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**Inside this issue:**

- Mayor Speaks with Local Students |
- Chief Gutierrez's Driving Pet Peeves |
- Employee Spotlight 2
- Community Garden Approved 3
- Interpretive Center 5
- City Calendar 8

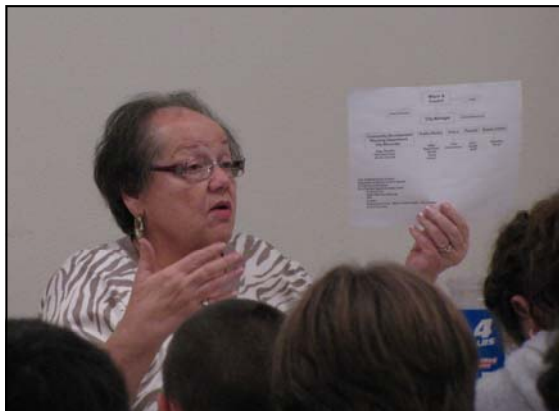


Siuslaw Bridge photo courtesy of Joshua Greene, © 2011 All Rights Reserved

# Focus on Florence

May 2013

## Mayor Speaks with Local Students



*Florence Mayor Nola Xavier goes over the City's organizational chart with Siuslaw Middle School Students.*

On April 17, 2013, Florence Mayor Nola Xavier spoke to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Siuslaw Middle School. She explained the structure and purpose of local government in Florence as well as how the City relates to other levels of government. Students learned about what the mayor does and how City employees carry out the directives from the City Council. Mayor Xavier answered several questions that students had prepared as part of their studies on local government tying into the "If I were

Mayor Contest." The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be submitting essays to the contest which is open to elementary, middle, and high school aged students. A winner from each age group will be selected by both Florence and Dunes City. Winners from each city will be entered into the state contest hosted by the Oregon Mayor's Association for the chance to win a new laptop computer.

## Chief Gutierrez's Driving Pet Peeves

I was a Sergeant when I assisted an officer on an alarm call on a late Saturday afternoon at the old Middle School on Quince Street. When I arrived, the officer was already in the school conducting the search. I parked my patrol vehicle next to his and noticed that his vehicle was unlocked and still running. This wasn't the first or even the second time he had left his patrol car unattended with the keys in the ignition and running. In fact, he had previ-

ously been disciplined for this same issue. After checking each room in the building and finding no one, we determined that it was a false alarm. Upon returning to the parking lot, we discovered that his vehicle was gone. I will never forget the terrified look on his face. He started yelling, "My car is gone! My car is gone!!" This went on for at least a full minute as I stood there shaking my head. I said to the

*See Pet Peeves Page 7*

# Employee Spotlight

## Patrol Officer Kevin Larson

Patrol Officer Kevin Larson has been associated with the Florence Police Department for 21 years. He began as a Reserve Police Officer in 1992, before becoming a full-time Officer in 1999. Like many Florence-area residents, Kevin likes to ride off-road vehicles, shoot guns, fish and hunt in his downtime. In fact, Kevin says he enjoys just about anything that has to do with the outdoors. Kevin's family includes his wife of 18 years, Suzan, two sons and two daughters.



**Kevin Larson began working at the City of Florence as a Reserve Police Officer in 1992.**

### **What is your most rewarding/proudest moment at the City?**

*"There have been so many different things that have been rewarding since being here at the Florence Police Department that it's hard to pinpoint the most rewarding. One that comes to mind was fairly recent. I, along with a potential witness, helped identify a suspect in a long rash of car break-ins. The suspect was positively identified a short time later. They had taken lots of stolen property and traded the items for drugs or whatever. The end result was the suspect was caught and convicted of several thefts. This person had been victimizing the residents of the Florence area for several years. The suspect should no longer pose a threat to the people of Florence or the surrounding area for several years."*

### **What do you like most about your job?**

*"Everyday is different. You never have a day like the*

*one before and you are always meeting new and interesting people."*

### **What is the strangest incident you've had at the City?**

*"The strangest incident would most likely be watching what I thought was a horse that possibly escaped from a horse trailer galloping south on Highway 101 towards the Siuslaw River Bridge at about 1*

*am. As the animal got closer, I saw it was a huge five-point bull elk. Luckily, just before reaching the bridge, the elk dropped down to Bay Street towards the gazebo park. Once at the gazebo it jumped the fence and swam across the river. Several patrons of the old Fisherman's Wharf and the Beachcomber were aware of our radio traffic or where outside at the time, and saw the elk walking on Bay Street. I always wondered how many bar customers quit drinking after seeing that."*

### **Anything else you want to add?**

*"It has been a great experience working as a police officer for the City of Florence. I work with some of the best Officers an agency can employ. The people of Florence and the surrounding area should feel comfortable knowing that we are looking out for their best interest and safety. There is a lot of things that go on in this little town that people are unaware of, but we are addressing everything that could bring harm and/or affect their safety."*



## FLORENCE COMMUNITY GARDEN APPROVED

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, City Council approved a proposal by Florence First Harvest to build a community garden at the old senior center site on Airport Road (15<sup>th</sup> Street). The garden will offer Florence residents the opportunity to rent a raised bed for an affordable, annual fee to grow their own plants, flowers and food. Not only will this project encourage active community participation and stewardship, and heighten people's awareness and appreciation for the environment, but it will also be one step closer to alleviating hunger.



Food insecurity is a big issue facing many rural communities in Oregon. According to the surveys conducted in Florence and the surrounding area in the Rural Lane County Community Food Assessment in 2012, 33.87% of individuals in the area have an income that is at or less than 185% of the federal poverty line and qualify for emergency food boxes. From 2011-2012, 4,022 area residents accessed an emergency food box. Furthermore, when asked what factors affected their ability



*The Florence Community Garden will be located at the site of the old senior center on Airport Road.*

to get the food they needed, 70.1% individuals responded 'cost of food.' When asked why they don't purchase local food, 35.3% responded it was too expensive, while 29.4% responded it was not available. By investing in a community garden, Florence is working towards helping a large portion of our population by

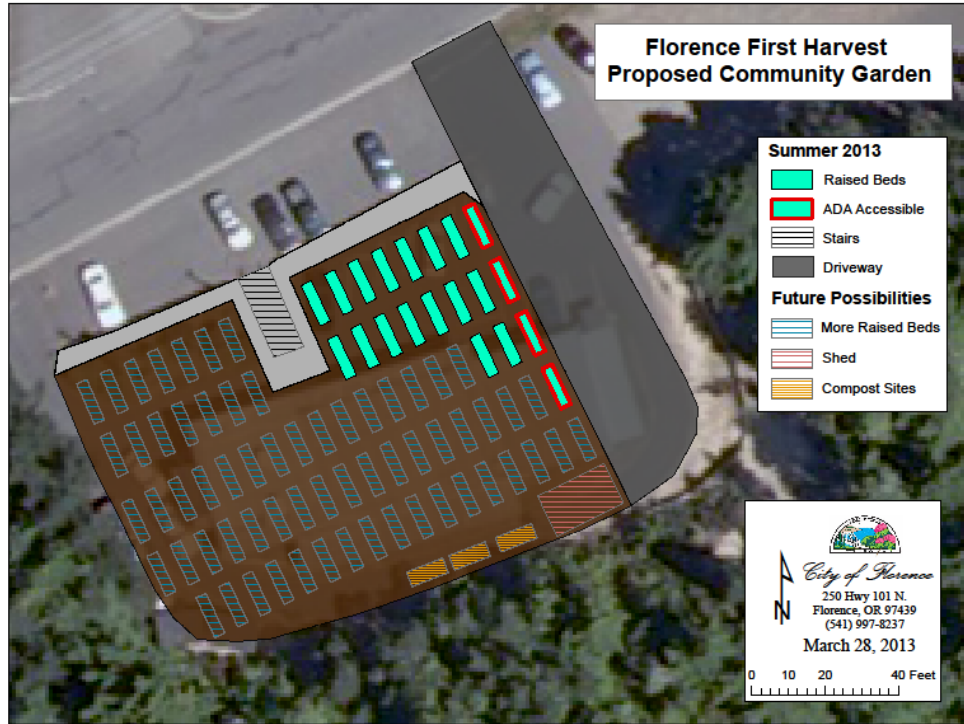
making local food accessible and affordable.

The garden's location could prove especially beneficial to nearby Habitat for Humanity housing residents, as many do not have room to garden on their properties. There has also been interest

COMMUNITY GARDEN Page 3

from the Boys and Girls Club, which is located across the street from the old senior center, to have their after-school teen program participants assist in maintaining the garden regularly. The City hopes these partnerships will increase the garden's support and further success.

The initial construction is projected to begin in late May, with building of the first 20 raised beds. There will be a wired fence put up along the perimeter of the garden site to deter vandalism and deer. Once the beds are constructed, gar-



den volunteers will solicit the beds to nearby residents, in an effort to give them priority. Florence First Harvest will also be soliciting any local businesses who may be interested in sponsoring a raised bed for a resident to use. Businesses would fund the materials needed to build and maintain the bed



and would be recognized with a name engraved on their sponsored bed.

If you are interested in attaining a bed or have a business that would like to sponsor one, please contact Joann Henderson at 541-997-2997. If you have any further questions about the city's involvement or the overall plan to build the gardens please contact Katya Reyna at 541-902-2587.

## INTERPRETIVE CENTER NEARS COMPLETION



**Tom Ayres General Contractor continues construction on the Siuslaw Interpretive Center.**

Work continues on the Siuslaw Interpretive Center with subcontracting crews for Tom Ayres General Contractor preparing to pour the new colored concrete sidewalk for a portion of the project on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This portion of the colored sidewalk starts at the west side of the stormwater quality facility and continues counter clockwise to the foot bridge location. The remaining colored sidewalks will be poured after the observation platform and foot bridge framing has been completed. Both the observation

platform (deck) and the foot bridge framing have been preassembled and will be installed utilizing a crane. Once the crane work is completed, the contractors crews will finish the concrete work.

The observation platform and foot bridge framing will begin to be installed the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>. Decking of the observation platform and foot bridge will follow soon after the framing is complete, which may be prior to Rhody weekend (May 17-19).

You know that it is spring when the irrigation and landscaping contractor for the project is thinking planting time. We anticipate that the new irrigation system for the plantings will be installed towards the end of May with new plantings beginning June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Once completed, the Siuslaw Interpretive Center will provide a picturesque view of the historic Siuslaw River Bridge for tourists, travelers, and residents alike. A pathway will take visitors by existing tidal wetlands, constructed wetland enhancements and a stormwater treatment swale, providing educational opportunities regarding our unique coastal terrain. A picnic area will be available to offer travelers an attractive respite to enjoy a lunch before moving on.

In conjunction with the Center, a small parking area is also being constructed underneath the bridge. Colored concrete has already been poured, along with the installation of two vintage-style lights. These eight additional parking spots will provide some much-needed extra parking in the Old Town area, while not interfering with the popular “Cathedral Arch” view of underneath the Siuslaw Bridge that is so popular with photographers and artists.



**A parking area under the bridge will offer eight additional parking spots while not interfering with the “Cathedral Arches” popular with photographers.**



# SIUSLAW RIVER BRIDGE INTERPRETIVE CENTER



*PET PEEVES Page 1*

officer, “You left your patrol vehicle running and unlocked again didn’t you?” With his head lowered he replied, “Yes.” I handed him his keys and told him that he can find his vehicle down at the (former) bus barn and we would discuss this further in my office. I then drove off, leaving him to make the pensive walk to recover his patrol vehicle.

**Most car thefts fall into one of three categories:**

- ⇒ The car is loaned to somebody who doesn’t return it.
- ⇒ The car is taken—typically from a convenience store, gas station or fast food restaurant when someone leaves it running.
- ⇒ A car thief finds the keys in the ignition, or in the glove box, ashtray or the compartment between the seats.

Recently while I was off duty I went to one of my favorite local stores. I walked into the middle of a conversation amongst four acquaintances on the topic of leaving car keys in the ignition. One person admitted that she does it all the time and didn’t think that there was anything wrong with it. The group agreed, saying that living in a small town has its advantages. I asked them if they knew that it was actually *illegal* to leave keys in the ignition of an unattended vehicle. All four told me that it wasn’t illegal, and that they have been doing it all their lives. The conversation turned into a short debate. Even after explaining the law, I saw there was no gaining headway in convincing them of the truth. I finally pulled the ‘police officer card’ and told them, “I do have some knowledge about this sort of thing,” it wasn’t until then that it dawned on them they were talking to a cop.

I was amazed that these four intelligent individuals were convinced that no such law exists, so I conducted a random survey and to my surprise there are a number of people under the same impression. If you happen to be one of those folks, please read the following section of the Oregon Vehicle Code:

**811.585 - Failure to secure motor vehicle**

(1) A person commits the offense of failure to secure a motor vehicle if the person is driving or is in charge of a motor vehicle and:

(a) The person permits the vehicle to stand unattended on a highway without first doing all of the following:

(A) Stopping the engine.

(B) Turning the front wheels to the curb or side of the highway when standing upon any grade.

(C) Locking the ignition.

(D) Removing the key from the ignition.

(E) Effectively setting the brake on the vehicle; or

(b) The person is the owner of an unattended motor vehicle parked on a highway in violation of paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(2) It is an affirmative defense to a prosecution of the owner of a vehicle under subsection (1)(b) of this section that the use of the vehicle was not authorized by the owner, either expressly or by implication.

(3) The offense described in this section, failure to secure a motor vehicle, is a Class D traffic violation. [1983 c.338 §676; 1985 c.16 §326; 1987 c.687 §7; 1995 c.383 §81]

**A habit of always removing your keys from the ignition when your car is parked will help you avoid the following situation in which one woman found herself:**

“Several days ago, as I left a meeting at a hotel, I desperately gave myself a personal TSA pat down. I was looking for my keys. They were not in my pockets. A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot.

My husband had scolded me many times for leaving the



From left to right: Councilor Joe Henry, Councilor Brian Jagoe, Mayor Nola Xavier, Councilor Suzanne Roberts, Councilor Joshua Greene

Visit the City of Florence online at [www.ci.florence.or.us](http://www.ci.florence.or.us)

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*PET PEEVES Page 7*

keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them. His theory is that the car will be stolen. As I burst through the door, I came to the terrifying conclusion. His theory was right. The parking lot was empty.

I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen. Then I made the most difficult call of all. "Honey," I stammered (I always call him "honey" in times like these) "I left my keys in the car and it's been stolen."

There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard his voice. "Are you kidding me," he barked. "I dropped you off!!!!!"

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me."

"I will," he replied. "as soon as I convince this cop I didn't steal your car."

**City Calendar**

For more information about meetings (days marked in yellow), contact City Hall at 541-997-3437. For information on events & concerts (days marked in blue), contact the Florence Events Center at 541-997-1994.

**May 2013**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 FEC Committee Meeting	3 New Gallery Shows Open FEC	4
5	6 City Council Meeting 7pm	7 Planning Commission Meeting 7pm	8	9	10 Jazz Kings Salute Judy Garland FEC 7:30 pm	11 Yard Debris Disposal Day 27th St 9 am to 2 pm  Pacific Coast Wind Ensemble FEC 7 pm
12 Presidio Brass FEC 2 pm OC Chamber Orchestra FEC	13 Budget Committee Meetings  FURA 5pm  City 6 pm	14  Planning Commission Meeting 7pm	15	16	17  Rhododendron Days	18  Rhododendron Days
19  Rhododendron Days	20  City Council Meeting 7pm	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Memorial Day Holiday City Hall & FEC Closed	28  Planning Commission Meeting 7pm	29	30 Coastal Fitness Gymnastics FEC 6:30 pm	31  New Gallery Shows Open FEC	