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 VOL. 131, NO. 15  
 FEBRUARY 20, 2021  
 FLORENCE, OREGON

**WEATHER**

Rain followed by clouds with a high of 49 and a low of 43.  
**Full forecast on A3**

**COMMUNITY**

'Safe Families' holds meeting  
**INSIDE — A3**

**LIFESTYLE**

Siuslaw kicks off soccer  
**INSIDE — B**

**RECORDS**  
 Obituaries & emergency response logs  
**Inside — A2**

**SIDE SHOW**  
 Activities and comics every Saturday  
**Inside — B4**

**CLASSIFIEDS**  
 Listings and public notices  
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# Florence honors Black History Month

By MARK BRENNAN  
 SIUSLAW NEWS

During Black History Month, this year's recognition of the contributions and struggles of African Americans takes place after a summer of racially charged protests across the country, and the ground-breaking election of America's first female vice president, Kamala Harris, who is of African and Asian descent.

That milestone in the nation's history was a stark contrast to the May 25 murder of George Floyd, a Black American whose death at the hands of a Minneapolis Police Department officer captured the attention of the nation.

The two are a sobering juxtaposition representing both the promise of America, and the continuing struggle against systemic racism that has been a continuing thread woven through the nation's history as it works to understand, mitigate

not only among the Black community but among Americans of all ethnicities, genders and economic status. On one hand, the election was a celebration of a barrier being broken; on the other, the summer's protests were an adamant defiance

differing sides of the issue directly against one another.

The divide was not only reflected in large cities across the U.S., but also in repeated local demonstrations on street corners at the intersections of Highway 126 and 101 in Florence, which alternately advocated for Black Lives Matter awareness as well as in support of law enforcement.

The issues of cultural imbalance, financial inequity and social justice were the focus of a KXCR Community Radio broadcast last Monday, which

included poetry, music and readings from archival letters written by African Americans over the past 150 years.

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**"This February, during Black History Month, I call on the American people to honor the history and achievements of Black Americans and to reflect on the centuries of struggle that have brought us to this time of reckoning, redemption and hope. We have never fully lived up to the founding principles of this nation that all people are created equal and have the right to be treated equally throughout their lives. We know that it is long past time to confront deep racial inequities and the systemic racism that continue to plague our nation."**

— President Joe Biden on Black History Month, Feb. 1, 2021

and — eventually — heal on a journey to something better.

The contrasts of those two moments — one of inspiration and the other of horror — sparked action

of a broken system whose barriers of inequity remain in place.

Demonstrations following the killing of Floyd took place across U.S., often pitting protestors on

## EMAC holds meeting with new members

By MARK BRENNAN  
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The City of Florence Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) met Feb. 16 for the first time since the seating of four new members: Lisa Walter-Sedlacek, Laurie Green, Anthony Cavarno and Erick Oshel, each selected by Florence Mayor Joe Henry to advise the council and city staff on environmentally related matters.

The meeting was chaired by Vice Chair Michael Titmus, who coordinated the presentations from staff related to the main focus of the evening — committee training.

There were a number of written public comments submitted to the committee and entered into the record, including one from past EMAC member Britte Kirsch.

Kirsch, who has been very active in the area of waste reduction and recycling, requested support from EMAC and the city in sponsoring three future recycling events. The "Take Back" events would be conducted by Eco-Generation, a waste reduction nonprofit which held a successful local event in November 2020.

At the January EMAC meeting, Kirsch introduced the idea of city participation in more recycling events this year and she revisited that hope in her comments.

"At the last meeting, I mentioned these 'Take Back' events and I wanted to give you a little background to help you to understand more about them

See EMAC page 6A

## Siuslaw gets February update

School board meeting includes Lane ESD, vaccination update, policies

By CHANTELE MEYER  
 SIUSLAW NEWS

Siuslaw School District Board of Directors continues to meet mostly virtually as the district prepares for on-site learning, which is scheduled to begin at Siuslaw Elementary School this Monday, Feb. 22. The board met with a full agenda and an executive session on Feb. 10, along with two special meetings.

Board Vice Chair Paul Burns led the meeting, as Chair Bob Sneddon was absent. All other board members were present, with directors Guy Rosinbaum and John Barnett joining school district staff in-person at the district office.

To start the meeting, the board went through mandatory reporter training, which requires that people report known or suspected child abuse.

"That was a good synopsis of a very important responsibility of the board and all within the school district to remember and to protect our children that we care for so much," Burns stated at the end of the video.

Following this, Elijah Blankenship, the Siuslaw High School student liaison, gave an update on school matters from a student perspective. He also talked about his experience starting limited in-person instruction (LIPI).

"Personally, for me, I really enjoy being able to be back in the building two times a week," Blankenship said. "It's supposed to be for more of a study hall, but I use it more as a social hour, such as a lot of the students in there. They're getting to see each other, which is nice, and see our teachers. I've really enjoyed that."

He also talked about sports that are now able to be in session, including soccer, cross country and football.

"It's nice to at least be practicing

right now, for my senior year, to get a little bit of football in there," Blankenship

said.

According to Burns, "The board thought it was really important to have more of a student representation on the board so we could have a better relationship with our student body. And Elijah has been gracious enough to be that go-between. So, thank you for doing that."

During the meeting, the board went over several action items, including a first reading on four policies. Three — "2 IJ – School Counseling Program," "IKFB – Graduation Exercises" and "LBE/LBEA" concerning public charter schools — moved to the consent agenda at the March meeting. The last, "GCPC/GDPC – Retirement of Staff," concerned the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and if they can still work.

Director Suzanne Mann-Heintz proposed just approving the policy, since the change was just a few lines to existing policy. Director Dianna Pimlott seconded Resolution 021021-6.11, which passed unanimously.

Next, the board approved Resolution 021021-6.3, which concerned Lane Education Service District (ESD) and its 2021-23 Local Service Plan for the first year of the biennium.

Lane ESD Superintendent Tony Scurto, accompanied by Nora Kent, Lane ESD board member for West/North County, presented the changes to the plan.

"It still has the same four main services that we've always had — special education, technology, school improvement and administration," Scurto said, "But I want to highlight some new areas."

See SIUSLAW page 5A

## City Council holds second work session on work plan

By MARK BRENNAN  
 SIUSLAW NEWS

Florence City Council met on Feb. 18 for a work session to finish the overview of the current City of Florence Work Plan. The recap was primarily a review for new councilors Bill Meyer, Sally Wantz and Maggie Wisniewski, bringing them up to speed on the range and complexity of the work being done by various city departments and committees.

The work session was the second time the new council has met to review the progress made on the existing work plan, with the first taking place Feb. 10. Earlier reviews were provided by City Manager Erin Reynolds, City Recorder Kelli Weese, Public Works Director Mike Miller and Florence Police Chief Tom Turner to update councilors on the specifics of their departments or areas of responsibility.

Thursday's session began with a review provided by Administrative Services Director Anne Baker, followed by presentations from Assistant City Manager Megan Messmer, City Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell and Miller.

The areas covered in the latest presentations included a recap of the work done in the past 12 months to further the work plan objectives in their specific realms of authority and, perhaps more importantly, what areas needed to be continued this year — and which projects are presenting challenges to complete.

The questions from councilors were few as the presenters covered a number of subjects including communications and

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