

SN

Siuslaw News

NOW THRU MARCH 7
VOTE FOR
2020 VOTED BEST OF FLORENCE
YOUR FAVORITE FLORENCE BUSINESSES
 Go online today <https://rebrand.ly/BestOfFlorence2020> to vote!

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Siuslaw News
 NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
 VOL. 131, NO. 18
 MARCH 3, 2021
 FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



Partly sunny with a high of 51 and a low of 40.
 Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



Apothecary opens new location
INSIDE — A3

LIFESTYLE



Viewfinders Camera Club shows shots
INSIDE — B

RECORDS
 Obituaries & response logs
Inside — A2

TV GUIDE
Inside — B3-B4

KIDS CORNER
 Activities for kids
Inside — B5

CLASSIFIEDS
 Listings & notices
Inside — B6

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST NEWS:
 f/SIUSLAWNEWS
 @SIUSLAWNEWS
 THESIUSLAWNEWS.COM

2 SECTIONS | 16 PAGES
 Siuslaw News
 0 88267 02345 1
 COPYRIGHT 2021

COVID-19: ONE YEAR IN OREGON

A look back at the novel coronavirus and its effects locally and across the state

By CHANTELE MEYER
 SIUSLAW NEWS

Oregon's first recorded case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 was announced Feb. 28, 2020. Now, one year later, the virus continues to impact nearly every aspect of people's lives.

"[Feb. 28] marks one year since the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Oregon," said Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in a press conference last Friday. She also announced a 60-day extension of the COVID-19 state of emergency in the state, until May 2.

"Last March, there were 14 known cases of COVID-19 in Oregon. We have now seen more than 150,000 cases across the state and, sadly, 2,194 deaths," Brown said.

A lot has happened in a year — on the global stage, nationally, statewide and locally in western Lane County. Like other media outlets, Siuslaw News has tracked COVID-19 from its earliest detections and into the pandemic designation. Here's a look back over the past year of the virus.

FEBRUARY 2020

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) confirmed its first presumptive case of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in an Oregon resident of Washington County on Feb. 28.

Locally, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor, emergency responders, the area's two school districts and others prepared for a possible outbreak with one clear message — be prepared and don't panic.

"There's no reason to panic at all," said Western Lane Ambulance District and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Chief Michael Schick. "We need to be cautious and ready, but I think everything we do for influenza, we should be doing for coronavirus. It is a bad disease. You see a lot of death, a lot more than what we see with influenza. But if you take the same precautions, people should be okay."

As far as preparing for a possible outbreak, local medical and emergency services stated that they were prepared to meet the needs of the community should the spread of COVID-19 escalate.

As for schools, Siuslaw School District had already prepared plans for closures as well as the use of the Siuslaw Middle School gym as

a designated emergency medical refuge and triage site. In addition, school buses were designated as emergency transport in the event of a community emergency.

"All of our school resources would go into supporting the community at-need first," said Siuslaw Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak.

At the state level, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) began to provide weekly public updates.

MARCH 2020

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the total number of COVID-19 cases globally reached more than 90,000, with more just over 80 reported cases in the U.S.

See MARCH page 5A

Committees learn scope of duties

Florence's CEDC, FURA meet

By MARK BRENNAN
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The process of introducing new volunteer members of the Florence Urban Renewal Agency (FURA) and the Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) to each other — and clarifying the responsibilities that accompany their participation in city endeavors — was the main goal of both groups' meetings last week.

FURA met Feb. 24, with the CEDC meeting Feb. 26, to learn more about the committees they will serve on, as well as to receive an overview of the city government structure, and the numerous departments overseen in many cases by committees.

After a welcome from City Manager Erin Reynolds, extensive presentations were
 See COMMITTEES page 7A

Revisiting restaurants



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS



The Florence area — and the rest of Lane County — began to offer indoor dining again on Feb. 26 after Oregon Gov. Kate Brown lowered the county from "extreme risk" of COVID-19 spread to "high risk." Under this designation, some restrictions were lifted from restaurants, though with a low maximum occupancy. This weekend, however, kept outside tables just as full as people enjoyed outdoor dining in Historic Old Town Florence.

Florence City Council approves resolutions at meeting

By MARK BRENNAN
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence City Council met March 1 with a short list of action items. This included a decision on accepting a proposal for roadway upgrades at a cost of \$2,027,015 and a request for a new sign for the Children's Repertory of Oregon Workshops (CROW).

All councilors were in attendance as Mayor Joe Henry called the virtual meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance before turning the facilitation of the meeting over to City Manager Erin Reynolds.

The first item presented was Resolution 8, Series 2021, by Planning Director Wendy FarleyCampbell, who walked the councilors through a request from CROW to approve a

minor exception to the city sign code which would allow for the non-profit to install a free-standing sign in front of the group's theater building located at 3120 Highway 101.

Bernie Cunningham is the owner of the Florence business, "The Sign Shop" and has been involved with the creation of the current code sections dealing with signs in the city limits and has created many signs which have been approved by city planners. He was in attendance to supply testimony to the council on behalf of the applicant.

Cunningham pointed out the exception requested would not negatively impact visibility and would clarify which entrance was CROW's.

"I think what we are asking is quite reasonable — a reader board like the one at the FEC," Cunningham said.

"It is backlit with an LED opaque background. It is not going to be very bright and there was a sign where we are proposing to put a sign now."

Councilors asked a couple of clarifying questions of FarleyCampbell, who supported the request, before approving the installation of the sign.

Next, Public Works Director Mike Miller asked the council to consider a proposal for replacement of water mains between Rhododendron Drive and Kingwood Street and between Ninth Street and Rhododendron.

Miller walked the council through the steps involved in the process, including the approved timeline for the project. He also gave the reasoning behind the decision to replace the existing water mains and the tangential impacts of the construction.

See CITY page 8A

WLFEA adopts FY20-21 personnel budget

By MARK BRENNAN
 SIUSLAW NEWS

The monthly joint meeting of Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue (SVFR) and the Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD) was held Feb. 25, with board members from both districts participating remotely. The combined boards make up the Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority (WLFEA).

Fire and EMS Chief Michael Schick facilitated the meeting. Office Manager Dina McClure presented the directors with two resolutions requiring a vote from the boards. Both resolutions prompted discussion, illustrating the differing level of acceptance regarding the recently completed labor negotiations for the districts — and some differences in the future vision for WLFEA.

Schick discussed the FY20-21 Personnel Services Budget, which was adopted to reflect the following cuts in the budget not part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement the Board approved Dec. 17, 2020:

- Eliminate the 3 percent Critical Care bonus for supervisors and full-time staff in the amount of \$64,585
- Eliminate the 6 percent PERS IAP for eligible WLAD staff in the amount of \$94,173
- Eliminate the HRA VEBA for full-time staff in the amount of \$45,000
- Eliminate Step raises for eligible staff in the amount of \$20,982 (according to the CBA Item 11.2, four employees were eligible for step raises.

See WLFEA page 7A

Understanding Medicare

Enroll in the right Medicare plan for your needs.

- Gain an understanding of how Medicare works.
- Learn the difference between Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans.
- Discover how Medicare Prescription Drug Plans work.



Dana Dane Insurance

Helping Oregonians Since 1996
 1932 Pine St Suite B-6
 Florence, OR. 97439

541-997-1410