

NEWS TIMES

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SURFRIDER

Keeping a sharp eye on water quality

BY CHRIS EHRMANN
Of the News-Times

NEWPORT — On Saturday mornings, while many people may be sleeping in, Surfrider volunteers are out testing the water quality in the city.

"I'm concerned about the water quality. You know, we have people go out and play in the water — I actually go out and play in the water," said Robert Trusty, a Surfrider water testing volunteer. "It can actually make you sick, it's not healthy at all. Some of it is waste,

some of it is animal (waste) and some of it is waste from a house." Surfrider Foundation volunteers, members of the Blue Water Task Force, get up in the early hours on Saturdays to test outfalls of where storm drainage from the city meets the ocean on

the local beaches, like at the Nye Beach turnaround. They gather water samples to bring back and test for bacteria levels. Charlie Plybon, the Oregon policy manager for the foundation

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VETERANS SERVICE



Lincoln County Veterans Service Officer Devin Whitaker is pictured at the White House in Washington, D.C., where he attended a veterans affairs conference on Nov. 29. (Courtesy photo)

Advocate invited to D.C. forum

BY STEVE CARD
Of the News-Times

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Devin Whitaker, the veterans service officer for Lincoln County, recently attended a White House Veterans Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C.

Whitaker was one of around 200 state and local leaders from around the country who met with federal officials during the conference.

"It was the Administration's effort to gain feedback from state and local leadership about what the needs of the veteran community are throughout the country, what those needs look like," said Whitaker.

Whitaker is a member of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers, and it was his involvement with this organization that resulted in an invitation to attend the conference. The day-long conference, held Nov. 29, was attended by directors of state veterans agencies, as well state representatives and senators. It was held in the Eisenhower Executive Building.

"What I really appreciated about (the conference) was having the confidence that the VA is actively listening to communities," said Whitaker. "I'm well aware that the federal VA is doing a massive thing. The scale that the VA operates in is absolutely enormous."

The VA is attempting to regain the confidence of its constituents, which has suffered in recent years.

"The VA is making certain pivots, winning back their client base," Whitaker said. "Secretary (David) Shulkin (head of the VA) said something to the effect of, 'It's really easy to

WASHINGTON DC on Page A5

EDUCATION GRANT



Matthew Novy stretches to catch a DJI Phantom drone while flying a mission with the Coastal Drone Academy Program in Siletz Bay near Lincoln City on Tuesday, Dec. 12. (Photos by Nathan Howard)

Drone program takes off

BY JOAN BROWN
Of the News-Times

The Lincoln County School District received a \$671,745 grant to further develop Career Technical Education programs.

The money will be split between Waldport High School for its Full Steam Ahead 2.0 program, and Career Tech Charter High School for its drone curriculum that emphasizes coastal habitat management and employability.

The Oregon Department of Education gifted the funds to the local schools as part of a \$10.3 million distribution of career-readiness grants. Across Oregon, 32 other schools received similar funds for programs that help prepare students for jobs after graduation.

For Career Tech, a \$336,286 slice of the pie will help expand a one-

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Dr. Chuck Getter (back), Coastal Drone Academy program director and Crew Leader Michelle Rogers (left) supervise Jason Miranda (front) as he transfers data from a drone flight in Siletz Bay on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

GIFT BASKETS



Judy Ross, a volunteer with The South Lincoln County Children's Christmas Program, wraps a package while organizing gift baskets on Saturday, Dec. 9. (Photo by Nathan Howard)

'Elves' spread cheer

BY JEFFREY DURHAM
For the News-Times

WALDPORT — Despite the lack of reindeer hanging out at the loading dock, a warehouse in Waldport may soon resemble Santa's North Pole workshop — it even has elves.

The South Lincoln County Children's Christmas Program, under the umbrella of South Lincoln Resources, has distributed

thousands of toys, games, clothing and more to children for more than 30 years. Now, under the watchful eye of Chief Elf Raenette Mohni, they are ready for the final push this Saturday to fill orders for more than 80 local families applying for gifts for their children.

The community effort goes hand-in-hand with South Lincoln

GIFT BASKETS on Page A12

HOMELESS CRISIS

Shelter in jeopardy

BY RICK BEASLEY
Of the News-Times

LINCOLN CITY — The fate of the town's warming shelter and scores of homeless residents hangs on the town's chief planner, who recently ordered the operation to cease because of a zoning violation.

The administrative decision by Richard Townsend, director of planning and community

development, gave Lincoln City Warming Shelter until Dec. 16 to appeal the verdict. The non-profit corporation, which operates a daytime resource center and a weather-activated shelter, moved into the remodeled firehouse at 1206 Southeast 48th Place on Nov. 15.

"The warming shelter is not a

HOMELESS CRISIS on Page A5



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DRONES

Continued from page 1

year-old drone program that's already proved valuable to students and beneficiaries alike.

"Nobody on the Oregon coast has done drones in education with regard to NOAA's tremendous investment bringing all the research ships here, and Hatfield's investment in spending \$50 million on a new building aimed at bringing new jobs to the coast and training high school students," said Dr. Chuck Getter, program director and instructor at Career Tech.

"That is a green science initiative. We're trying to be here while that happens and try to be in the middle of the activity,"

Drones can take aerial photos and videos less expensively than an aircraft and a photographer can, and are able to fly lower or over spaces difficult for larger aircraft to manage.

On the coast, drones boast environmental benefits. They can monitor protected and endangered marine species and their habitats, as well as support fisheries stock assessments, effort surveys and habitat assessments. They're also useful for monitoring the effects of climate change, coastal erosion and sea level rise, and recording sea grass and marsh health, states the Career Tech website. There are also many commercial uses for drones.

"The goal here is for these students to learn drones immediately. If they finish this class, and don't drop out, they get to keep a Hubsan X4 (drone). If we get them at 9th grade or 10th grade they have three or four years to finish their commercial drone license, the 107," Getter said. "Our goal for them is to have 100 commercial flights, as much as 50 commercial hours, that makes them very employable and at very high rates around the United States."

The FAA 107 license is required to fly a drone, and one must be 16 or older to take the exam. But until a student has the knowledge and age to pass, they still get to fly under Getter's license. "I can stand next to them and imbue them with



my 107," he said.

Student Kyle Voss, 14, is in his first year in the program, and is taking introduction to coastal drones. He plans on taking the FAA 107 to get his pilot's license when he turns 16.

"We have the date on the calendar, it's his birthday present, we're going to pay for him to take it," Getter said.

From the first class, the goal is for students to learn what it takes to pass the Federal Aviation Administration 107 Commercial Pilot License test. On inclement weather days, the classes stay in to book study or work on drone computer programs. On good weather days, they fly.

Along with flying the drones, students learn to develop the photos and videos they take, and how to make maps—two-dimensional, three-dimensional and topographic. Plus, students gain customer service and business management experience.

Currently, the students are able to map five-acre plots with tremendous precision. The grant money will afford the school equipment with higher pixel quality.

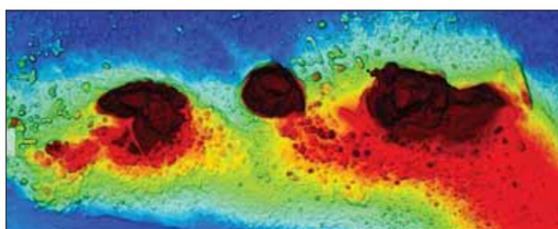
The drone program has four courses: introduction to coastal drones, coastal drone operations, coastal drone missions and coastal drone projects. Getter heads the program, but is quick to say how much he depends on his crew leader, Michelle Rogers.

"She actually started this, it was part of the work-study program. We inherited some wonderful projects."

Rogers said, "I assist Dr. Getter. It's a great job, I can't imagine doing anything else."

Career Tech course work incorporates and performs crew missions on behalf of community partners. A recent crew mission involved taking a video of a section of the Siletz River to monitor Chinook Salmon for the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. Following that, the tribe asked the school to set up a permanent salmon monitoring program. CTSI also agreed to send an expert to the school to teach students about salmon.

Another recent crew mission was for a realtor who wanted pictures of a property. Following a third mission, students attended a public information



Left: Jason Miranda monitors the pre-programmed flight path of his DJI Phantom Drone while flying a mission with the Coastal Drone Academy Program in Siletz Bay near Lincoln City on Tuesday, Dec. 12. (Photo by Nathan Howard)

Above: A topographic map of Lincoln City's popular haystack rock formation, created by the Coastal Drone Academy Program, is seen here as part of a project the team has undertaken to track erosion of the rocks. (Map courtesy of Career Tech High School)

session to present aerial photographs of a property in Lincoln City that the school district purchased earlier this year.

"What I plan to get out of it is to learn to fly the drones efficiently, so when real time opportunities come up I will be able to help them, and maybe earn some cash on the side," said Matthew Novy a 14-year-old student in the class.

Getter said that whenever he's not in class or flying with

the students, he's out meeting people to bring missions to the school. Depending on the mission, the crew is sometimes paid.

In setting up and evolving the drone program, Getter said he interviewed about 50 experts throughout the United States who have committed to coming into the classroom to provide training to the students.

Felicia Shamberger, a senior

at Career Tech, said, "I took this class originally for credit. It's pretty neat, actually, because I figured out that I could get a lot more than I bargained for by taking this class. I'm not quite sure what I'll do."

Because Career Tech has a small student-to-teacher ratio — about 50 students and eight staff, Getter said — when outside experts work with the students they really get to know each other. That way, students can get recommendations and internships from experts who are familiar with them as individuals and drone pilots.

"I came to the crew not knowing what I would get into," said student Ben Noland. "But after being in drone for a bit, I am looking at drone flying as an actual career choice. I'm basically seeing where this class will take me."

Getter said that completing all four courses of the program will give students the ability to earn from \$150 to \$3,000 a day — partly due to the technology and learning opportunities the grant money will provide.

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Holiday Gift Guide

Welcome to Mariner Square in Newport, Oregon — home of Oregon Undersea Gardens, Ripley's Believe It or Not, and The Wax Works.

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EDITORIAL

Investment in career technical education is critical

The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries announced earlier this month that 32 grants totaling \$10.3 million have been awarded to middle schools and high schools across the state to expand career readiness.

In a press release dated Dec. 4, Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian said, "Our state's ability to attract and retain good jobs is fundamentally linked to the availability of a skilled workforce."

Colt Gill, acting state deputy superintendent, said, "I'm very pleased to see the ongoing expansion of hands-on, applied learning to more schools around the state. These programs are good for students, good for businesses and good for local communities."

And it's good news for students in Lincoln County, where two schools will receive significant funding through these grants. Waldport High School's Full Steam Ahead program has been awarded \$335,459. Career Tech Charter High School in Lincoln City will receive \$336,282 for its Coastal Drone Academy.

Full Steam Ahead at Waldport High is aimed at expanding opportunities for students there to learn and practice science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) and apply these skills in career-related projects and internships. This means opportunities like a new art class in digital design, a teen emergency medical responder course and learning building trades by constructing tiny houses.

At Career Tech, students in the Coastal Drone Academy not only learn how to fly drones, they learn how this emerging technology can be used in a wide variety of real life applications. One recent project involved taking a video of a section of the Siletz River to monitor salmon for the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. Students also used drones to shoot aerial photos of a property for a real estate agent, and they did aerial mapping and photography of property recently purchased by the school district in Lincoln City. One Career Tech student said, "I figured out that I could get a lot more than I bargained for by taking this class."

It's a proven fact that these types of hands-on opportunities keep young people engaged and motivate them to complete their education. In fact, the Oregon Department of Education states that graduation rates for students in Oregon career technical education programs are 15.5 percent higher than the statewide average.

That, to us, speaks volumes about the success of these programs. Students who otherwise might flounder in school are finding a purpose for being there, and these opportunities are fostering a desire in them to learn. That's what education should be about.

— STEVE CARD



A gas station and cottages are pictured in Delake in this photo, taken around 1930. Delake was one of seven small communities incorporated in 1965 to become Lincoln City. (Photo courtesy of the Lincoln County Historical Society, LCHS #988 oregoncoasthistory.org and www.facebook.com/newportlincolncountyhistoricalsociety)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DOUBLE THE LOVE FOR OREGON CULTURE

As we celebrate the season of giving, we at the Oregon Cultural Trust hope you will support a cultural organization that makes a difference in your world. Oregon's famous quality of life is due, in large part, to the 1,400-plus arts, heritage and humanities organizations that call our great state home.

That's why the Oregon legislature established the cultural tax credit to reward Oregonians who donate to cultural nonprofit organizations. Just donate to one or more of the libraries, arts organizations or museums you care about, then make a matching gift to the Oregon Cultural Trust at cultural-trust.org by Dec. 31. When you file your 2017 state taxes, the donation you made to the cultural trust will come back to you via the cultural tax credit. That's right, you double the impact of your donation for free.

This year, generous donors lifted Oregon Cultural Trust fundraising to a new high, resulting in a record \$2.94 million in awards to 136 cultural nonprofits last fiscal year.

The awards include a total

of \$735,887 to the cultural trust's five statewide partners (Oregon Arts Commission, Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Humanities, Oregon Historical Society and the State Historic Preservation Office); \$735,887 to 45 county and tribal cultural coalitions — for re-granting in their communities; and \$1,471,774 in competitive cultural development grants to 86 cultural organizations across the state.

In Lincoln County, the cultural trust awarded \$11,551 to the Lincoln County Cultural Coalition, \$24,345 to the Newport Symphony Orchestra, \$13,452 to the Oregon Coast Council of the Arts and \$6,858 to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. The grant to the Lincoln County Cultural Coalition will be used to award more local grants for projects that matter to our community.

The cultural trust envisions an Oregon that champions and invests in creative expression and cultural exchange, driving innovation and opportunity for all. Our mission is to lead Oregon in cultivating, growing and valuing culture as an integral

part of communities.

Please help us double the love for Oregon culture by taking advantage of the cultural tax credit this year. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Niki Price

Vice Chair, Oregon

Cultural Trust

Co-chair, Lincoln County

Cultural Coalition

CONGRESSMAN'S VOTE WEAKENS CONCEALED CARRY LAW

Rep. Kurt Schrader voted in favor of concealed carry reciprocity, allowing someone with a concealed handgun license from any state — even states with weak or no standards — to carry their weapons in all 50 states. What does this mean for Oregonians? According to Everytown for Gun Safety, Oregon's current standards are stronger than:

- 19 states that do not require safety training;
- 25 states that do not allow law enforcement to block people with "red flags;"
- 22 states that do not block all people with stalking convictions;
- 23 states that do not block

many people with violent misdemeanor convictions; and

• 15 states that do not block many dating partners convicted of abuse or under restraining orders.

In the wake of recent mass shootings, one might expect the congressman to support common sense gun safety legislation that an overwhelming majority of voters — including gun owners — favor. Instead, Rep. Schrader voted to weaken current Oregon concealed carry law and to make all of us less safe.

For those who wish to remember the children and teachers who perished in the Sandy Hook massacre, and the victims of this year's many mass shootings, the public is invited to attend a "We Will Not Forget" candlelight vigil, sponsored by Central Coast Ceasefire — Oregon, at Don Davis Park, 840 W Olive St., Newport this Thursday evening from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Cynthia Jacobi

Central Oregon Coast

Chapter of the National

Organization for Women

Central Coast

Ceasefire-Oregon

VIEWS ON THE NEWS — READER FEEDBACK

Each week, readers are being asked — via the News-Times Facebook page — to offer their input on an issue currently in the news. To join that conversation, log on at www.facebook.com/newportnewstimes.

A recent survey by the Newport 60+ Activity Center found that older adults ranked health care as the issue they are the most concerned with. Access to adequate health care and a shortage of doctors on the coast were two areas identified as needing improvement.

Questions: Where does health care fall on the spectrum of issues that are important to you? How do you think health care in Lincoln County stacks up with health care offered elsewhere in Oregon? Do you agree that there is a shortage of medical professionals in this area?

Do you think new hospitals in Lincoln City and Newport will make a difference when it comes to the quality of care offered here?

I travel to Albany to see a board-certified, American-trained general internist, a doctor that specializes in adult medicine. I can't find a similarly well-trained doctor on the coast that is taking new patients. When I can no longer drive over to the valley — I am almost 62 — I may need to consider moving. It took me 11 years to become educated, board-certified, and licensed to practice medicine in my specialty. Yes, I am a retired MD. Complicated, elderly patients need physicians who have seen that, done that, been around the block a time or two. That is what the long, difficult, tedious, exasperating and expensive medical education and residency are all about.

You can have nice, new facilities, but it takes more than that to attract medical doctors. A lot more.

— Carol Schriener

There is a serious shortage of decent doctors here. So bad, after 16 years here, we are thinking of selling and moving to the valley. I don't think new buildings will change anything but would like to hear from the docs.

— Cindy Renner

As a senior citizen, health care is of paramount importance. Now we have to go to Portland or the valley for care that a PA can't handle. As to primary care doctors, there are almost none. Part of our problem is a lack of jobs for doctors' spouses. Another is sub-standard schools and a lack of available shopping, night life etc. Newport has a great and caring population, but it isn't exciting for

young professionals. Hopefully Newport's Vision 2040, together with the new medical facilities, may help chip into the problem. Maybe we could recruit more foreign immigrant doctors.

— Bill Branigan

Lack of access in this area was a motivating factor in choosing to set up my private practice here.

— Dr. Katie Bennett, ND

There is a shortage of insurance companies that cover here.

— Linda Rushing

Editor's note: due to space constraints, we don't guarantee all comments received via our Facebook page will be printed in this space, and some comments may be edited for length. However, all comments and replies on this topic can be viewed online at www.facebook.com/newportnewstimes.

OPINION PAGE POLICY

The News-Times welcomes submission of viewpoints and letters to the editor, however, submission of an opinion piece is not a guarantee that it will be printed in the newspaper. When there are multiple letters on the same topic, and after parties have had ample space to state their opinions on that topic, the editorial board may choose not to continue to run additional letters so as to make space available for other subject matter.

The News-Times will not print statements in letters that contain a personal attack on an individual or attacks on a specific group and will not run letters that promote violence, bigotry and prejudice. Those letters may be edited to remove objectionable content or may not be run at all.

Also, submissions may be edited for length, at the editorial board's discretion, if they are longer than the 300-word limit for letters and 600-word limit for viewpoint pieces.

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