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Siuslaw News
NEWS & VIEWS THAT DEFINE OUR COMMUNITY
VOL. 131, NO. 71
SEPTEMBER 4, 2021
FLORENCE, OREGON

WEATHER

Mostly sunny with a high of 67 and a low of 55.
Full forecast on A3

COMMUNITY

Nonprofits work together to feed kids
INSIDE — A3

SPORTS

Volleyball starts up at Siuslaw
INSIDE — B

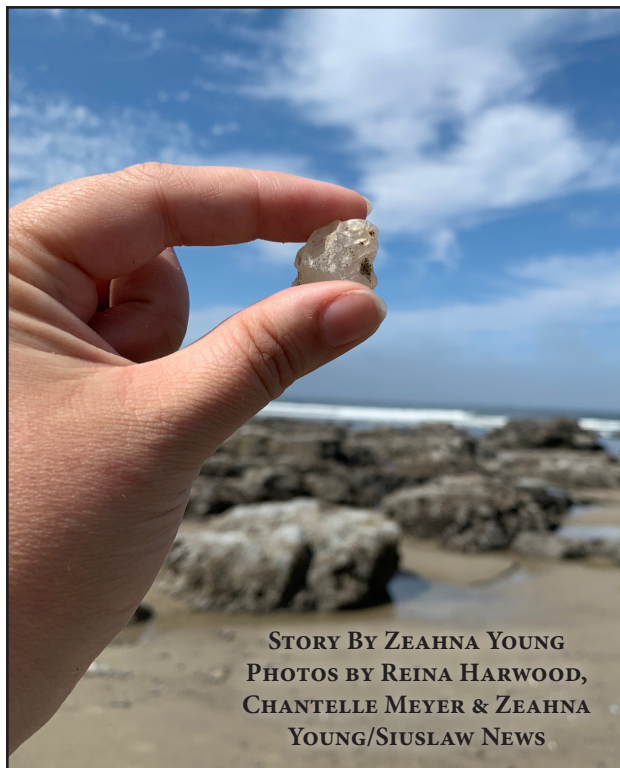
RECORDS
Obituaries & emergency response logs
Inside — A2

SIDE SHOW
Activities and comics every Saturday
Inside — B4

CLASSIFIEDS
Listings and public notices
Inside — B5

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STORY BY ZEAHNA YOUNG
PHOTOS BY REINA HARWOOD,
CHANTELLE MEYER & ZEAHNA
YOUNG/SIUSLAW NEWS

ROCKHOUNDING ROUNDUP

With record low tides this year in the Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve, the entire area is the perfect locale for beach rockhounding on the Central Oregon Coast. Although winter through early spring is generally the most ideal time for rockhounding locally, with tides still being as low as they are and summer weather lingering, it's the perfect recreational activity to "dig" into right now.

There are numerous reasons to explore rockhounding, particularly on beaches surrounding Florence. For one, it is free to get started, and even if people take it to an expert level, they won't need much equipment to be successful.

As a beginner, all someone really needs is a brush and a spray bottle filled with water, which helps people distinguish between rocks, and something in which to carry their rocks. People should keep in mind that the

limit for collecting at the hobbyist level is one gallon of rocks per day and three total gallons per year, and rocks may only be collected for personal use without using mechanized tools.

Rockhounding is also a fun and meditative activity that allows beachgoers to get fresh air, sunlight and exercise. It's a relaxing way to simultaneously be active and learn about local rocks and semi-precious stones, and it is a great way to introduce kids to geology.

Plus, rockhounding is enjoyable for all ages. People can set their own pace. Whether they're looking for a peaceful activity to do alone, something fun to do with family on the weekend or a pretty adorable option for a date, rockhounding is a wonderful idea.

With regard to group activities, there are social media groups people can join by See AGATES page 9A



Rockhounding, which can be done at places like Bob Creek, is one of the best local recreational activities to delve into. Agates, better known as the jewels of the Oregon Coast, and jaspers can be found in great quantities throughout the Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve region.



PeaceHealth adds solutions to help staff wearing thin

'It really is important at this time that we're taking every measure possible to prevent further spread'

BY CHANTELLE MEYER
SIUSLAW NEWS

As of Thursday, Lane County reported it has only four available Intensive Care Unit beds available. Out of 137 hospitalized COVID-19 patients, 29 are on ventilators, and an overall 31 percent of the region's hospitalized beds are being used for COVID-19.

"At this point, we are seeing a significant increase in our hospi-

talizations from COVID," reported Dr. Brenda Ormersher, M.D., infectious disease specialist with PeaceHealth.

PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend in Springfield is still the region's hub for the novel coronavirus COVID-19. This means patients from as far away as Coos Bay and Roseburg are being treated there.

"Out of all the patients hospitalized since April of this year until

now, 95% of our patients have been unvaccinated," Ormersher stated. "Only 5% of the cases here are actually with vaccinated individuals — and they tend to recover faster and with better outcomes.

"The best thing to do to prevent the spread of COVID is vaccination. Even with breakthrough cases that we're seeing in the news, if you got vaccinated, but you get COVID, these cases tend to be less severe, and patients tend to recover better."

Recovery for patients is top of mind for health care workers right now, as there are staffing shortages due to the high number of patients.

In addition, PeaceHealth announced that "starting Aug. 31, 2021, all caregivers will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit a qualifying medical exemption."

In an Aug. 3 news release, PeaceHealth's Chief Physician Executive See HEALTH page 7A

Mapleton welcomes new staff

Four new instructors prepare for school year's changes, challenges

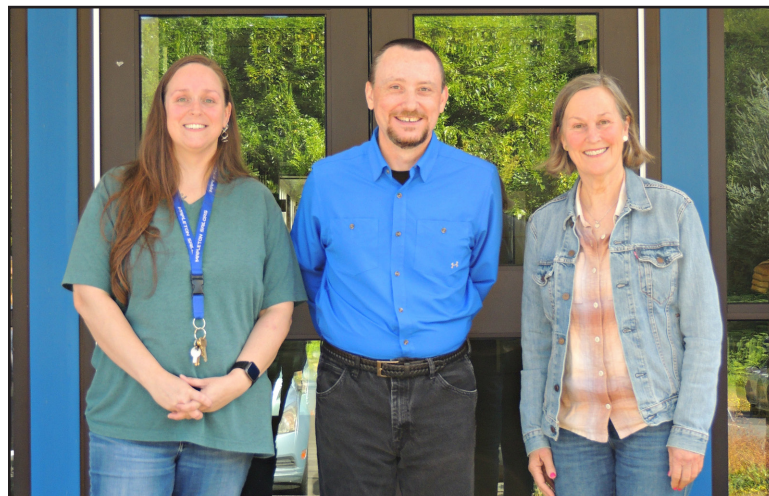
BY ZAC BURTT
SIUSLAW NEWS

Four new faces will join the Mapleton School District for the 2021-22 school year. Though COVID-19 has hidden those faces behind masks, they're all smiles about their new opportunity.

Superintendent Jodi O'Mara couldn't be happier with the crew joining the Mapleton staff.

"I'm excited about the new school year. I'm excited to get kids back on campus in a 'normal' situation where they can learn and socialize. I'm excited for the new staff," she said. "Though we've lost some wonderful people, change is always good in my opinion. There will be challenges, both COVID and instructional, but were going to roll with it, because that's what we do."

Coming to work with students in a small town like Mapleton can be different, if not more difficult, than a larger school, but can also be extremely rewarding.



Mapleton School District's new staff members include (from left) Crystal Massie, Sean O'Mara and Susan Fenton. Not pictured is Tucker Ford, who begins his first year of full-time teaching.

"One of the biggest challenges new staff face in Mapleton is that everyone knows everyone," said O'Mara. "This is actually a good thing, but learning to navigate it can be difficult initially. The small class sizes are also great, but getting used to them can be different if the staff is used to larger schools."

This year, four new people will become part of the team at Mapleton School District.

One new teacher that is used to larger schools is new middle school and high school language arts, social studies and College Credit Western Civilizations teacher Sean O'Mara. See MAPLETON page 6A

Port of Siuslaw sees steady seas

Revenues grow as full-service sites draw visitors

The Port of Siuslaw Board of Commissioners met on Aug. 18, with an agenda which included reports which indicate a significant rise in port revenues in the past 12 months and increased visits to the port's campground. Two commissioners, Mike Buckwald and Craig Zolezzi, were absent for the meeting.

The commission received reports from Office Manager Kelly Stewart, who reported a rise in revenue from both the recently installed full-service campsites and from the campground's older sites, which were upgraded to offer electricity, sewer hookups and WIFI. She reported the campground is full at this time. See PORT page 6A

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