entrepreneurs and launching start-ups for long-term success. I am excited to help build a stronger coast-

al economy and bring great jobs to these rural communities, while supporting sustainable oceans,” said Laura Furgurson.

Furgurson is a long-time entrepreneur and business coach having held leadership roles in six start-ups, including both for-profit and nonprofit organizations. She grew up working in her family’s small manufacturing business and launched a full-service market research and branding firm after graduating with a degree in Economics and Business from Willamette University in Salem. In 2008, she transitioned to business coaching after completing a certification program with the Hudson Institute in Santa Barbara. Her support for small business owners includes leading a Peer Advisory Group for Vistage International.

Furgurson’s role owning and managing a research firm opened up opportunities with her clients, including a founding role in Banfield Pet Hospitals, which is now owned by M&M MARS. She served as the founding Executive Director of Working Wonders Children’s Museum and Discover Your Forest, a stewardship and conservation education group supporting the US Forest Service. Furgurson

has held leadership roles in two other start-ups; a travel app, as well as a pet-matching and veterinary care provider. Before joining RAIN, Laura was the Executive Director of both the Waldport and Depoe Bay Chambers of Commerce. She will continue on a part-time basis leading the Depoe Bay Chamber.

“We are fortunate to have someone with Laura’s diverse experience as our Blue Economy Innovation Catalyst,” said Caroline Cummings, CEO of RAIN. “We know she can hit the ground running, demonstrate inclusivity with coastal partners and stakeholders, and achieve the goals outlined in this EDA grant.”

“We look forward to working with Laura and RAIN in our efforts to align innovators and entrepreneurs who can benefit from access to our rapid-prototyping tools and training,” stated Robert Cowen, Director of OSU’s Hatfield Marine Science Center.

Anyone wanting to learn about this project, has marine technology ideas or prototypes, or wants to mentor innovators, can contact Laura Furgurson directly at laura@oregon-rain.org.

For more information, go to oregonrain.org.

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JANUARY 31 TO FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Nominate your top choices in dozens of categories. We’ll tally the five with the most votes in each category.

VOTING PHASE

FEBRUARY 20 TO MARCH 7, 2021

Readers vote for the top three from the five that received the most nominations in each category.

AUTOMOTIVE

ATV Store _____
Auto Body / Paint _____
Auto Detail / Wash _____
Auto Parts / Accessories _____
Auto Repair _____
Oil Change _____
Tire Service _____

COMMUNITY

Early Child Learning _____
Non-Profit Organization _____
Place to Worship _____
Place to Volunteer _____
Senior Living Community _____
Service Club _____
Support Group _____
Place / Business Missed the Most During Covid _____

DRINKS

Bar _____
Bloody Mary _____
Cocktail _____
Coffee _____
Craft Brew _____
Happy Hour _____
Margarita _____
Smoothie _____
Tea _____

ENTERTAINMENT

Indoor Entertainment _____
Family Entertainment _____
Gaming _____
Golf Course _____
Live Music _____
Museum _____
Park _____
Performing Arts Group _____
Performance Venue _____
Virtual Entertainment _____

FOOD & DINING

Appetizer/Small Plate _____
Asian Cuisine _____
Breakfast _____
Burger _____
Burrito _____

Chowder _____
Dessert _____
Mexican _____
Outdoor Seating _____
Pizza _____
Restaurant _____
Restaurant Service _____
Salad _____
Salsa _____
Sandwiches _____
Seafood _____
Steak _____
Sushi _____
Taco _____
Take Away Experience _____
Vegetarian / Vegan _____

HOME SERVICES

Carpet Cleaning _____
Contractor _____
Electrician _____
Estate Liquidator _____
Flooring _____
Garbage / Recycling _____
Handyman _____
Home Improvement _____
HVAC / Heating & Air _____
Internet Service _____
Painting _____
Pest Control _____
Plumbing _____
Roofing _____
Self-Storage _____
Windows _____

PET

Pet Boarding _____
Pet Groomer _____
Pet Supplies _____
Pet Trainer _____
Veterinarian _____
Veterinarian Office _____

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Accountant _____
Attorney _____
Bank _____
Bank /Credit Union Teller _____
Computer Help / Repair _____

Credit Union _____
Financial Planner _____
Insurance Professional _____
Insurance Office _____
Mortgage Lending _____
Photographer _____
Publisher / Publishing Company _____
Real Estate Agent _____
Real Estate Office _____
Title Company _____

SHOP LOCAL

Appliances _____
Art Gallery _____
Art Supplies _____
Antiques _____
Books _____
Boutique _____
Clothing _____
Furniture _____
Games _____
Garden Nursery _____
Gifts _____
Home Décor _____
Home Improvement _____
Kids Clothing _____
Mattress _____
Thrift Store _____

WELLNESS & BEAUTY

Acupuncture _____
Barbershop _____
Day Spa _____
Dental Office _____
Dentist _____
Denturist _____
Esthetician _____
Eye Care _____
Hair Salon _____
Hair Stylist _____
Hearing Specialist _____
Manicure / Pedicurist _____
Massage _____
Medical Facility _____
Medical Professional _____
Nail Salon _____
Pharmacy _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

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Winners will be announced in a special Best of Florence 2020 section of The Siuslaw News will publish on March 31, 2021.