

New ScienceWorks head named

Mark DiRienzo
tapped for executive
director position

Staff reports

ScienceWorks board member Mark DiRienzo has been hired as the executive director of the Ashland-based hands-on children's museum.

"On behalf of the Board and myself, we are thrilled. Mark is a perfect fit," Board President Steve Miner said. "We spent 2008 in a state of transition after our five-year veteran executive director moved on last December. Mark has been instrumental to the museum during this transition and now, as our new leader, he will be able to focus on improving and expanding our services to the regional community."

DiRienzo moved to the Rogue Valley in 1998 with his

wife Maddalena. They have two boys, Owen, 9, and Simon, 7, who both grew up visiting the museum. DiRienzo says they will be part of his advisory committee, helping him stay in touch with how the museum serves its younger visitors. During the past 10 years, DiRienzo has helped to establish, improve, and expand a wide range of regional businesses — including those involved with food and wine production, film industry equipment, aerial mapping, and real estate development. DiRienzo steps into these companies to help them improve their operations, marketing, finances and long term focus.

Newly elected Ashland Mayor John Stromberg approved of the choice.

"ScienceWorks' hiring of Mark DiRienzo is a stroke of impeccable timing: the right person, with the right touch, as ScienceWorks converges with Ashland's future as a world cen-

ter for sustainability," Stromberg said.

Prior to arriving in Ashland, DiRienzo spent nine years in New York City working in the financial services industry; his last position in New York was as a Vice President at Marsh, Inc.

"ScienceWorks has built up a solid foundation of services in its first five years," DiRienzo said. "Now is the time for it to become the best small science museum in the country. I see opportunities to earn larger grants, to build an outdoor science learning area, to expand our existing exhibit construction shop, and to broaden our adult, high school, and pre-school educational programs. While 2009 will be a tough year for all non-profits, this is an exciting time for ScienceWorks."

In addition to a Bachelor of Science degree from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, DiRienzo earned an MBA in Marketing and International Business at Fordham

University while living and working in New York City.

ScienceWorks HandOn Museum, opened in 2002, and serves more than 50,000 visitors per year at its interactive, hands-on science center in Ashland. With a fully equipped exhibit design and construction shop, ScienceWorks custom builds unique and exciting exhibits for its visitors and also sells and leases exhibits around the country. ScienceWorks school programs annually reach 15,000 children in nine counties and 22 school districts regionally and include pre-visit and post-visit curriculums. 2009 promises to be an exciting time at ScienceWorks; in addition to expanding into a wide range of educational programs, the museum will unveil several new exhibits including an interactive theatre exhibit, an early childhood exhibit, and an outdoor geology climbing wall. Learn more at www.scienceworksmuseum.org or call 482-6767.

Oregon IN BRIEF

Emergency shelter open tonight

Ashland's emergency shelter will be open tonight as forecasts call for temperatures to drop to about 19 degrees, shelter organizers said.

Check in to the "no frills" shelter at First Presbyterian Church of Ashland, on the corner of Siskiyou Boulevard and Walker Avenue, between 8 and 9 p.m. tonight. Bring your own bedding if you can. Doors are locked at 9 p.m. and the shelter will close at 7:30 a.m. Tuesday. Call 552-2378, the Community Emergency Response Team hotline, or log on to AshlandCERT.org to check if the shelter will be open on additional nights this week. Notices will also be placed at locations throughout town.

2 killed, 8 shot near Portland nightspots

PORTLAND — A gunman opened fire outside an under-21 nightclub in Portland, killing two girls and wounding seven other people before shooting himself in what police say might have been a random act of violence.

Detective Mary Wheat, a police spokeswoman, said the shooting does not appear connected to gangs, and there was no indication the man had a relationship with any of the people he shot in front of The Zone nightclub late Saturday. A stray bullet hit a man outside a neighboring bar.

Police late Sunday identified the shooter as Erik Salvador Ayala, 24. He remained in critical condition at Legacy Emanuel Hospital after shooting himself in the head, Wheat said.

Wheat said investigators are trying to determine the shooter's path to the club, but it does not appear he had been inside it or the nearby bar beforehand. Police seized a car in downtown Portland that is associated with Ayala.

Police have recovered the gun used in the shooting. Wheat