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Siuslaw News  
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY  
VOL. 131, NO. 20  
MARCH 10, 2021  
FLORENCE, OREGON

**WEATHER**



Partly sunny with a high of 51 and a low of 35.  
Full forecast on A3

**COMMUNITY**



PeaceHealth allows visitors  
INSIDE — A3

**SPORTS**



Mapleton wins at home  
INSIDE — B

**RECORDS**

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Activities for kids  
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**CLASSIFIEDS**

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# Lane County progresses to 'moderate risk' of COVID-19

## Governor announces updates to County Risk Levels

By CHANTELE MEYER  
SIUSLAW NEWS

On Tuesday, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown today 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 March 12 through March 25, there will be two coun-

ties in the extreme risk level, nine at high risk, 12 at moderate risk and 13 at lower risk. Lane County shifts down to moderate risk after just two weeks at high risk, along with four other counties.

"We are largely seeing case rates decline across the state, with the most counties in the lower risk level since the framework was introduced in November," said Brown. "This

should serve as a reminder that when we follow the health and safety measures we know work against this virus, we can truly make a difference in infection spread."

Only Coos and Douglas counties remain at extreme risk.

Additional restrictions are lifted as counties reach fewer cases of community spread of COVID-19.

See RISK page 5A

# Florence inn fined \$21,600 for accusations of price gouging



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Le Chateau Inn, also called Economy Inn of Florence, is one of four Oregon lodgings fined by the Oregon Department of Justice for raising room prices after September's wildfires displaced families.

By MARK BRENNAN  
SIUSLAW NEWS

Le Chateau Inn, located at 1084 Highway 101 in Florence, has been fined \$21,600 for price gouging, according to the Oregon Department of Justice (ODJ), which said room rental rates were hiked during the aftermath of numerous area wildfires in 2020.

Le Chateau is one of four hotels and motels in Oregon fined last week by the ODJ as a result

of what the agency termed "price gouging."

The decision to fine the businesses was based on what the ODJ said was the owners' intentional increase of more than 15 percent over normal rates charged prior to the wildfires — an act that is in violation of an order put in place by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown to prevent emergency-related overcharges levied on consumers.

In a statement, Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum report-

ed the amounts charged and the rationale for the decision to fine the establishments.

"More than 40,000 Oregonians had to evacuate their homes during the fires that spread so rapidly through our state. Without much warning, many families had to seek shelter in hotels and motels," she said. "Unfortunately, some hotels upped their prices significantly and took advantage of this horrible situation."

See FINE page 5A

# Filing deadline for May Special Election approaches

May 18 is the next election date in Lane County. Filing deadlines for the Tuesday, May 18, Special Election is March 18. People can still run for positions on several local boards, including school districts, emergency response departments and special districts.

April 27 is the last day to register to vote in the election. People can confirm their voter registration status online at sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections/.

Ballots will be mailed by the end of April. People can go to lanecounty.org/elections for more information.

**Measure Filings:**

- Measure #20-319: Supporting 4-H and OSU Extension Programs in Lane County

**Regional Candidate Filings:**

- Lane Community College — four positions, residents will vote for their zone
- Lane Education Service District — three positions, residents will vote for their zone

See ELECTION page 5A

# A HEART FOR KIDS

New executive director begins at local Boys and Girls Club

By CHANTELE MEYER  
SIUSLAW NEWS

On March 3, Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Lane County (BGCWLC) welcomed a new CEO, Josiah Pleasant, to replace former executive director Chuck Trent. While Pleasant fully transitions to life in Florence, Trent will remain in leadership as he continues to serve on the board.

"When I first talked with Josiah, I was so impressed because it was obvious that he had the right kind of heart, and he had the business experience that we were looking for as well," said Trent. "This is the kind of job that if you don't connect with the kids, and also the community, you can't be successful."

The BGCWLC board underwent a stringent process in hiring Pleasant, starting with 1,000 applications and narrowing it down to 70 requests for interviews. Pleasant went through four rounds of interviews and extensive reference checks before coming to the club

and meeting the board in person.

"He spent a couple of weeks with us so we could make sure we drew the right picture of what the club looks like and where we wanted to go," Trent said. "A couple of things were really important to us. First, that we needed to make sure that the person we hired to fill this position had a heart for kids. You can learn a lot of things about running an organization, but the heart is what matters."

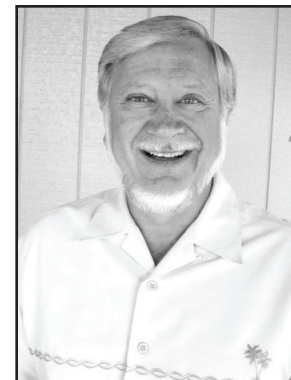
Second was business experience, especially as the club continues to navigate COVID-19. The third important thing was connection to the community and dedication to underserved populations.

"We had a unanimous decision by the board and by the staff, that he was the right person," Trent said.

Now, Pleasant is moving to Or-



Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Lane County CEO Josiah Pleasant



Former Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Lane County CEO Chuck Trent

"Based on my business background — and I definitely have a heart for kids like Josiah does — I stepped into that role thinking it would be for about three months."

The plan was to make a plan to keep the club open, support kids, serve the community and prepare for the future.

"As I got into that role, it became very obvious that this was not a three-

month kind of thing."

In fact, this past Feb. 14 appropriately enough marked Trent's sixth year.

However, right before the COVID-19 pandemic began a year ago, Trent realized that BGCWLC had all the pieces in place that he wanted as the club prepared for finding a new CEO: the right staff, quality programs and solid financials.

Then the lockdown began.  
See CLUB page 6A

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