

# Appeal Tribune

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## Private company operating Ranches

### Silver Falls park reservations under new management

**Bill Poehler**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

A private company is taking over management of two group facilities at Silver Falls State Park. Most who rent The Ranches at Silver Falls State Park will notice a price increase, but they will also notice a lot of other changes.

Silver Falls Recreation Company began taking reservations for 2019 on Dec. 1.

The Silver Falls Recreation Company, a private entity, has managed the Silver Falls Lodge & Conference Center since 2013.

Silver Falls Recreation Company general manager Adrienne Blomgren said rental rates will increase, but much of that is due to the park not raising rental rates

on the facility in the past decade.

“Initially, yes there is a large rate increase because we’re making up for 10-plus years of inflation,” Blomgren said. “I do recognize initially what people will perceive as a large rate increase, but really that is trying to catch up with the economy.”

The move of running The Ranches to a third-party allows park rangers to perform other tasks at the park.

“Transitioning to a concessionaire, especially one we already work with at Silver Falls, will make more staff time available for managing other areas of the park,” said Chris Gilliland, Silver Falls park ranger supervisor.

When Silver Falls Recreation Company took over management of the Convention Center six years ago,

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The New Ranch at Silver Falls State Park will be under new, private management.  
SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

## A look at distracted driving law’s 1st year



Oregon stiffened penalties for using a cellphone — or any electronic device — while driving in 2017.

GETTY IMAGES

### Uncertainty if new law is changing driving habits

**Virginia Barreda**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

In the first year of Oregon’s tougher distracted driving law, Salem and Marion County law enforcement has issued dozens more citations and warnings.

From Oct. 1, 2017, to Sept. 30, Salem police officers issued 4.7 percent more citations to distracted drivers — a total of 200 — than in the same period last year.

But with only one year of data, it’s hard to know if the law is changing people’s driving habits, said Lt. Treven Upkes with the Salem Police Department. But the citations and warnings might be helping drivers become more aware of the stiffer law and penalties.

“The usage is changing,” Upkes said, noting he’s seen more people putting their phones on a mount in their cars. If the state sees a dramatic increase in citations for distracted driving and a decrease in crashes,

that’s when he’ll know the law is working.

“It’s such a common sense law,” he said. “I think it will eventually have an impact so long as people are willing to comply and put their phones away.”

The law, which took effect Oct. 1, 2017, states drivers in Oregon can be pulled over for not only texting and talking on their cellphones, which was already illegal, but any other “hands-on” cellphone and electronics use.

Just holding a device while driving can result in a ticket if an officer spots it.

Stemming from the passage of House Bill 2597 during the 2017 Oregon Legislature, the primary goal is to help officers nab reckless drivers and curb dangerous driving behaviors.

Before the Legislature stiffened the law, Oregon had experienced a significant spike in fatal crashes,

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## Carbon cap, education reform top list of priorities for state lawmakers

**Connor Radnovich**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Lawmakers still have a lot of work on their two top legislative priorities — education reform and a greenhouse gas emissions cap — as they return to Salem on Wednesday for committee meetings and discussions ahead of the 2019 legislative session.

Draft bills will not be ready on either issue during the Wednesday to Friday legislative days, but relevant committees will hear the results of studies important for informing the bill-writing process.

Other legislative concepts released by committees

will be discussed, the Senate will take up executive appointments, committees will get updates from state officials, and lawmakers who lost their seats in November will have their last official actions as representatives of the public.

Legislators had hoped to have a draft concept of the so-called “cap-and-invest” bill aimed at reducing carbon emissions ready for December legislative days, but a decision by Gov. Kate Brown and other circumstances have pushed the timeline until January.

For legislative days, the committee is planning to do a conceptual walk-through of their eventual pro-

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## Incumbents joined by one newcomer on city council

**Christena Brooks**  
Special to Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Three returners and one newcomer will be sworn into office by the City of Silverton on Jan. 7.

Eighteen months after being appointed to fill an empty mayor’s seat, Kyle Palmer won the popular election — and the opportunity to keep serving — on Nov. 6 with 58 percent of the vote. Stu Rasmussen, local business owner and a past mayor, came away with 37 percent of the vote.

“I really appreciate the trust the community has given me,” Palmer said. “I’m certain we’ve been able to make some gains in the transparency of city government ... it means a lot to me to win the vote after almost a full term in office.”

Palmer, 52, was a longtime city councilor before being appointed in 2017 to Silverton’s mayoral post after the man elected for the job, Rick Lewis, joined the Oregon State Legislature. Lewis also won the November election and will continue serving in the House of Representatives.

Palmer is a veterinary technician who helps manage Silver Creek Animal Clinic and also holds a variety of part-time animal-related jobs. Raised in Silverton, he’s been a prolific volunteer on sports teams, civic committees and charity groups. He ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 2010 and 2012 before being appointed in 2017.

With November’s win, he’ll now serve through 2020.

The three council seats up for grabs in the November election went to incumbents Jim Sears and Dana Smith and newcomer Crystal Neideigh. These are four-year volunteer positions, ending in 2022.

Twenty-one percent of the vote went to Sears, 17 percent to Smith, and 15 percent to Neideigh. Leigh Harrod finished fourth, with 12 percent.

**Crystal Neideigh**

New to the council, Neideigh, 42, is a Silverton native who works as a physician’s assistant in Kaiser Permanente’s urgent care center in Salem.

Under her maiden name, Beahm, she was a student-athlete at Silverton High School, part of its first occupational medicine class, and, later, a graduate of Alderson Broaddus University in West Virginia.

At the time, the college offered a four-year, year-round physician’s assistant program.

One thousand students applied for 100 slots; that group was deliberately halved after the first year.

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**Harcourts NW Oregon Realty Group**

### November Top Listing Agents

 #1 – Valerie Boen 503-871-1667 <i>Tranquil Setting!</i> \$645,000 ~ MLS#742049	
 #2 – Rosie Wilgus 503-409-8779 <i>Master on Main!</i> \$319,000 ~ MLS#741249	
 #3 – Donna Paradis 503-851-0998 <i>Sweet Seclusion!</i> \$399,000 ~ MLS#740814	

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