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Siuslaw News

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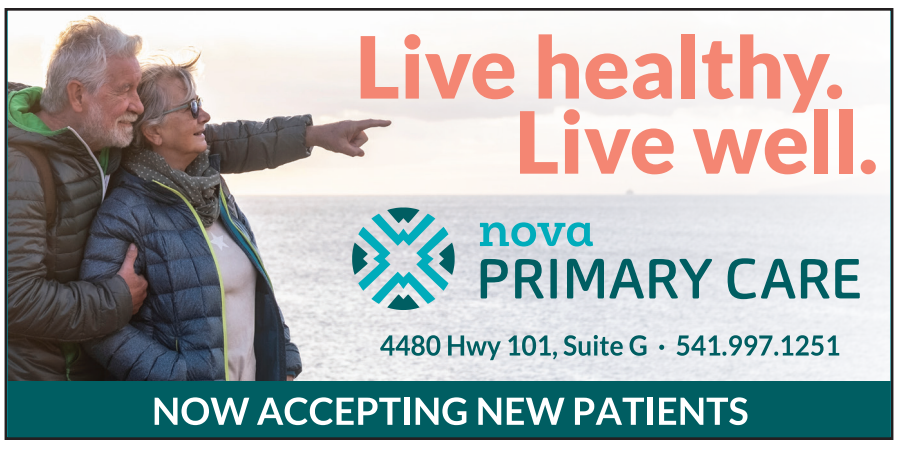
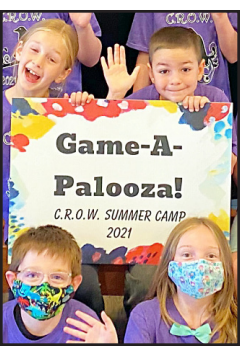


Siuslaw News
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
VOL. 131, NO. 1
JULY 14, 2021
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER

Morning clouds with afternoon sun. High of 64 and low of 52.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



CROW resumes summer camps
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Golfers take 'tee' time
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SIUSLAW NEWS
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Summer in full-swing with Florence's reopening

Restaurants, businesses report on first weeks beyond pandemic restrictions

BY REINA HARWOOD
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence area has hit the ground running, reopening to visitors across the West Coast and others from Georgia, Texas, Pennsylvania and more. Since Oregon Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) lifted COVID-19 masks and physical distancing mandates on July 30 following Gov. Kate Brown's executive order, the Florence area has seen big changes. This kicked off with the Fourth of July weekend, which kept businesses busy and required them to be ready for the coming months.

Last June, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) recorded its first COVID-19 case in Florence. As cases increased, the City of Florence allowed alternatives such as extended parking plans for Historic Old Town, giving local restaurant owners outdoor seating on the street. Some of those remain standing today.

Now, OHA confirmed 70% of Oregon adults are vaccinated. The growth in vaccinations has paved a way in authorizing the Siuslaw Region to slowly transform back into what it was before the pandemic for local businesses and events.

Though challenges like staff shortages have persisted on a state-wide level, business owners in Florence have resorted to new systems of work, allowing room for more visitors, vendors, volunteers and business. Florence is awakening, and the community can feel it too.

Public services and events like the Florence Farmers Market and the Siuslaw Public Library are a few stops amongst many for local residents. In May, the Florence Farmers Market recorded 335 shoppers and is currently counting an average of 500 shoppers a week. More recently, the headcount was at 562 in early July, according to Britte Kirsch, the volunteer coordinator for the Florence Farmers Market.

"The increase in attendance can be attributed to the availability of more products, especially more veggies and produce, as well as people getting out more now that we have the restrictions lifted," Kirsch said.

See **REOPEN** *page 7A*

Four Siuslaw residents honored with First Citizen nominations

Chamber's Siuslaw Awards highlight local volunteers, community builders

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce has adapted its annual Siuslaw Awards into a night celebrating the resiliency of the Siuslaw region and its businesses, organizations and individuals. One of the major awards to be announced during the awards — held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 22, at Three Rivers Casino Resort, 5647 Highway 126 — is the First Citizen Award.

This prestigious award has honored dozens of people over the years, and this year four area residents are being considered: Lori Gates, Steve Olienyk, Jodi O'Mara and Bob Teter.

Each one has been involved in community work of the highest caliber, volunteering on top of the import work of their day jobs.

See **NOMINEES** *page 6A*

Kiwanis 'on par' with golf tournament

BY REINA HARWOOD
SIUSLAW NEWS

On Saturday, the Kiwanis Club of Florence hosted its third annual Kiwanis Club Golf Challenge at Florence Golf Links. More than 25 volunteers and 100 golfers participated.

"Thank you to our sponsors and everyone who came out to play in our tournament. This will help us fund our projects over the next year to help Florence's whole community and our children's programs as well," said Kiwanis President Megan Messmer.

These programs include funding the Kiwanis Doernbecher Children's Cancer Program (KDCCP,) along with other local projects benefitting the area's youth.

In addition, Kiwanis is resuming in-person meetings today, July 14, at noon at the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue Station at 2625 Highway 101.

For more information, visit www.florencekiwanis.org.

Cycling through Florence

University of Texas students stop by on their 70-day bike journey

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

Cyclists on the Sierra route of the Texas 4000 for Cancer Bike Ride stayed overnight Monday at St. Andrews Episcopal Church and shared a meal with community members at Florence Elks Lodge 1858.

One of the lesser known casualties of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has been the efforts of fund-raising groups which have previously incorporated stops in Florence, as part of educational and revenue generating campaigns, for a variety of worthwhile causes.

One of groups impacted by the pandemic, the Texas 4000 for Cancer bike ride, the longest annual charity bike ride in the world, has stopped in Florence every year since 2004 with the exception of 2020. Since 2004, more than 980 students have completed the ride, raising over $12.1 million and logging more than 5.3 million miles.

Texas 4000's Team Sierra is now in the 39th day of their journey, having logged a collective total of 3,159 miles to this point. All riders on the 2021 team were vaccinated for COVID-19 before the start of the ride on June 5.

The Texas 4000 for Cancer riders are all students from the University of Texas who have spent much of the past year preparing for the journey. They are part of a three-pronged team which have three separate routes across the country, one of which runs along the Oregon coast.

See **CYCLISTS** *page 6A*

OPEN HOUSE TODAY • 10-3

22 Sea Watch • Florence

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