

# For rural Internet providers, redundancy is necessary

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Internet access has become indispensable in many American homes, making potential outages a point of consternation.

While lapses in Internet services are more common in rural areas, local Internet service providers say they have the safety nets needed to avoid long-term local problems.

Rural areas have made headlines in recent years for Internet outages that wipe out Web access for whole communities.

According to the Associated Press, vandals in Northern Arizona intentionally cut a fiber optic cable last month, shutting down Internet service for nearby residents for up to 15 hours. Two years ago, residents of the San Juan Islands off the coast of Washington state were left without Internet for 10 days when an underwater cable broke.

What many of these communities shared is a lack of redundancy with their fiber optic lines — there was just one cable going in and one

cable going out.

A lack of redundancy struck Pendleton in 2011, when a CenturyLink technician accidentally disconnected Eastern Oregon Telecom's fiber optic cable. The company's 1,000 customers in Pendleton were without Internet and phone service for more than six hours.

Joe Franell, the CEO of EOT, said the incident convinced the company to invest in several types of redundancy.

The company now has back-up bandwidth, access to a second cable that comes from Seattle in addition to their regular line from Portland, and another provider they can buy Internet services from.

Due to Seattle and Portland's proximity to the Cascadia fault, Franell said Telecom is also looking into access to a third source of fiber from the Salt Lake City area.

All of these efforts from EOT are being made to significantly reduce the chance of Internet service interruption for the company's customers, which number between 5,000 and 10,000 across Umatilla

and Morrow counties.

Wtechlink is another top local Internet service provider, with about 2,500 accounts in Umatilla County. Co-owner Jordan McDonald said Wtechlink also has redundancies in its Internet network.

Unlike other utilities, McDonald said the impetus to create that infrastructure is on the providers.

Franell said those redundancies aren't cheap, especially for providers in rural areas. With a proximity to two interstate highways, Franell said it can be cheaper for communities such as Hermiston, which are easily connected to major lines.

Still, that's not to say Internet outages are a thing of the past.

While the lines going in and out of town have reliable backups, McDonald said most customers don't invest in redundancies for the cables directly connected to their home, which can lead to small-scale, more personal outages.

Contact Antonio Sierra at [asierra@eastoregonian.com](mailto:asierra@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0836.

## HERMISTON

### Scammers claim to be police chief

East Oregonian

A Hermiston couple saved themselves a few hundred dollars after they realized a call from the "police chief" was actually a scam.

Hermiston Police Department's actual police chief Jason Edmiston said in an email that the couple, who wish to remain anonymous, told him Thursday that they had spoken on the phone with a man claiming to be Edmiston.

According to a press release from Hermiston's crime prevention officer Erica Sandoval, the couple was targeted by a scam.

First they received a call from a man who introduced himself as Walter Simmons of the Federal Bureau of Investigations. He told them they had won more than \$600,000 from Publisher's Clearinghouse Sweepstakes but the money had been stolen while en route to them. Now the money had been recovered at the Mexican border, he said, and the couple would be contacted soon by Edmiston with the information of how to pay the more than \$900 in fees needed to get the money released from Mexico.

"Later in the evening, the reporting resident received not only a call from someone claiming to be a Hermiston police officer but they also received an additional call from the 'chief' to give additional information about getting their 'winnings,'" Sandoval wrote. "The residents were vigilant and recognized the scam, stopping their involvement."

She said spoofing technology makes it easy for scammers to fool caller ID into displaying the correct number of the Hermiston Police Department, lending legitimacy to the call.

She urged residents to be vigilant and to educate friends and neighbors about the scam as well. She said Hermiston Police Department would never act as a representative of Publisher's Clearinghouse or facilitate the transfer of money unless it was something seized by the department in the line of duty.

If anyone has questions or concerns that they are being targeted by a similar scam, they can contact Sandoval at 541-667-5112 or [esandoval@hermiston.or.us](mailto:esandoval@hermiston.or.us).

## BRIEFLY

### Music festival set for Tuesday

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District's annual music festival will be Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Hermiston High School main gym.

The evening will include performances from the bands and choirs of Hermiston High School, Sandstone Middle School and Armand Larive Middle School.

The night will end with a joint performance of "America the Beautiful" played and sung by more than 500 students in grades 6 through 12.

### Ribbons available for police appreciation

HERMISTON — Blue ribbons are available around Hermiston for residents who want to show their appreciation to law enforcement.

The ribbons are part of an annual tradition celebrating National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week May 10-16. But Hermiston Police Department chaplain Terry Cummings said some people choose to display the ribbons for more than just the designated week.

The ribbons are provided for free by Concerns of Police Survivors, or COPS, an organization for the family members of officers killed in the line of duty. They started as something to tie around a car antenna, but since many newer cars don't have an antenna to tie around Cummings said people have taken to tying them around a mirror, closing them in a back window or finding somewhere else to display them.

He said the gesture brightens the day of police officers and sheriff's deputies who are often met with hostility in the course of their jobs.

The ribbons can be picked up at the Hermiston police station, city hall, Banner



Hermiston High School music teacher Paul Dunsmoor directs the Hermiston High School band during the district wide music concert last year. This year's district music festival will be held Tuesday, 7 p.m. at Hermiston High School.

Bank, Hermiston Drug, Ace Hardware and Washington Mutual. Cummings said a variety of local churches will also be handing them out to members of their congregations.

Last year more than 1,100 ribbons were distributed and Cummings said he hopes to beat that mark this year.

### Business tips for working with the government

PENDLETON — A workshop offering businesses advice on how to make money by selling items and services to the government is planned.

The free session introduces participants

to who the Federal Public Land Agencies are, offers advice and tools for growing their business by selling to the government and give the opportunity to network with representatives from different state and federal agencies.

The event is Monday, April 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at ST 214 at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

In addition, 30-minute one-on-one counseling sessions with a procurement counselor are available following the training.

For more information, contact; Sue LaCroix at [slacroix@gcap.org](mailto:slacroix@gcap.org) or 541-

786-7344. To register, visit [www.ptassist.com](http://www.ptassist.com).

### Kids make candles in new workshop

PENDLETON — Turn any space into a medieval castle with the old-time practice of candle making.

In the Ye Olde Candlemaking Workshop, kids ages 8-12 will dip, pour and wrap warmed wax to create classic pieces of functional art, adding colorful dyes and scents to put an updated twist on this traditional handicraft just in time for Mother's Day.

The class, taught by Ian Shadle, will be held on three consecutive Saturdays — April 25 through May 9, from 1-2 p.m. at the Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton. The cost is \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members plus a \$7 materials fee.

Registration is requested; call 541-278-9201 or stop

by the arts center.

### Teacher job fair coming to town

HERMISTON — Prospective teachers from Eastern Oregon will have a golden opportunity for networking on April 11 at the Northeast Oregon Educator Job Fair.

Building principals and other staff from districts in northeastern Oregon and the InterMountain ESD will be on hand to meet one on one with interested educators.

Participants' contact information will also be available to the participating school districts through 2016.

The conference is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 11 at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. Attendance is free but participants are asked to sign up ahead of time at <https://hermiston.tedk12.com/>

## Join us for the Relay For Life Of Pendleton

June 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 6pm-7am  
Sunridge Middle School Track  
[www.relayforlife.org/pendletonor](http://www.relayforlife.org/pendletonor)

Sandy Morris, Event Lead  
541-969-1712  
[smorrissgee@charter.net](mailto:smorrissgee@charter.net)  
Heather Farnworth, ACS Staff  
509-783-1574, [heather.farnworth@cancer.org](mailto:heather.farnworth@cancer.org)

## We want YOU! To join in the fight against cancer!

**Join us and Sign up a Team!**  
Looking for a way to give back that is both fun and rewarding? Join us and sign up a team to fundraise and make a difference in your community!

**Businesses!**  
Become a Sponsor for the 2015 Relay For Life event and receive recognition for helping in the fight against cancer!

**The American Cancer Society Relay For Life** is an overnight event that raises funds and awareness to fight cancer. Because cancer never sleeps, dedicated teams of friends, families, and coworkers commit to keeping at least one member on a track or path at all times.

Make a donation to honor or remember a loved one or friend. All proceeds go directly to **The American Cancer Society** to help save lives and create a world with less cancer and more birthdays by helping people stay well and get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.

**Did You Know...**  
From 1991 to 2010, the combined cancer rate for men and women **DECLINED** 20%, and more than 1.3 Million cancer deaths were averted due to this decline.

**How your Donations Help!**  
**\$20** can help connect 20 people to clinical trials through our clinical trials matching service, which currently lists 6,000 ongoing studies.  
**\$50** can help provide 4 rides to or from treatment for a cancer patient. Through our **Road To Recovery®** program, **The American Cancer Society** volunteer drivers provided nearly 380,000 free rides to and from treatment for cancer patients last year.  
**\$1,000** can help support an early career researcher turning to **The American Cancer Society** to investigate cancer, its causes or how to help patients cope with the effects of the disease and its treatments.

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