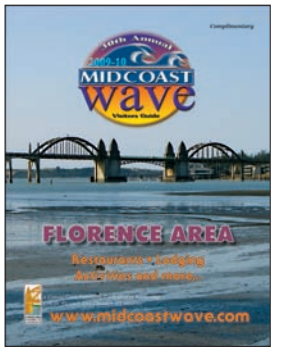


Siuslaw News

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Storms cause digital TV delays

By RYAN CRONK
Siuslaw News

Inclement weather continues to be a factor for West Lane Translator (WLT), a Florence-based nonprofit organization that is attempting to convert its free broadcast of local television channels from analog to digital.

"Most all of the equipment is here now, but the biggest problem is weather," said Larry Bloomfield, WLT board member.

According to Bloomfield, stormy conditions have prevented the installation of new antenna equipment near the top of a 240-foot tower located south of Florence

See **DIGITAL 6A**

Still no ID for remains found on beach

By RYAN CRONK
Siuslaw News

Oregon State Police (OSP) has yet to identify the partial remains of a body found Dec. 13 on a beach in Yachats.

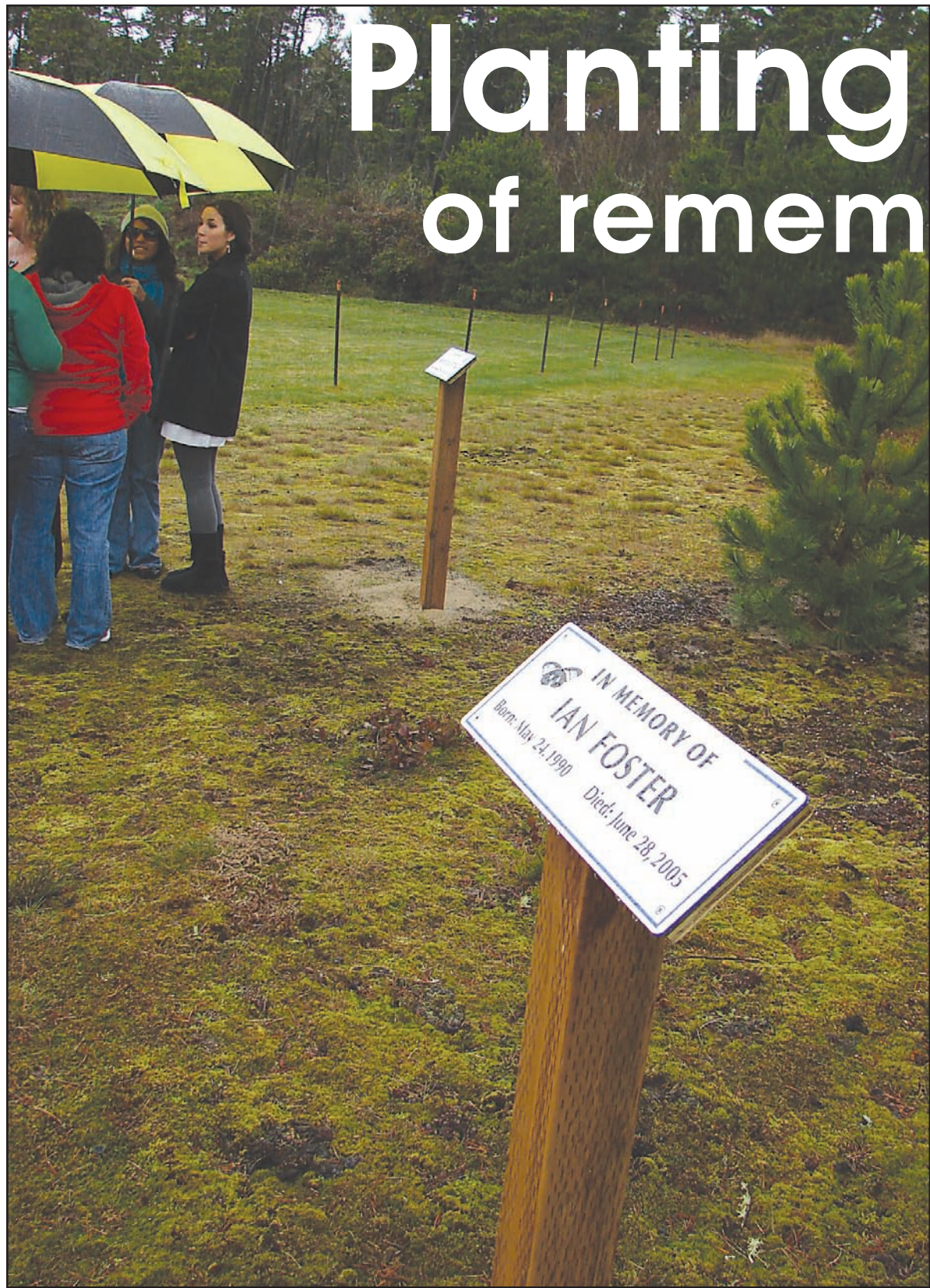
According to Lt. Gregg Hastings, OSP public information officer, the Lincoln County Medical Examiner, who is assisting police in the investigation, sent the remains last month to another lab in the Midwest for further analysis.

Hastings said no other information is available at this time pending positive identification.

Around 3 p.m. Dec. 13, a citizen walking on a Yachats area beach discovered the partial remains of a body and reported the finding to local police.

The remains, which appeared to have washed ashore, were located about one mile north of the site where the body of Bill Bodewig, 62, of Yachats, was found 10 days earlier in the surf line near Smelt Sands State Park.

Bodewig was one of two men reported missing Nov. 18 after not returning from a fishing trip south of Yachats. The second fisherman, Nick Lutz, 23, of Florence, is still missing.



Students, parents and community members await the dedication of memorials, above, for Ian Foster and Montana Oetken Jan. 7 near Siuslaw High School's softball fields. At right, Oetken's plaque and Austrian Pine tree.



Planting trees of remembrance

Deaths of two high school students prompt creation of memorial trees.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RYAN CRONK
Siuslaw News

Siuslaw High School students recently planted memorial trees in hope that the longevity of the foliage will help others remember two local teenagers who died in tragic accidents.

A ceremony dedicating the trees, which were planted near the school's softball fields, was held Thursday.

"Our ultimate goal for this project was to find a place at Siuslaw High School where two trees and two plaques could be placed as remembrance for two very special individuals," said freshman Jade Herbert.

Herbert, 14, and Janessa Mitchell, 14, set out the objective to memorialize fellow high school students Montana Oetken and Ian Foster for their Leadership Class project.

Oetken died July 31, 2009, in a car accident on Highway 101 south of Florence. He was 18 years old. At the age of 15, Foster died from drowning June 28, 2005, at the North Jetty.

"Janessa and I did not get the privilege of ever really knowing either of them, but we do know they were very special members of the community who will be sorely missed," Herbert said.

As incoming freshmen, she said they realized there were no memorials at the school for either Oetken or Foster. This triggered the idea for their class project.

"We wanted to have a place of remembrance for two members of the community who did not get the chance to show this world how much they had to give," Herbert explained.

School administrators fully supported the girls' proposal, and all the materials for the project were donated by local businesses.

See **TREES 6A**

LACK OF RURAL SOCIAL SERVICES FOCUS OF PUBLIC FORUM



KCST Radio News Director Bob Sneddon, right, and State Rep. Arnie Roblan discuss human services Jan. 6 during a public forum hosted by the Florence Area Coordinating Council.

Local agencies report increase in demand for assistance.

STORY AND PHOTO BY SHAWN PENROD
Siuslaw News

More than 30 area residents, including Florence Mayor Phil Brubaker and Fire Chief John Buchanan, attended a public forum at the Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue conference room Jan. 6 to discuss the state of human services in western Lane County with District 9 State Rep. Arnie Roblan.

Hosted by the Florence Area Coordinating Council (FACC) and moderated by KCST Radio's News Director

Bob Sneddon, Roblan fielded questions regarding social services in the area and used the opportunity to advocate for Measures 66 and 67.

"FACC's goal, for this meeting with State Rep. Roblan, was to provide west Lane County Human Service providers and residents an opportunity to ask questions about legislation and to provide Rep. Roblan with information regarding community concerns and needs, as the

next state legislative session begins in February," said Sarah Huff, FACC board president and Florence Police Department public information officer.

Roblan, a Coos Bay Democrat who is in the final year of his third term, said the legislature is preparing for a special session on Feb. 1. The session starts less than one week after the Jan. 26 Special Election that will decide the fate of Ballot Measures 66 and 67, which, if passed, would increase the corporate minimum tax and income taxes on higher income Oregonians.

Supporters of the meas-

ures say the tax revenues are necessary in order to fill an expected \$2 billion shortfall, while opponents contend the measures are unfair and would kill new job creation.

Dwindling funds coupled with an increase in those applying for services was the common theme throughout the morning.

Monica Kosman, an FACC board member representing the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), said efforts to form a community system for mental health have gone nowhere.

"No funds seem to be

See **SERVICES 6A**

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Classifieds	B5	SideShow	B4
Community	A5	Sports	B

Your Weather			
TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Clouds & rain 55 47	Mostly cloudy 55 48	Clouds & rain 54 47	Clouds & rain 53 47



SPORTS — B



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'Twist' King and Social Security team up on marketing campaign

Program changes make it easier to qualify for help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs.

Michael J. Astrue, commissioner of Social Security, and Chubby Checker, Grammy Award winner and rock and roll legend, today launched a new campaign to inform millions of Americans about a new "twist" in the law that makes it easier to qualify for extra help with Medicare prescription drug costs.

The extra help program currently provides assistance to more than nine million senior and disabled Americans — saving them an average of almost \$4,000 a year on their Medicare prescription drug plan costs.

To apply for extra help, there is an easy-to-use online application available online at www.socialsecurity.gov.

"The changes in the Medicare law that take effect this month will allow hundreds of thousands of Americans who are struggling to pay their

prescription drug costs to get extra help during these tough economic times," said Commissioner Astrue. "I am thrilled that Chubby Checker has volunteered to help us spread this important message through a new television, radio, and Internet spot as well as pamphlets and posters."

"Listen up, America! For 50 years, people of all ages and backgrounds have danced the Twist," Chubby Checker said. "Now it's important everyone learn about this new twist in the law. Check it out at www.socialsecurity.gov."

To qualify for extra help, people must meet certain resource and income limits. The new Medicare law eases those requirements in two ways.

First, it eliminates the cash value of life insurance from counting as a resource. Second, it eliminates the assistance

people receive from others to pay for household expenses, such as food, rent, mortgage or utilities, from counting as income.

There also is another important "twist" in the law. The application for extra help can now start the application process for Medicare Savings Programs — state programs that provide help with other Medicare costs. These programs help pay Medicare Part B (medical insurance) premiums.

For some people, the Medicare Savings Programs also pay Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) premiums, if any, and Part A and B deductibles and co-payments.

To learn more about the extra help program and to view the new TV spot featuring Chubby Checker, go to www.socialsecurity.gov/extra-help.

Services from 1A

set aside for communities like Florence," she said.

Roblan said that mental health problems, in general, are misunderstood and "underfunded at every level." As a result, he said people with mental illness are being passed on to the prison system.

"How do we re-allocate those funds, get them out of the prison system and productive citizens again?" Roblan asked, adding he would like to see funds spent on early intervention. "Sadly, I don't see a lot of money going there."

How to meet federal mandates was a concern for Bobbie Spencer, FACC board member and service coordinator for Early Childhood (EC) Cares.

According to Spencer, between 2004 and 2008, the number of children eligible for EC Cares services increased by approximately 13 percent, while funding remains stagnant.

"(Our mandate is) the realistic expectation that children benefit from our services," she said. "At what point are we no longer meeting that mandate?"

Roblan responded that situations like EC Care's is one of the reasons the legislature created Measures 66 and 67.

"Many programs are funded through the state, but are not considered state programs," he said. "Those get cut first before the state programs."

Suzanne Gatch, family self-sufficiency coordinator for the Housing and Community Services Agency of Lane County, said common sense is needed when dealing with human services issues.

"We have a devaluing of social services in this state. People need to realize that what you put in is what you get out."

—DOTTIE GARCIA, GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON CHILD WELFARE RACIAL EQUALITY MEMBER

"We need to apply a multi-faceted approach, which saves money in the long term," she said. "We have to change the way we fund these challenges and approach (the problems) in different ways ... We have all the pieces, we just haven't creatively brought them together."

"I absolutely agree," said Roblan. "We have a built-in attitude in this country ... 'I'm in charge of this and that's all I'm talking about.' It's frustrating."

George Goldstein, a member of the Lane County Roads Advisory Committee, commented that enough is not revealed in the media about the

burden law enforcement takes on when cuts are made to human services.

"Law enforcement ends up having to pick up that slack," agreed Roblan. "They are not trained to deal with mental illness."

Dottie Garcia is member of the Governor's Task Force on Child Welfare Racial Equality and the Western Lane County

Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors. She said the Boys and Girls Club is currently in a funding crisis.

"We have a devaluing of

social services in this state," she said. "People need to realize that what you put in is what you get out."

"My challenge to you is to be our ally. Figure out a way to address (these problems) and affect the bottom line in a positive way."

Roblan assured Garcia and the audience he would "continue to fight to use funds wisely." He closed the forum by encouraging people to fill out their ballots for the Special Election.

"If (Measures 66 and 67) go down, rural Oregon will be hurt the most dramatically," he said.

Trees from 1A



Janessa Mitchell, left, and Jade Herbert thank the victims' families at the dedication.

Woodsman's Native Nursery supplied the trees, an Austrian Pine for Oetken and a Vine Maple for Foster; Treehouse Signs and Decorative Arts created the memorial plaques; and Pro Lumber installed the signs.

Sophomore John Pollard and junior Logan Bliss helped

with planting the trees.

"I thought trees would be a great lasting substance for someone," Herbert said. "It wouldn't be just a sign or something that could rot away."

Mitchell added, "We wanted it to be more like a stand-out thing, not like something

that would be hidden, but something that people could actually see and remember them by for many years to come."

Both students thanked the victims' families at the dedication for allowing them to honor the young lives that were lost.

WEATHER			
DATE	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
Dec. 29	42	33	0.50
Dec. 30	51	39	0.44
Dec. 31	52	41	1.56
Dec. 1	52	46	0.51
Dec. 2	52	44	0.10
Dec. 3	55	45	0.00
Dec. 4	51	45	0.30

Rainfall	Week:	3.51"
Month:	10.52	Year: 68.69

Data Courtesy of Roger Cunningham

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Tuesday: Homemade Meatloaf Sandwich
Soup: Italian Wedding

Wed: Vegetarian Walkabouts
Soup: Potato Bacon

Thurs: Macaroni & Cheese
Soup: Beef Barley

Friday: Chicken Sour Cream Enchiladas
Soup: Clam Chowder

This Week's Friday Night Take-Home Supper:
Baked Ziti
(Place your order by 3:00pm Thursday)

Saturday: Cindy's Homemade Sticky Buns - get 'em while their hot!
Free house coffee w/any pastry purchase.

490 Highway 101, Florence Oregon 97439

Digital from 1A

on Glenada Hill. The equipment is essential for the digital conversion.

"Hopefully it should be within the next week — two weeks at the longest," he said.

WLT previously announced the analog-to-digital transition would take place in December for residents using its "on-air" television services. If all goes well, Bloomfield said the change should happen later this month.

The organization currently broadcasts four stations, ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX, in the form of analog signals by using translators inside a building at the tower's base.

A fifth channel, Oregon Public Broadcasting, is also available.

These older signals, however, will cease shortly after the new equipment is installed and WLT switches to the digital signals.

"Once we get everything up and running, everybody should be pretty happy (with the digital channels)," said Bloomfield, who also is a semi-retired television engineer. "... We will have a lot more entertainment available to the people of the central coast once everything is working."

WLT will announce the date of the conversion. For more information, visit its Web site www.W-L-T.org.

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