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Siuslaw News

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Efforts towards affordable housing take community work

Study shows roughly 30 percent of Oregonians worried of eviction or foreclosure

BY REINA HARWOOD
SIUSLAW NEWS

Before the outbreak of COVID-19, Oregonians were experiencing the pre-existing symptoms of income inequality in 2019, which amplified the harsh economic fallout that erupted as the pandemic went on.

One of the biggest impacts has been to housing. First, when state and federal governments provided protections for renters against evictions and homeowners from foreclosure. As those mor-

atoriums have ended, the housing market has tightened yet further, with houses selling within days of listing and a scarcity of rentals.

Despite the far reach to affordable homeownership and housing availability, the Florence community has taken it upon themselves to collaborate and seek resourceful ways to support employees, local businesses, families and long-term residents in search of a living space.

Last year, the U.S. Census Bureau launched a new Household Pulse

Survey. It studied how COVID-19 has impacted households and communities across the nation to pinpoint what areas needed assistance the most.

According to the survey, roughly 30 percent of Oregonians fell under the likelihood of eviction or foreclosure as of Aug. 2, 2021. On a national scale, around 32 percent of the U.S. population is at risk of falling behind on payments and rent. Meanwhile, 4.3 percent of Oregonians have missed their payments in the week of Aug. 2, and are not feeling confident.

While Oregonians have faced financial setbacks affecting their housing, local non-profit organizations like the Florence Food Share, an emergency food pantry based in Florence, continue providing resources to prevent hunger in the community.

Florence Food Share Executive Director Colin Morgan spoke on the local housing crisis and its impact on the food pantry.

"Hunger doesn't just stay at the dinner table, it goes throughout the community," he said.

See HOUSING page 5A

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

WEATHER

Partly cloudy with a high of 67 and a low of 54.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY



A big birthday
INSIDE — A3

SPORTS



SYSA trains youth referees
INSIDE — B

RECORDS
Obituaries & response logs
Inside — A2

TV GUIDE
Inside — B3-B4

KIDS CORNER
Activities for kids
Inside — B5

CLASSIFIEDS
Listings & notices
Inside — B6

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2 SECTIONS | 18 PAGES
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Siuslaw Teacher Librarian Jennifer McKenzie receives Fulbright Award



Jennifer McKenzie
BY CHANTELE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

The U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board are pleased to have announced that Jennifer McKenzie of Siuslaw School District in Oregon has received a Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Program award.

As a Fulbright recipient, McKenzie will share knowledge and foster meaningful connections across communities in the United States and abroad.

"It's such an honor, as Fulbright awards are considered the most prestigious international education grants in the world," McKenzie said.

Fulbrighters engage in cutting-edge research and expand their professional networks, often continuing research collaborations started abroad and laying the groundwork for forging future partnerships between institutions. Upon returning to their classrooms in the United States, they share their stories and often become active supporters of international exchange, inviting foreign scholars and educators to their school or campus and encouraging their colleagues and students to go abroad.

According to McKenzie, she will collaborate virtually with a team of international teachers this academic school year, attend a Global Education Symposium this spring in Washington D.C.

See FULBRIGHT page 7A



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS



ALLOFTOWN'S A STAGE

CROW Advanced Acting Students presented three showings of their "History of Live Theater" play around town on Friday. Two performances drew large crowds at the Port of Siuslaw Boardwalk and Gazebo Park in Historic Old Town Florence. The students wrote and then acted in the play, which was directed by CROW Artistic Director Melanie Heard and her colleague Diane David. The students also created their own set, which had scenic design from Brian Sandahl. The show drew laughter as the students showed theater's progression from ancient Greece to "Hamilton," complete with singing, soliloquy and stage deaths. For more information, visit www.crowkids.com.

Census data released for Lane County

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The 2020 Census was released last Thursday during a nationwide virtual press briefing given by U.S. Census Bureau Acting Director Dr. Ron Jarmin and Chief James Whitehorse of the Redistricting and Voting Rights Office, along with other senior staff members.

The release of the data collected during the 2020 Census has drawn scrutiny due to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the former U.S. administration. However, the Supreme Court eventually rejected the additional questions added to the census, which asked for the immigration status of respondents.

Jarmin addressed these concerns and the actions taken by the bureau to provide accurate and well-founded information, which policy makers and municipal leaders will use in future plans.

The Census data is also central to possible redistricting for Congressional seats as well as the distribution of billions of dollars in federal funds.

See CENSUS page 6A

Ambassadors represent Florence

New volunteers needed for public functions

BY MARK BRENNAN
SIUSLAW NEWS

The Florence Area Chamber of Commerce represents its members and local business interests by communicating news and connecting resources. It is an essential link in the chain which draws new residents and new businesses to the area, as well as supporting current members.

One of the most visible aspects of the chamber is the all-volunteer

Florence Ambassadors, which acts as the publicity arm of the Chamber.

Mike Bones is the chair of the Ambassadors, which elected its new board of directors in July.

"The Florence Area Chamber Ambassadors had our first meeting in over a year," Bones said. "We enjoyed getting to see one another and getting back down to business! We welcomed our elected officers and we are looking forward to being active with our Chamber activities again."

The board now includes President Mike Bones, Vice President Igor Kuszniarczyk, Secretary Kathy Bones and Treasurer Terry Woodward.

"We are looking for potential and

interested new members," Bones said.

Many volunteers are needed to support local nonprofits. During the pandemic, volunteer numbers have dropped.

According to Bones, filling the open spots on the board was a minor challenge. However, the need now is to add to the number of individuals participating in the activities associated with the ribbon-cuttings, grand openings and recognition ceremonies that take place in and around Florence during the year.

"We really do need some new volunteers," he said. "A lot of our members are getting older and some have

See AMBASSADOR page 5A

Save the heavy lifting for us!
Atiyeh Bros. area rug cleaning and repair service to the Florence area will be August 25th, with return service September 8th and September 22nd for repair orders. We will pick up your rugs, deep clean them in our state of the art facility, repair if needed, and deliver to your home. Please call us at 541-342-3678 to schedule your pickup!

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