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Full forecast on A5

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Historic bipartisan CARES stimulus package enacted

BY MARK BRENNAN
FOR THE SENTINEL

In a rare show of bipartisan cooperation, the U.S. Senate voted unanimously 96-0 last Wednesday, March 25, to approve a \$2.2 trillion fiscal stimulus package, which the House of Representatives approved by a resounding voice-vote on Friday. The House Measure, H.R. 478, is designed to blunt the unprecedented economic chaos created by the novel coronavirus COVID-19

pandemic.

“Today, as we have all acknowledged, our nation faces an economic and health emergency of historic proportions,” said Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act is a broad-based fiscal infusion which is designed to assist in a number of different ways in the form of direct payments, tax credits or penalty waivers, depending on the individual or business involved.

Pelosi worked closely with Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin on the creation of the package.

COVID-19 and the measures put in place, at every level of government, to limit the virus’s reach and impact have caused turmoil in nearly every aspect of life in the U.S. and across the globe.

Millions of Americans are unexpectedly unemployed, major transportation and entertainment corporations have ceased operating and the pandemic has essen-

tially stopped commerce in many segments of the economy.

Friday, the stimulus package was sent to U.S. President Donald Trump, who quickly signed the bill.

However, pressure continues to build in the business sector in spite of the stimulus act as millions of Americans have suddenly found themselves out of work. New unemployment claims in Oregon alone shot up nearly 1,500 percent

See **CARE 6A**



COURTESY PHOTO

Local quilter Robin Fouquette has been fabricating homemade masks for area distribution and donation.

Mask makers sew community threads

BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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While debate on the usability and effectiveness of the public wearing masks continues at the national level, local area volunteers have been busily producing hand-sewn masks and distributing them to the community.

“I’ve been making masks every single day [since March 10] and just handing them out to individuals and businesses,” said Robin Fouquette, a Cottage Grove quilter with the Eugene-based Pioneer Quilters group.

So far, Fouquette estimates she’s distributed 75 masks in the area and has another 25 ready to be handed out by the end of

the week.

Though these homemade masks do not rise to the standards of surgical masks worn by health workers, they can be used individually or as a reusable cover over higher quality medical masks, Fouquette said.

“Originally, the hospitals didn’t want them, but then they ran out of masks and the call came out to

have quilters make masks,” she said. “First the Eugene Mission reached out to Emerald Valley Quilters in Eugene and then the hospital set up a coordinating team to work with the sewers in the area to make these covers.”

Last week, a spokesperson for PeaceHealth Oregon stated that there was

See **MASKS 11A**

School closure possible for remainder of year

BY NICK SNYDER
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For students in the state of Oregon, the road back to normalcy may have gotten a bit longer this week.

On Monday (March 30), South Lane School District (SLSD) interim superintendent Yvonne Curtis sent out a message to all parents and students informing them that the school closure directive —

“...we will be ensuring all students engage in Distance Learning quite possibly through the remainder of the school year.”

— Yvonne Curtis, SLSD interim superintendent

currently scheduled to end on April 28 — may in fact last the remainder of the school year.

“Until last night, our intention was to remotely

our director at the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Colt Gill, with a new directive. Now we will be ensuring all students engage in Distance Learning quite possibly through the remainder of the school year.”

While the message is vague on details and still leaves open the possibility of a re-opening in spring

See **SCHOOLS 9A**

NDSB begins meal delivery for students

BY NICK SNYDER
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In line with urban and rural areas all across the country, the looming specter of the COVID-19 virus has challenged the adaptability of the North Douglas School District (NDSB).

Monday (March 30), NDSB superintendent Terry Bennett announced that their Mid-Columbia busses, staffed with district instructional assistants (IA), will run on a four-hour delay delivering breakfast and lunch to all students at their regular bus stops.

Two days later, on April 1, the district began using the same system to deliver educational packets and resources to students so they may

See **MEALS 8A**

Elkton declares pre-emptive state of emergency

BY DAMIEN SHERWOOD
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In response to the continued spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 through Oregon, the City of Elkton declared a state of emergency on Monday, March 30, during a 9 a.m. emergency meeting of the city council.

“Basically, it’s just pre-emptive in case we get hit with what they’re predicting could happen,” said Gary Trout, Elkton’s city clerk and public works foreman. “We’re not actually in an emergency situation, but we’re trying to get things in place in case it happens because our city is so small-staffed. If we do have some illness or if we do have something come through, it could

See **ELKTON 8A**

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