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June 7th, 2021

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

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Full forecast on A3

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Food Share reopens to public



Members of the Florence Food Share team (from left) Bart Mealer, Brittany Goldberg, Jeff Kernan, Michelle Perry, Executive Director Colin Morgan and Stephen Beale show off the food share garden this week. Florence Food Share has reopened for client shopping while maintaining masking and distancing requirements.

Community members can now shop the Florence pantry in person

STORY & PHOTO
BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

As state mandated restrictions are lessened on businesses and nonprofits, local foodbank Florence Food Share has reopened to serve those in need of nutritional support. There has been food available at the pantry during the pandemic, but the opportunity to enter the facility and for volunteers

to assist clients has been severely limited.

Florence Food Share Executive Director Colin Morgan said he believes the resumption of more normal services will be well-received by the people he and his staff serve in the community.

“For the past year, the public has not been able to enter the building, but was still able to receive food with the help of volunteers shopping the pantry for them,” Morgan

said. “Clients will now once again be able to shop the shelves for themselves with the help of a volunteer. We will continue to follow all safety guidelines and ask clients to please wear a mask when entering the building.”

One of the most appreciated aspects of the food support program at Florence Food Share is the opportunity to offer fresh vegetables to clients.

See FOOD page 6A

Expanded program brings support to veterans

Disabled American Veterans hosts counselor to address wellbeing

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Florence veterans have a new opportunity to share their military experiences and other memories at a program taking place at the Florence Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), 1715 21st St., just off Highway 101. Veterans will now have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with a Licensed Professional

Counselor about stress or psychological issues they may be facing.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a major reduction in services offered to veterans as Veteran Service Officers (VSO) operating under COVID restrictions have been unable to assist veterans with state and federal military service issues. This has led to an increase in veterans in crisis — and a corresponding increase in veteran

suicides — across the country, including the Oregon coast, among many other problems.

Florence DAV is hosting a series of workshops focused on wellness coordinated by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ Vet Centers to address issues not related to obtaining benefits but to ensuring the mental and emotional health of former service members.

See VETS page 6A

Students receive acknowledgment, support

Regional scholarships go to Mapleton, Siuslaw students

BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

On May 28, the 2021 Siuslaw Regional Scholarship Awards Ceremony awarded 42 students from Mapleton and Siuslaw high schools with a total of \$222,300.

“Each honored senior has plans for the future, and tonight those plans take a step closer to becoming reality,” said Siuslaw High School Counselor Steve Moser, who helped coordinate the event along with Bob Orr. “There are costs associated with these future goals and career aspirations. That sacrifice of time, energy and freedom will become well known to

these students. Although the cost we hope to limit tonight is one of financial debt.”

In total, there were 153 individual scholarships presented by 33 local presenters and organizations in a virtual ceremony released that Friday night.

“I want to thank you all for taking the time to be present tonight as we gather to acknowledge the achievements of tonight’s honored seniors and to support their educational and career aspirations,” Moser said.

To be eligible for the scholarships, students filled out the Siuslaw Regional Scholarship form, which automatically entered

students into a database for the 153 awards. This is just the second year that the form has been available to students. Previously, high school seniors at Siuslaw and Mapleton would have to fill out multiple paper copies, write different essays and send in their resumes and transcripts to individual awards.

“This system was created to simplify and streamline the way students consolidate their information to submit to local providers,” Orr said. “It is our hope to continue the use of the regional application in the years to come.”

See SCHOLARS page 7A

Siuslaw Valley, Western Lane conduct poll

Districts seek input on future of combined fire, EMS services

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The merger of administration services between local first responders from Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue and Western Lane Ambulance District has been in the works for three years. Recent discussions of the joint boards of directors, known as Western Lane Fire and EMS Authority (WLFEA), have often centered on the need to reevaluate the integration of the two districts.

One suggestion from the WLFEA discussions was to initiate a more direct way to determine what district voters, who will have to pay for changes through taxes, want to support.

See INPUT page 5A

School district notified of COVID-19 case

The Siuslaw School District has been notified that an employee at Siuslaw Middle School has tested positive for COVID-19.

The sixth-grade on-campus cohort should be in isolation through June 15, and may return to campus on June 16.

Sixth grade students should be monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19 over the next few days. Any changes in health conditions should be reported to your primary care doctor or Lane County Public Health.

This isolation period does not impact the seventh and eighth grade classes, and they may continue their regular routines on campus.

See CASE page 7A

Lane County now in ‘moderate risk’

Originally published on June 1 at TheSiuslawNews.com

SALEM—On Tuesday (after press deadlines), Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced updates to county risk levels under the state’s public health framework to reduce transmission and protect Oregonians from COVID-19. Effective June 4 through June 10, there will be 13 counties in the High Risk level, 4 at Moderate Risk, and 19 at Lower Risk.

A complete list of counties and their associated risk levels is available here. Among the changes is a shift downward for Lane County,

See LEVEL page 5A

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