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Giving Back & Making A Difference in the Siuslaw Region

A celebration of some of the area's nonprofits

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Siuslaw News
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
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FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER

Mostly sunny with a high of 65 and a low of 41.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY

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Mapleton schools tackle standardized testing

School board passes resolution urging families to opt out

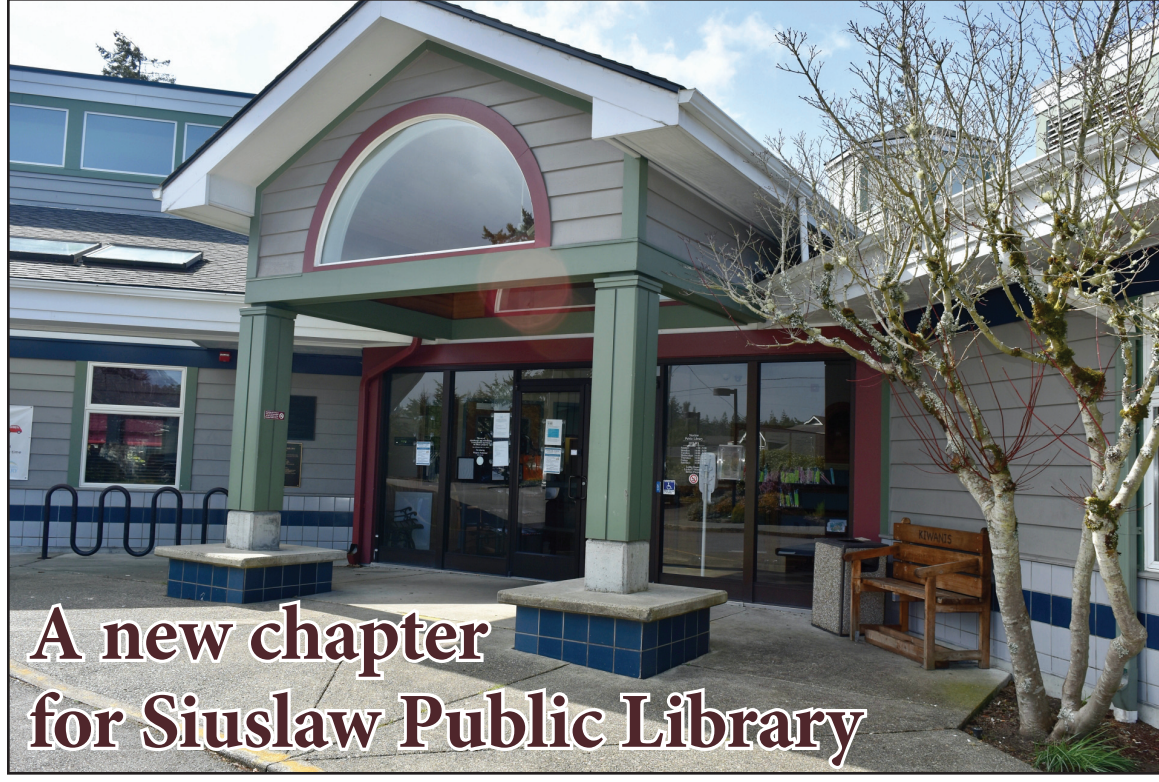
BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Mapleton School District Board of Directors met virtually for its monthly meeting on March 17. Four out of five members were present, along with Mapleton Superintendent Jodi O'Mara and student liaison Orion Ricks. Director Marilyn Fox was absent.

The meeting included several discussion and action items, the most prominent of which were deciding when to evaluate the superintendent, setting board goals and considering a resolution to support district families in opting out of standardized testing.

Director Michelle Holman worked with Fox on the resolution. She then proposed it to the board at the meeting.

See SCHOOL page 6A



A new chapter for Siuslaw Public Library

Library to reopen tomorrow in Florence, Mapleton on limited basis

STORY & PHOTO
BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Siuslaw Public Library District has announced that it will be reopening to the public for browsing and check-out of materials on Thursday, April 1.

Branch locations in Mapleton, 88148 Riverview Ave., and Florence, 1460 Ninth St. (pictured above), will reopen, with the Mapleton Branch operating fewer hours than in pre-pandemic times.

Both branches have been largely closed to the public since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted the partial shut-down of many parts of the community. However, the easing of state-man-

dated restrictions, the lowering case counts and the increase in vaccinations have prompted the Siuslaw Public Library Board, and Library Director Meg Spencer, to take the first steps towards a full reopening at some point in the future.

According to Spencer, the district has added services and

See REOPEN page 7A

Mapleton Water District changes course to avert further troubles

Community meeting gives information on navigating forward

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Editor's Note: An earlier version of this story was posted to TheSiuslawNews.com on March 27.

The cloudy situation swirling around the Mapleton Water District (MWD) has cleared a bit after a community Zoom meeting held on March 24, hosted by the water district board of directors. More than 30 residents participated in the live stream which was facilitated by Board Vice Chair Dustin Basurto.

Basurto has stepped into a more pronounced leadership role in the district's operations after the abrupt

resignation of District Manager Terry Saubert.

Since last summer, there had been a growing dissatisfaction by some in the community with Saubert's leadership and a lack of communication from the board to MWD customers. These were exacerbated by the recent arrival of unusually high-water bills for many residents.

One of the reasons Basurto and the remaining board members — Bryan Moore, Marilyn Fox and Linda Jensen — have agreed to remain on the MWD board was the need to navigate the district through another problem in what has clearly been a difficult year for residents and board members.

"First, the board would like to apologize for all the problems, and we hope to make this better as soon as possible," Basurto said. "Westec (Tech Support) has been onsite and

done some service, and the temporary system we have is working as well as can be expected — but we are going to have to have a new plant for the future. ... I know this is a rough situation, but we have to take responsibility for what we have, and we have to figure out a way to move forward."

One of the first ways the board has decided to move forward is by creating a Community Relations Team (CRT), which will be tasked with contacting district customers and discussing with them their specific situation in regard to their water quality, cost and needs.

There was also a clear acknowledgment in Basurto's comments that there was a problem with the way the water meters in Mapleton had been read during the past year.

It was also stated at the meeting, in response to questions from those



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

Mapleton Water District is located inside the Mapleton Lions Club at 88151 Riverview Ave.

viewing live, that there would be no water shut offs occurring due to unpaid bills at this time.

See WATER page 8A

Dunes City announces employment opportunities

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Dunes City Council met on March 24 with a short agenda of action items to consider and the announcement of employment and volunteer opportunities available at the city.

Mayor Robert Forsythe brought the meeting to order with Councilor Robert Orr an excused absence.

City Administrator Jaime Mills facilitated the meeting, first announcing an unwanted opening with the city.

"It is with great sadness I announce the passing of Dunes City Permit Tech Sandra VanderWoude," Mills said. "Unfortu-

nately, this opens the Permit Tech position again and we are seeking candidates to fill that position."

In addition, Dunes City is looking for a planning secretary who can work 20 hours per week.

Mills said that citizens interested in learning about Dunes City should also consider applying for one of the six openings on the Dunes City Budget committee.

Next on the agenda, councilors considered, discussed briefly and passed unanimously Ordinance 257, which allows for public access through Dunes City property along the Hellcat Trail at Buckskin Bob Campground.

The next item discussed was the acceptance of Mills' recommendation that the city enters

into an agreement to look at the repair and improvement of Parkway Drive, which is becoming unsafe.

The scope of the repair needs to be assessed, but the council approved Mills' request to move forward by engaging engineer Will Dawson to create the report from preliminary work he had done.

Following this, Mills gave reports updating the number and types of city permits issued.

She also passed on communication from Lane County regarding the plan for registering for a COVID-19 vaccine. Mills directed residents who wish to receive the vaccine to contact

See DUNES page 7A

Agencies seek info about theft of multiple firearms from The Sportsman

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the trade association for the firearms industry, announced a reward today for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the persons responsible for the burglary of The Sportsman located in Florence on Feb. 5, in which six firearms were stolen.

On Feb. 5 at approximately 3:45 a.m., one or more unknown suspects forced entry into

See BURGLARY page 7A

SIUSLAW PUBLIC LIBRARY

STARTING THURSDAY, APRIL 1



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Friday 11 AM - 6 PM

Mapleton: Thursdays 12-5 PM.
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