

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

The First Amendment
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." — Thomas Jefferson (1800)

LETTERS

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on these and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

REIGN ENDS

Raining Cats & Dogs in Old Town Florence has been sold. I would like to thank all of you for supporting me for the past 12 years and announce that I will be retiring at the end of October. The business has been sold to a local family and they will be taking over on Nov. 1. Raining has been in the same location since 1998 and this will be the fourth transfer of the business to new owners. It has been a real treat working with each of you. Exciting when new pets arrived and heartbreaking when they left way to soon. Each one of them has left a little piece in my memory, and I will miss being involved with you and your furry family.
— Jackie Allen
Florence

BEWARE YE WHO LIVE HERE

If you live in Dunes City, be aware! Dunes City is inviting us to a critical meeting while our region continues to battle COVID-19. On Oct. 9, the Siuslaw News reported that Lane County had experienced "an overall increase in COVID cases and hospital admissions, with 912 total cases, 40 hospital admissions, and 15 deaths for the week of Sept. 29 to Oct. 6." Why would Dunes City put us at risk to rush adopting Ordinance 259 now? Apparently, they've been working on it for years. Do they care about our health and safety? No mention of masks is made on the public notice mailed to us. Dunes City Mayor Robert Forsythe and a couple council members stated in their Aug. 25 meeting that they will not be wearing masks. The city's door signage explains how to avoid wearing a mask, while saying nothing about mask requirements. The meeting items are of great im-

portance, and could adversely affect us for decades.

Planning claims that Ordinance #259 merely revises/updates old zoning and development codes. It does far more than that! The summary is 48 pages (condensed from a 258 page document). They're charging .25 cents a page to print it.

If passed, the ordinance will change many things benefiting the city, but not citizens. They can exponentially increase charges for permits/penalties as they see fit, expanding rights over homes and properties as never before. Ordinance #259 will expand their authority, giving them "legitimacy."

Dunes City has kept few of the promises made after we were coerced into signing their petition for fear of the "big bad" national park. Why believe them now? They don't even care enough to wear masks.

Call, email or write Dunes City Planning now with your thoughts. Stop them in their tracks.
— Fred Beloin
Westlake

YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Vote yes on Nov. 2.

The majority of our community is retired, they live in gated communities and flee to Arizona in the winter. They have voted down any levy to build a new school here, in some ways because the locals only serve them part of the year at stores and restaurants, and to provide healthcare. But here's the thing — when you have a health crisis, when your chest pain is unbearable, when you smell burning toast, when you're lying on your back, gasping for breath, who do you want to respond?

The highest trained EMTs in the state or the lowest bidder?

Look, I understand if you don't care for the youth of this community (although you should), but just out of self preservation, I would think you would be fine with paying a little more to have the best of the best saving you.

You get what you pay for. Think about that when you vote, and choose wisely.
— Edward Gunderson
Florence

CHANGE TO LAB HOURS AFFECTS PATIENTS

Some of us have learned the following the hard way, and I hope this reduces that number for the future.

I arrived at the PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Lab at 2:30 p.m. on Oct. 8 for a blood draw, only to find a big sign on the door stating they now close at 2 p.m. and are closed on Saturdays.

I understand the reason for the change to a shorter workday and the elimination of Saturdays, but I don't understand the lack of communicating those changes to our community.

The reason is a critical shortage of phlebotomists at the lab and we can't expect those few remaining to do the workload of a fully staffed lab. To that point, I understand there is a new phlebotomist starting (as I write) and two more in training.

Unfortunately, as I left the lab after another blood draw on Monday, Oct. 18, a young man pulled up and turned around after reaching the locked door.

My experience with this lack of communication from PeaceHealth to our community, is I searched the patient portal (mypeacehealth) for any information regarding the change and found none. Nor do I recall seeing any notice in the Siuslaw News. It seems to be left to the sign on the door, although I'm told the local primary care clinic staffs are aware of it. That doesn't help those of us receiving blood work orders from out-of-town specialists, as both of mine were.

So, until further notice, (as I understand it), plan on the lab opening at 7 a.m. and closing at 2 p.m. (as in locked door) with no Saturday service.
— Bob Horney
Florence

Siuslaw News

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes Letters to the Editor and Guest Viewpoints as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Email letters to cmeyer@thesiuslawnews.com

TO BE CONSIDERED FOR PUBLICATION:

Letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large. In addition:

- Letters reflect the opinion of the writer. The Siuslaw News cannot verify the accuracy of all statements made in letters. Authors should ensure any information is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay, and include sources where possible.
- Letters have a suggested 300-word limit and may be edited for grammar and clarity.
- Authors must sign their full name and include their street address (only city will be printed), as well as a daytime phone number and/or email address for verification. The person who signs the letter must be the actual author. Siuslaw News does not accept anonymous Letters to the Editor.
- Siuslaw News will not print form letters, libelous letters, business promotions or personal disputes, poetry, open letters, letters espousing religious views without reference to a current issue, or letters considered in poor taste. Letters also may not be part of letter-writing campaigns.
- Writers are limited to one published letter every two weeks.

TO SUBMIT TO THE SIUSLAW NEWS:

Emailed submissions are preferred. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed.

The newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

WHERE TO WRITE

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Western Lane Ambulance has a proven history

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

I had the distinct pleasure of serving as the Interim District Manager of Western Lane Ambulance District (WLAD) from 2016-17 and would consider my time there as one of the high points of my professional career. My career spanned 34 years and included all aspects of providing service as a first responder — ranging from positions as a volunteer firefighter/EMT, paramedic, company officer, and at conclusion a chief officer responsible for EMS division of a fire district. Throughout the last 20 years of my career, I served as an EMS chief and was able to gain valuable appreciation of what best practices should be for EMS agencies across the State of Oregon as well as across our nation.

After retirement, I had an additional honor and privilege of assisting fire/EMS agencies as a consultant with Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO).

An invaluable lesson learned early in my career was the practice of observation when given the opportunity of a new position, especially when working with an unfamiliar organization or discipline. I met with all WLAD employees in February 2015, and held true to the practice of "watch and learn" while reviewing the financials, policies and standards of operations that were adopted by the district.

In a very short timeframe, based

on my years of experience, everything that I observed showed that WLAD provided a superior quality service to the citizens they served. The district's financials revealed operational sustainability through a fixed tax base, a five-year option levy and ambulance transport rev-

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Brian Burright

Former Interim District Manager of Western Lane Ambulance

enues. Wages, benefits and working conditions gave WLAD the valuable benefit of employee longevity and operational experience. The EMT's/Paramedics were professional, well trained and community based. District equipment was up to date, well maintained with an apparatus/equipment replacement policy in place and practiced. The district's elected board of directors were actively engaged in monthly public meetings that produced open spirited discussion resulting in the consensus decision making that was in the best interest of the district and the patrons who elected them.

Above all else, the overwhelming support and positive feedback from the citizens who lived, worked and recreated within the district boundaries provided me the best evidence that the agency was one of the best in the state. Continued contact with current WLAD employees, friends in the community and SDAO consultants assures me that this is still the case.

Recently, it has come to my attention that there is a small group of

citizens who have initiated a campaign with the intent of replacing the long-standing, well-run EMS response and transport services of WLAD with a private, for-profit company. First, let me state I have nothing against private for-profit ambulance EMTs and paramedics, as they provide life-saving care and serve their communities with professionalism and dedication.

However, it has been my observations over the years that when the underlying business model is governed by profit and not by service, there can be — and have been — some service degradation to communities served by private for-profit ambulance companies. Through my years of experience and witnessing similar scenarios, I can cite real examples of why this is a questionable direction.

In short, decisions of this magnitude must be evaluated very closely by the elected officials or governing bodies to assure the levels of service proposed by any alternative provider would match and/or exceed that of the existing provider and I can with certainty that this would not be the case for your community.

WLAD has a proven history of providing preventative and life-sustaining services to the community in a fiscally responsible way. Why let a small vocal group with questionable motives threaten a proven organization who is a vital component of the healthcare in your community?

Supporting the option levy allows WLAD to maintain one of the highest levels of care in the State of Oregon. This is what the community is voting on.