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Siuslaw News
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
VOL. 131, NO. 21
MARCH 13, 2021
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



Partly sunny with a high of 53 and a low of 44.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



FACE brings 'Living Voices' to SMS
INSIDE — A3



Viks score first volleyball win
INSIDE — B

RECORDS
Obituaries & emergency response logs
Inside — A2

SIDE SHOW
Activities and comics every Saturday
Inside — B4

CLASSIFIEDS
Listings and public notices
Inside — B5

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THE S I U S L A W N E W S . C O M

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Peace Harbor completes seismic upgrade

\$2.5 million Seismic Rehabilitation Grant pays for medical center's retrofit

By MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

On March 11, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center, 400 Ninth St. in Florence, completed seismic upgrades to its Florence facility.

According to Chief Administrative Officer Jason Hawkins, patients and residents of this area can now receive treatment in a safer environment than they were able to prior to the completion of the reinforcement project.

"Our patients, caregivers and community can now rest assured that Peace Harbor is prepared for a high-magnitude, Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake," Hawkins said. "Every floor and wall of this building is now fortified to the



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

This week, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center finished a seismic retrofit to its facility which serves western Lane County.

state's stringent seismic standards our patients and caregivers and to ensure the immediate safety of the continuation of hospital oper-

ations."

Coincidentally, the project at PPH was completed March 11 — the 10th anniversary of the earthquake off the coast of Japan which led to the flooding and destruction of three reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The tsunami which destroyed the Fukushima complex killed more than 20,000 people.

One of the responses to the Japanese disaster was the recognition of the need for hospitals and first response agencies to be able to continue to support their communities even when confronted by major natural disasters.

"When Peace Harbor was built in 1989, there wasn't a widespread understanding of the likelihood of

See SEISMIC page 5A

Siuslaw School Board grades superintendent accomplished, effective

The Siuslaw School District Board of Directors met March 10 for its monthly board meeting, as well as two executive sessions. A majority of the board members attended virtually, with Board Chair Bob Sneddon leading the meeting from the Siuslaw School District Office.

The meeting was on the shorter side, due in part to no scheduled special presentations or program highlights.

The focus of the meeting was on the evaluation of Siuslaw Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak.

See EVALUATION page 7A

Commission addresses construction penalties

Fairway Estates challenges fines, code violations

The Florence Planning Committee met March 9 with a relatively short agenda which grew into long conversations regarding parking and penalties. The penalty discussion was the first agenda item requiring action.

Pacific Golf Communities, LLC, was recently fined \$2,000 for improperly clearing vegetation at the site of its construction project at Fairway Estates.

City Planner Wendy FarleyCampbell began the meeting with a detailed review of the violations assessed and what she felt city code required her to do in response to the clearing being done at the construction location. Her comments were then refuted point by point by the recipient of the violations.



Pacific Golf Communities, LLC, has been fined by the City of Florence for construction work being done at Fairway Estates on Rhododendron Drive.

Pacific Golf Communities representative Michael Pearson provided commissioners with a detailed list of reasons to waive the fines, but Pearson was more focused on the length of time he has been working to satisfy city demands and his analysis of Florence

City Code — which he believes is being misinterpreted by Farley Campbell.

Pearson has delivered verbal and written criticism of the fine, including during his presentation to commissioners Tuesday, See PLANNING page 6A

'The first day of school all over again'

Siuslaw middle, high school begin on-campus hybrid learning

By CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

On March 8, 100 students at both Siuslaw middle and high school stepped into their buildings for their first day back in hybrid learning. Moving forward, for half the week they will be on campus, with the other half spent in comprehensive distance learning (CDL).

"It's been good," said Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak. "The kids seem to enjoy it and the teachers enjoy it. It's kind of the first day of school all over again, having kids back in."

The district split students into two cohorts for the new hybrid model. Students who were on campus Monday and Tuesday morning are Cohort A, and attended both Monday and Tuesday, followed by CDL the rest of the week. Cohort B attended Wednesday and Thursday, with the rest of the week in CDL.

According to Siuslaw School Board Student Liaison Elijah Blankenship, "Personally, the hybrid stuff has been really nice. I really enjoyed being in school the last couple of days, even though all the curriculum is pretty much the same stuff. It's just a lot nicer to be in school and seeing people."

To prepare to bring students back for longer days — a transition from the limited in-person instruction the district had operated in since December — school staff has been hard at work.

Grzeskowiak detailed the complicated transportation plans, classroom reorganization and even changing the hallways to be one way only.

"It's been a big dance for us," he said.

In addition, the district's custodial and maintenance staff have been working on projects such as replacing drinking fountains with water

bottle filling stations, increasing filtration on HVAC units and rearranging all the necessary classrooms and student spaces.

"They're running things well within the buildings, and getting kids to and from," Grzeskowiak said about each of the facilities.

Siuslaw Elementary started hybrid learning on Feb. 22.

"The kids are really good about masks and distances and stuff," Grzeskowiak added. "The funny thing is, the only thing that's changed has been the volume of it. Because they're six feet apart, the kids just need to be a little louder. Plus, they're kids and they haven't seen a lot of each other for the last year."

Friday marked the one-year anniversary of Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's executive order to close Oregon schools. Many districts headed into a longer spring break before transitioning into CDL.

See HYBRID page 6A


Florence Public Art Committee continues work

The City of Florence Public Art Committee (PAC) met virtually on March 8 for its monthly meeting with new members and a new ex-officio representative from the Florence City Council.

Committee Vice Chair Jo Beaudreau was acting chairperson for the meeting, with fellow members Serena Appel, Maggie Bagon, Karl Engel, Peggy Meyer, Dayle Murphy, Christine Santiago, Kathleen Wenzel and Patti Williams, along with ex-officio representatives City Councilor Maggie Wisniewski and City Recorder Kelli Weese, making up the latest incarnation of the committee.

Wisniewski recently accepted the responsibility of participating in

See PAC page 5A



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