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**FEDS PAUSE
BEAVER
KILLINGS**
NORTHWEST/2A



**17 DEAD IN
CALIFORNIA
MUDSLIDES**
NATION/6A

EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11, 2018

142nd Year, No. 61

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Lineman C.J. Christensen with Eastern Oregon Telecom works on moving an internet cable line on Wednesday in Umatilla.

PENDLETON



Neil Brown

Neil Brown won't seek third term

Three other incumbents have filed for re-election

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Pendleton City Council president Neil Brown said Wednesday he won't seek re-election in 2018.

"I think two terms is appropriate," Brown said. "I think we need some new blood."

He said now that he is semi-retired and downsizing his business, NWB Sales, he is dedicating more of his time toward traveling.

Brown encouraged residents of Ward 3, which includes McKay Creek, Southgate and Tutuilla Road, to jump into the race to replace him. Brown said he has talked with some people about the prospect, but he's "shooting blanks" so far.

The other three council incumbents whose seats are up for election — John Brenne in Ward 1, McKennon McDonald in Ward 2 and Jake Cambier in an at-large position — have filed their campaign paperwork, according to city recorder Andrea Denton.

No challengers have yet filed. The deadline is March 6.

Brown was a former Pendleton planning commissioner who ran unopposed to win his first term in 2010, turning in his filing paperwork just minutes before the deadline. Brown did not face any opposition in 2014 either, easily winning a second term.

While Brown is leaving, the council's newest incumbent is

"I think we need some new blood."

— Neil Brown,
Pendleton City Council president

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HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ON THE 'FRONTIER'

Trump executive orders aim to bring broadband to rural America

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
and GEORGE PLAVEN
EO Media Group

During his speech Monday at the American Farm Bureau Federation convention in Nashville, Tenn., President Donald Trump signed two executive orders aimed at improving broadband internet access to rural America.

The first order is aimed at easing the process to put private broadband infrastructure on federal property, and the second is a memorandum directing the Interior Department to work on a plan to increase access to their facilities for broadband deployment.

More than 34 million Americans are without access to affordable, reliable broadband service, said Zachary Cikanek, a national spokesman for Connect Americans Now, a coalition launched Jan. 2. Of those, 23.4 million live in rural communities.

"This gap is something we think we can bridge in the next five years if we roll out the right combination of technology," Cikanek said.

Roughly 16 percent of Oregon's population lives in rural areas, according to the USDA Economic Research Service.

Digital divide

Joe Franell, CEO of Eastern Oregon Telecom, said he was pleased at the prospect of being able



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

President Donald Trump, surrounded by politicians, holds up a signed executive order and a memorandum on rural broadband access at the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center on Monday in Nashville, Tenn.

to deal with government entities more quickly when trying to install fiber access in rural areas.

"One big barrier is that anyone building any infrastructure struggles to get a permit on federal land," he said. He noted that locally, getting a permit is fairly routine, but dealing with federal

government agencies can be a slow and difficult process.

"I was really excited about that aspect of the executive order," he said. "If we can streamline

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Governor Brown releases priorities for short session

Gun control, PERS reform among top concerns

By CLAIRE WITCOMBE
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown's priorities for the 2018 legislative session include efforts to pay down the state's public pension liability and tighten restrictions on gun ownership.

Brown, who is running for reelection in November, released five proposals Wednesday, ahead of the short session that begins Feb. 5 and will last up to 35 days.

Here are the governor's proposals:

• **Gun control:** This proposal lays out a previously voiced desire of the

governor to close the "Boyfriend Loophole" by modifying state law to bar people convicted of misdemeanor stalking and/or domestic violence from purchasing a firearm.

The bill would also make sure that the "appropriate authorities" are notified when someone who is prohibited by law from buying a firearm tries to buy one, and have the state track information about those cases to learn where the reporting system can be improved.

Affordable housing:

The proposal would allow the state to temporarily waive fees and education requirements (in favor of training experience "on the job") for construction profes-

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File photo

Gov. Kate Brown has released five proposals ahead of next month's short session of the Oregon Legislature.



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