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NATIONAL POLICE WEEK
SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

Siuslaw News
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
VOL. 131, NO. 37
MAY 8, 2021
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER



Partly sunny with a high of 58 and a low of 45.
Full forecast on A3

SPECIAL



Mother's Day Greetings
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COMMUNITY



City cancels 'reverse parade'
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SPORTS



Mapleton throws PRs at Track Meet
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How does your garden grow?

Committee tours treatment plant to learn about FloGro



PHOTOS BY MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence Wastewater Treatment Plant is home to the city's FloGro composting operation. Members of the Environmental Management Advisory Committee toured the site to learn how to grow the program.

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Four members of Florence's Environmental Management Advisory Committee (EMAC), followed up on the committee's April decision to provide initial funding for a home composting program by touring the city's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The program incorporates Public Works landscaping materials, such as brush, tree trimmings, leaves and more with treated bio-matter into a mixture which produces rich, usable soil for plants and trees.

In April, EMAC accepted Philben's recommendation that the Florence City Council fund a pilot program for residents who wish to start a home composting system. Her observations of the process will help to inform the full committee of the current status of the program.

"The FloGro program, which composts the biosolids from the wastewater treatment plant with chipped yard waste to produce a soil amendment (FloGro), has been a great success as a pilot program. Although it is much more efficient now than when it started, the pro-

gram has not really been able to expand," Philben said. "The aerated FloGro compost piles are located right at the wastewater treatment plant and there is not enough space to have more piles."

In order to expand the program, more space needs to be found. But even if more space was secured, more personnel and better equipment would be needed to expand the program.

One of the main challenges and goals of the program is to reduce the amount of biomatter that is ultimately dumped in the landfill and a reduction of the non-solid waste, which must be filtered and sanitized before it can be redirected to other "grey" water usages.

See FLOGRO page 5A



'Today, we have news to be thankful for'

Governor lowers risk levels due to vaccines, people's choices

BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

Starting yesterday, Lane County and 14 other counties left the "extreme risk" designation of COVID-19 and shifted down to "high risk."

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown made the announcement on Tuesday. She followed up with a statement on Friday.

"After weeks of surging cases and hospitalizations in Oregon, today, we have news to be thankful for," she said. "This latest wave of COVID-19 seems to be cresting and 15 counties will be moving out of our extreme risk category."

In addition, Oregon Health Authority (OHA) updated its Sector Risk Level Guidance Chart. The 24 counties at high risk will be able to operate a little differently than they were able to previously:

- Indoor Social and At-Home Gatherings: maximum 6 people, 2 households
- Outdoor Social and At-Home Gatherings: maximum 8 people
- Eating and Drinking Establishments: indoor dining allowed, take-out recommended; indoor capacity not to exceed 25 percent maximum occupancy or 50 people, whichever is smaller; Indoor and outdoor seating: 6 people per party and per table maximum, limit 2 households

See UPDATE page 6A

City of Florence reviews budget for next biennium

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Members of the City of Florence Budget Committee met for the first time this year virtually, on May 5. The meeting was brought to order by Mayor Joe Henry.

"It is my pleasure to call this May 5, preliminary budget meeting to order," he said. "It should be a fun process and is one that is very important to the City and an integral part of the operation of our city."

After greeting the committee, Henry nominated Brittany Horning for the position of chairperson of the group. The nomination was approved by consensus.

Leonard Larson was then selected to be vice chair.

Next, Henry turned the meeting over to Florence City Manager Erin Reynolds, who reviewed the proposed budget for the fiscal period beginning July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2023.

See BUDGET page 5A

Pop of color

Historic Old Town and other parts of Florence got a pop of color this week as Florence Public Works employees installed seasonal flower baskets. The popular flower baskets are sponsored by businesses and the Florence Area Chamber of Commerce. People can spot the bright flowers, which bloom until autumn, throughout town, including in new locations on Highway 101 and at the Port of Siuslaw Boardwalk. Since starting the project, the flower baskets have become an integral part of the overall festive ambiance of the spring and summer seasons.



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