TIMBER

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that all key voices will be heard in the process, including our vital small-woodland owners and Oregon's federally recognized tribes. All sides have agreed this process of improving the Oregon Forest Practices Act will be informed by science and driven by science."

Present in Brown's ceremonial office to make the announcement with her was Bob Van Dyke of the Wild Salmon Center, representing the environmentalists, and Greg Mill, representing the forestry coalition.

"This is a shared recognition of the diverse benefits Oregon's forests provide and the need for more meaningful dialogue around forest issues across the state," Miller said.

According to Brown, the agreement between the two sides started when CEOs from the state's largest timber companies approached her to find a way out of the embroiled dialogue surrounding timber practices and conservation. A series of conversations followed over the past four weeks that led to the agreement.

For Van Dyke, the agreement culminates more than 20 years of bickering and lawsuits between timber interests and environmentalists over what takes place in Oregon's forests while Washington state led the way in conserving endangered species and protecting drinking water.

"While the Wild Salmon Center and many of the signers of this MOU today have been part of that 20 years of tension, the results have been a lack of trust, gridlock on forest policy and growing public demand for broader reform of laws," Van Dyke said. "Today we're starting a new approach."

From a 10,000-foot level, the deal seems to favor environmental interests, but Miller believes that isn't so.

According to Miller, the timber industry in Oregon is proud of its environmental stewardship and are equally interested in protecting water from aerial spraying of herbicides and using technology to let local residents know in real time of spraying.

"This is going to be a best-in-class practice for real-time notification, increasing the distance for the notifications, and having the spray records available within 24 hours," Miller said. "Those kinds of things are difficult to develop in terms of execution on the ground...I think that's the thing that got us over the hurdle."

The agreement cites moving forward with a science-based approach, but often the two sides have offered different science to back their positions. Miller and Van Dyke agreed while there still will be differences of opinion, they're committed to using science as a means to engage and work together on solutions.

Brown said moving forward, the next step would be to shepherd through the Legislature new rules and buffers on aerial spraying in forests and notification for local residents. After that, both sides will update the Oregon Forest Practices Act and create the statewide habitat conservation plan.

Photo by Claire Withycombe/Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, left, announces the "historic" deal between logging and environmental interests Monday. She called the agreement "a genuine act of good faith."

INTERNET

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on Friday declaring a state of emergency in Umatilla, Union and Wallowa counties due to the flooding.

Floodwaters damaged property and cut off phone service and internet for some residents and businesses in Union County. The Spectrum outage began Friday night and persists, with little insight from the company about when service will be restored.

Bret Picciolo, Spectrum's spokesperson for the northwest region, told The Observer Sunday the internet outage was due to damage to a third-party fiber optic line. Picciolo said Monday Spectrum has not been able to restore service because crews cannot access equipment in areas under an evacuation. The outage is affecting areas in Union and Baker counties.

The company has refused to say how many customers are without service.

"I'm unable to share customer numbers for competitive reasons," Picciolo said in a follow-up email.

An unofficial source within the company said at least 3,000 local customers reported their internet was down. Some residents said Spectrum will give credit for the time customers are without service. Picciolo said Spectrum is working with customers individually.

Law enforcement, Oregon Department of Transportation, the city of La Grande and Union County remain connected because they use other companies for their internet service. Other locations, including The Observer's office and various local restaurants and businesses are without primary internet service.

The loss of internet service has been a source of frustration for many, but a small boom for some who are stepping forward to help those who have lost their connection to the outside world. They include Spring Roberts, the owner of Le Bebe Cakes Bakery & Coffee House, La Grande.

Le Bebe normally is closed Mondays during the winter, but Roberts decided to open it Monday to provide those who need it with Wi-Fi, which her bakery and coffee shop offers.

"I put it on Facebook on Sunday and received many likes," Roberts said.

Her shop was packed with people using its Wi-Fi service during the time it was open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Le Bebe had many new customers Monday as a result, including a number of accountants.

Colleen MacLeod, who owns Joe Beans coffee shop in downtown La Grande with her husband, Al, said her business was up Monday thanks in part to new customers who were coming in to use the business' Wi-Fi.

Activity also jumped at La Grande's Cook Memorial Library and Pierce Library at Eastern Oregon University because of the internet outage.

Kip Roberson, director of Cook Memorial Library, La Grande, said 859 people came to the library Saturday, up from 686 the previous Saturday. Roberson was among those who came to the library Saturday because, like many, he could not access the internet at home. He said the library's Wi-Fi is available to everyone, not just those who have library cards. The Network for Education and Research in Oregon, a nonprofit consortium, provides the library's internet service.

Roberson noted the library also has internet hotspots people can check out. These small devices pick up internet signals anywhere there is cell service. Cook Memorial Library has 10 hot spots, all of which are now checked out.

Karen Clay, director of Pierce Library, said the number of EOU students using the library over the weekend was up. She believes it was because of students coming to use the Wi-Fi service.

"We saw a number of people who were not regulars," Clay said.

Many likely were students, Clay said, who live in La Grande and take EOU classes online.

Brent Clapp, the owner of La GrandeAlive, an internet television station, said the outage did not affect his company because he receives his service from Eastern Oregon Net Inc., which he said has been providing excellent service. Clapp also said the many people who watch La GrandeAlive programming have not been affected by the outage. Clapp said he believes this is because many people watch La GrandeAlive programming on smartphones, which the lack of service has not affected as much as other devices.

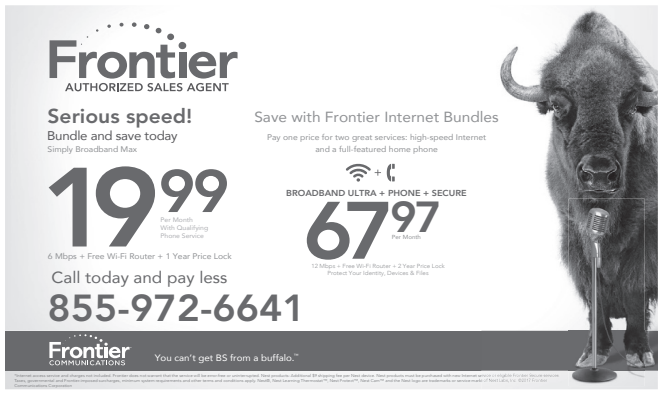
The outage also has not put the pinch on Frontier Communications, which provides landline phone and internet service, according to a company spokesperson. He said the fiber optic cable Frontier receives its signals from in the Grande Ronde Valley may have followed a route not affected by the flooding.

Kyle Carpenter, La Grande public work's director, reported most of the city's systems to deal with the high water performed well and sustained little damage.

"Some new areas of vulnerability were identified," he said, "and staff have begun working on ways to mediate them in the future."

The flooding in La Grande damaged C Avenue from Sunset Avenue to the end of the road to the west, L Avenue from Cedar to Second Street, and the intersection of Fourth Street and N Avenue. The city created a trench at L Avenue from Cedar to Second to keep water away from homes and has already scheduled the area for repairs in the spring. The flooding sent a geyser of water 3-feet tall that blew off the manhole cover at Fourth Street and N Avenue, according to Carpenter.

Additionally, the city's wastewater treatment plant experienced an overflow. Carpenter reported the plant was designed to hold about 11 million gallons of water per day, but during the flooding about 17.5 million gallons flowed in. However, he stated, the plant had a system in place to deal with the overflow and remains operational.



COUNTY

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sending to the Legislature. The commissioners voted to wait to send the letter so they could address any amendments to SB 1530 and a second cap-and-trade bill, House Bill 4159.

Anderes also asked for the removal of the emergency clause from SB 1530. He said he was not arguing on whether Catastrophic Climate Change is an emergency but would argue that rushed decisions without an opportunity for the people of Oregon to speak is not how "our great state should do business."

In his third point, Anderes said he opposes the "carve outs" in SB 1530. These are businesses that would not be subject to carbon emission restrictions while others would be. Anderes said carve outs reflect weak legislation and give the illusion of politics rather than good policy.

Anderes also spoke briefly at Thursday's rally against cap and trade, again expressing his opposition to the legislation as a private citizen.

Hundreds of semis, dump trucks and other large vehicles flooded Salem to oppose the greenhouse gas reduction plan Thursday. Anderes described the noise from the big vehicles as deafening.

"It was incredible," Anderes said. "My ears are still ringing from the air horns."