



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2017



SEA CHANGE

New campus gets a go

Seaside School District voters said a resounding “yes” in November to a \$99.7 million bond to move three schools out of the tsunami inundation zone.

In a 65 percent to 35 percent vote, residents endorsed the plan to replace deteriorating schools at an 80-acre location in the city’s East Hills adjacent to Seaside Heights Elementary School.

“This victory belongs to our community which had the foresight to see how important high quality schools are to the future of everyone who lives in the Seaside School District,” Superintendent-emeritus Doug Dougherty said after the bond’s passage. “New schools benefit the entire community, strengthen our economy and, in this case, provide a safe place for all in an emergency. From retirees to those just starting out, employees to business owners, children and families; education touches everyone and strengthens the fiber and opportunity of our community.”



PHOTOS BY R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Seniors Kara Ipson, Lizzy Barnes and Emma Dutcher were among student leaders to advocate for a new school campus. Students played a key role in helping in the bond’s passage.

The bond came three years after a failed \$128.8 million dollar plan. The scaled-back proposal eliminated an auditorium, covered bleachers, long-term emergency shelters and a varsity playing field. The bond equates to

about \$1.35 per thousand, a 37.5 percent total reduction in cost from the previous bond. A home with an assessed value of \$200,000 would see a tax hike of about \$270 and a \$400,000 home about \$540.

Advocates of the proposal, including Vote Yes For Our Local Schools, presented a sustained campaign to promote the bond, which, they said, was necessary not only for the safety of the students but because of the condition of the schools. Gearhart Elementary School, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School were built with an expected life span of 45 to 50 years. Each has been used beyond that span. Dougherty described the schools as unsafe, deteriorating and “very inefficient.”

With a land gift of 80 acres from Weyerhaeuser Co. in the East Hills, along with favorable interest rates and a likelihood of limited matching funds from the state, proponents said “this was the best time” to pass the bond.

“I couldn’t be more proud of our community for stepping forward and making a truly historic decision that will improve the lives of children and families for generations to come,” Dougherty added.