

## GUNS: Private sales have increasingly gone online

Continued from 1A

other social connections than at gun shows or flea markets.

The president's action "has potential impact — the degree or the type, it's hard to predict," said University of Pennsylvania professor Susan Sorenson, who studies violence prevention. "And it's really important to acknowledge that we can't just have one change and expect that to change things wildly."

The president also called for the hiring of more than 230 additional examiners and other staff to process the millions of background checks received annually.

Yet even with added manpower, there's no way to completely eliminate human error like the clerical mistake that allowed Dylann Roof, the young man charged in the Charleston, South Carolina, church massacre, to buy a weapon even though he should have been disqualified because of a drug arrest.

The White House did not set a threshold for the number of guns someone has to sell to be covered by the licensing and background check requirement. But it warned that people can be charged with a federal crime punishable by up to five years in prison for selling as few as two firearms when there is evidence they are running a business, such as selling weapons in their original packaging and for a profit.

Theresa O'Rourke of Downers Grove, Illinois, said

she hopes Obama's action will deter illegal transactions that have deadly consequences. Her best friend, 36-year-old Jitka Vesel, was killed in 2011 by a stalker who had illegally purchased a gun from a seller he met through Armslist.com, an online gun site. The seller was sentenced to prison after pleading guilty to an illegal sale.

"People do it now because it's easy," O'Rourke said. "But if we say upfront that if you break the law and you are going to go to prison, most people are going to take a step back and say, 'You know what? It's not worth it.'"

She and other gun control advocates said too many individuals make a living selling guns without obtaining the \$150 license and following requirements to conduct background checks, keep detailed sales records and face federal inspections.

Private sales — often carried out in person after Internet advertisements connect sellers and buyers — can be exploited by convicted felons, domestic abusers and others who cannot pass a background check, critics say.

Private sales have increasingly gone online over the last decade, but precise data is hard to pin down. GunBroker.com, which calls itself the world's largest online auction site for firearms and accessories, says it has grown every year since 1999. It now boasts 750,000 active listings on

any given day. Armslist claims 7 million site visits per month.

One in 20 guns advertised through Armslist last year was linked to an unlicensed seller who had listed at least 25 guns, according to recent research published by Everytown for Gun Safety, a gun control group backed by former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. A 2013 investigation by that group's predecessor, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, found that more than 3 percent of potential buyers on Armslist had criminal records that would bar them from owning firearms.

Armslist, which was founded after Craigslist banned gun ads in 2007, says in a disclaimer on its website that it doesn't get involved in transactions and that buyers and sellers must follow all state and federal gun laws. Still, guns sold through ads on the site have been linked to some fatal shootings.

A lawsuit filed in October alleges that an abusive husband purchased a handgun through an Armslist ad and used it to kill his wife and two other women at a salon in suburban Milwaukee in 2012. The man, Radcliffe Haughton, was able to buy the gun even though a judge had issued a restraining order days earlier that should have made him ineligible. He went online to say he was "looking to buy ASAP," and made the purchase in the parking lot of a McDonald's, the lawsuit says.

Armslist owner Jonathan

Gibbon called Obama's moves "well-meaning but ultimately ineffective." He said many private sellers want to conduct background checks but are discouraged by a "costly and burdensome" system that requires them to go to licensed dealers and pay fees.

"Further scrutiny of law-abiding people will not stop criminals," he said.

Everytown president John Feinblatt called the clarification a welcome if modest step.

"It puts them on notice and, if accompanied with aggressive enforcement, has the potential to narrow the number of unlicensed dealers who are selling without background checks," he said. "But even so, millions of guns will be sold online without background checks unless Congress or states pass universal background checks, as 18 states have done on their own."

The Obama administration appeared determined to tamp down expectations, with Obama saying he realizes his actions won't stop all gun violence.

"Obviously the president is not able to take strong measures because that's going to require Congress to act," said Philip Cook, a Duke University professor. "But if he is able to disrupt a relative handful of sales and save a handful of lives, that may well be worthwhile."

He added: "What we're looking at here is a low-cost intervention with the possibility of some payoff."

## TRANSPORTATION: State has \$167M in available bonding capacity

Continued from 1A

that's shifted since the (2015 legislative) session."

Davis said an example of a project that might qualify for a federal freight grant is the Oregon Department of Transportation plan to widen Interstate Highway 5 to three lanes through Portland's Rose Quarter and improve highway ramps. He is waiting for ODOT to produce a list of eligible projects. Davis expects to unveil the bill by early to mid-January so that people can critique it and offer suggestions for improvement.

Any transportation funding bill faces long odds in the short 2016 legislative session, which starts in February. Gov. Kate Brown, Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, have all said it is unlikely they will pass a transportation bill this year. Davis could also run into opposition because his proposal would eliminate part of the state's low-carbon fuel program, although he is discussing the plan with environmental groups.

Davis was a member of the bi-partisan group of state lawmakers that Gov. Kate Brown dubbed the "gang of eight," who met secretly toward the end of the 2015 legislative session to negotiate a transportation funding package. The legislation lost support after the Oregon Department of Transportation revealed the plan would

not achieve the promised reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which was a sticking point for environmentalists because the deal would have repealed the state's low-carbon fuel standard. Republicans had refused to support any increase in the state gas tax, a crucial funding source for transportation, while the fuel standard remained in place.

Davis' proposal would modify the low-carbon fuel standard, so that fuel producers and importers would only be required to reduce greenhouse gases by blending biofuels with lower carbon content into gasoline and diesel. Fuel companies would no longer have to purchase carbon credits generated by electric vehicle charging stations and other businesses in order to meet the fuel standard. The cost of the carbon credits fueled much of the opposition to the standard, Davis said.

The Oregon Environmental Commission voted in December to delay enforcement of the fuel standard until 2018, and commissioners said they wanted frequent updates on the supply and cost of alternative fuels and carbon credits.

Oregon's low-carbon fuel standard is supposed to reduce emissions from transportation fuels by 10 percent over a decade. So far, carbon credits sales under a similar program in California have increased the cost of gas by approximately 1 cent per gallon, Oregon Depart-

ment of Environmental Quality Air Quality Planner Cory-Ann Wind told the commission in December. At this point, California has reduced carbon emissions from fuels by 1 percent.

Oregon has \$167 million in available bonding capacity from the general fund during the current two-year budget cycle, Davis said. That bonding capacity remained unallocated at the end of the 2015 legislative session, when lawmakers decided against using it to overhaul the Capitol.

The Capitol project, which would upgrade the 1938 building to withstand earthquakes, is a top priority for Courtney. However, Courtney's plan ran into opposition from both parties after the Willamette Week newspaper reported that Courtney had not informed other lawmakers that the price tag increased to \$337

million and the project included extras such as an expanded cafe and gathering place for lobbyists, along with a 3,000-square-foot "legislative lounge."

Courtney was unavailable to comment Monday on Davis' proposed use of the bonding capacity.

"We've got the capacity right now, at very, very low interest rates that will only go up," Davis said.

Finally, Davis said he wants to increase oversight of ODOT's spending. His legislation will create a special legislative committee to review the agency's spending and call for "some pretty robust audits."

*The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group. Hillary Borrud can be reached at 503-364-4431 or hborrud@eomediagroup.com.*

## PENDLETON: Neil Brown elected city council president

Continued from 1A

meet them, officials can either provide an explanation for the shortfall and a recovery plan or request the benchmarks be revised to a lower expectation.

With operations previously hindered by the FAA's slowness in creating and administering rules for the drone industry, Councilor Tom Young expressed concern over how the range would meet the benchmarks.

"We haven't been hitting promises that we've had for the past 18 months, so what has changed that now all of a sudden we can hit these metrics?" he said.

Steve Chrisman, airport manager and economic development director, said the FAA is starting to grant the test ranges more authorities in testing drones and the path toward testing has "rounded a corner."

"If we can't put people in the air, it's all for naught," he said.

One way the range could meet SOAR Oregon's benchmarks is through a

signed agreement with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to do UAS training at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport.

Chrisman said the U.S. Department of Energy has granted funding for the training, with actual operations expected to start over the next couple of months as the laboratory waits for various authorizations from the FAA.

Chrisman said he prefers the range manager position be privately contracted rather than a city-hired employee given the length of the grant. "A handful of folks" have already approached the city interested in the position, Chrisman said.

The council also unanimously elected Councilor Neil Brown as council president, a role he served last year. As the council president, Brown will conduct city council meetings if Mayor Phillip Houk is absent.

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

### BRIEFLY

#### State now taking applications for recreational pot licenses

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon residents looking to enter the recreational marijuana business can now apply for a license.

The license paperwork became available Monday morning at 6 a.m. At noon, 70 people had submitted the forms, *The Oregonian* reports. Of those, 36 applications are from producers, 18 for retail locations and eight for processors and eight for wholesalers.

Oregon has no limit to the number of grower or retailer licenses it will issue. A report by the liquor control commission estimates the state will issue 850 recreational marijuana licenses by the end of 2017.

Amy Margolis, a lawyer with Emerge Law Group, which represents cannabis businesses, said she expects her firm to file about 30 applications this week.

The forms require everything from security plans to electrical and water use information.

Commission Executive Director Steve Marks said regulators are not likely to approve any applications until after the Oregon Legislature meets next month.

#### Oregon is top relocation state in America

SALEM (AP) — For the third year in a row, more people are moving to Oregon than anywhere else in the nation.

*The Statesman Journal* reports that a study by United Van Lines found that 69 percent of moves to and from Oregon in 2015 were inbound. The state has increased inbound migration by 10 percent over the past six years.

According to the study, 19 percent of people moving to Oregon say they did so for retirement. Another 19 percent say they came for the lifestyle.

Other popular states for those looking to move were South Carolina, Vermont, Idaho, North Carolina, Florida, Nevada, Texas, Washington and Washington, D.C.

## Umatilla Electric Scholarship Program

Got Scholarships?



### Umatilla Electric is offering the following scholarships for the 2016-17 school year:

**Academic Scholarships** - 12 \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who receive electric service from UEC at their primary residence, and are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college. Apply online at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov) by **March 1, 2016**.


**Electrical Engineering Scholarship** - a \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply by **March 1, 2016** at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov)

**Lineman Scholarship** - a \$2,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member who receive electric service from UEC at their primary residence, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. Apply by **March 1, 2016**. Go to [www.umatillaelectric.com](http://www.umatillaelectric.com) to download the application.

UEC wants to help make college accessible to our young members. We hope you apply.

For more information about UEC's scholarship program, visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or online at [www.umatillaelectric.com](http://www.umatillaelectric.com). You can also call us for more information at 541-564-6414 or the Oregon Student Access and Completion (OSAC) at 1-800-452-8807.


## STUDENT OF THE WEEK



**Ian Meakins**  
IRRIGON HIGH SCHOOL

*Ian Meakins is a senior at Irrigon Jr/Sr High School who will graduate in June. He currently has a 3.81 GPA and is enrolled in Jazz Band, Honors English, Pre-Calculus, Government/Economics, Computer Science, and Careers. Ian is a member of pep band and also involved in 4-H. He will graduate with close to 30 college credits that he earned by taking advanced and honors courses in math, language arts, and computer science. Ian has taken karate lessons for 8 years and currently holds a black-belt. He plans to enlist in the Air Force after graduation and hopes to receive training in avionics or cyber security. Ian lives at home with his mother, father, and younger brother.*

**Proudly Sponsored by**



**AMERICAN WEST**  
Properties - Hermiston, LLC

**PATTI BURRES**, Broker  
541-571-5888 • [pattiburres@eoni.com](mailto:pattiburres@eoni.com)  
[www.amwestprop.com](http://www.amwestprop.com)