



HEMP FARMER GETS HIGH CROP AT HIGH ALTITUDE

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EAST OREGON

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EO SPOTLIGHT



GETTING CONNECTED

High-speed internet making its way to east Umatilla County

Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Ron Thomas, an employee of Eastern Oregon Telecom, unloads conduit from a trailer at a construction site in Umatilla on Friday afternoon.

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — Weston Mayor Jennifer Spurgeon has made her case for rural broadband to members of Congress and the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, but it was an encounter with the chief executive of a local service provider that has Weston on the verge of gaining access to high-speed internet.

Eastern Oregon Telecom President Joseph Franell said he met Spurgeon at a Hermiston Chamber of Commerce function about a year ago, a meeting that helped convince him that it was worth it to extend fiber internet to some of Oregon's smallest incorporated towns.

Not only will Weston get high-speed broadband in the coming days, but EOT is expecting to extend fiber into Athena by the end of the year and Adams shortly thereafter.

The giants in the telecommunications industry have typically passed over smaller communities because the customer base isn't large enough to justify the investment.

Franell said EOT is able to save money by doing all of its construction and engineering work in-house, but what really mattered, he said, was that Spurgeon and her fellow mayors in Athena and Adams were



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Eastern Oregon Telecom is making strides to expand rural broadband access throughout Northeastern Oregon. The company has recently been a part of a rural broadband expansion into Weston, Athena and Adams.

"broadband champions."
"We tend to go where we're wanted," he said.

If EOT tried to expand fiber into each community individually, Franell said the

investment probably would have been cost-prohibitive. But by grouping all three east county communities together — collective

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Curbing big money donations

Secretary of State candidates working to limit influence in 2020 race

By **DIRK VANDERHART**
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — In a state with no limits on campaign cash, the candidates vying to oversee elections are rushing to set their own.

The three top Democrats running for Oregon Secretary of State next year have quietly developed an array of proposals for how they'd like to curb the influence of big money in one of 2020's highest profile statewide races.

If they're agreed upon by all contenders, the proposals could reshape a contest that — with Oregon laws being what they are — is certain to attract mountains of cash. But as of Thursday, any potential for an agreement was unclear, and at least one candidate was vowing to go her own direction.

The candidates, state Rep. Jennifer Williamson, D-Portland, state Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, and former congressional candidate Jamie McLeod-Skinner, have repeatedly emphasized their support for changes to the state's permissive campaign finance laws. Two have taken pains to tout their support for a legislative resolution that will give voters the opportunity to OK contribution limits next year.

None have formally unveiled proposals for self-imposed limits, but they shared their intentions with OPB.

State Rep. Jennifer Williamson

Williamson signaled on Wednesday that she intends to set her own limits, regardless of what her opponents do.

"I believe candidates for Secretary of State have a special responsibility to set a new standard and lead the way on this issue," Williamson said in a statement to OPB. "That's why I have decided to voluntarily place limits on corporate contributions to my campaign."

Williamson's pledge is to limit donations from corporations or political action committees run by

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Tenor lived life on the opera stage

By **KATHY ANEY**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Quade Winter's obsession with opera began early.

At age 9 or 10, he started playing the music of dramatist W.S. Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan, the team who created such comic operas as "H.M.S. Pinafore" and "The Pirates of Penzance." Winter, opera singer and composer who died this month at age 68, played their music constantly as a boy growing up in Pendleton.

"He absolutely drove us nuts playing Gilbert and Sullivan," said Phil Winter, Quade's older brother. "He played it day and night, night and day."

Winter eventually parlayed

his fixation into a career. Starting with theater at Pendleton High School and the University of Oregon, the operatic tenor eventually sang with San Francisco and Portland opera companies. Later, he performed in Austria, Italy, Canada, Mexico and New York City. He sang with a state-run opera company in Germany for almost 10 years.

Reviewers described him as a big teddy bear of a tenor who possessed a rich, clear voice and perfect pitch.

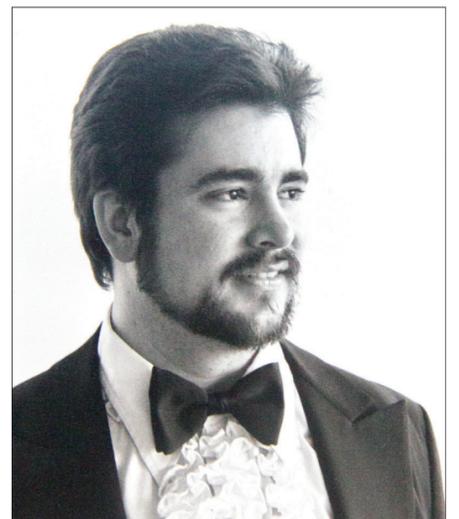
Winter debuted his first major composition as the result of a boast. When the Ohio Light Opera in the mid-1990s bragged in a publication that the company had performed every one of Gilbert and Sullivan's works, Winter pro-

tested. He contacted the artistic director at Ohio Light Opera and reminded him of a work called "Thespis," a Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration that had vanished except for two songs. Winter half-jokingly offered to send him a score he had composed for "Thespis."

"He called my bluff and slated the world premiere for the summer of 1996," Winter later wrote.

After a successful run, Winter became the theater's composer in residence.

Winter moved back to Pendleton in 2014 to be near his mother, who was nearing the end of her life. He kept his vocal cords limber by singing with the Pendleton Men's



Contributed photo

Opera singer and composer Quade Winter performed on stages all over the world before returning to Pendleton to retire.

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