

University installs new fly ash scrubber

By CLARK WALWORTH
Of the Emerald

Gordon York has been fighting so long to get the University's physical plant to stop dropping ashes on his animal hospital, he can't even remember exactly when he started. Harold Babcock, director of the plant, says when he began working for the plant in 1971 York, the operator of the Eugene Animal Hospital next door, had already been complaining for years.

But now, after years of writing letters, testifying at hearings, and phoning in complaints to the Lane

Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA), York's prayers have been answered. The physical plant is installing a \$500,000 air scrubber, the largest of its kind in the nation. When it goes into operation at the end of the month, the fly ash problem will be solved. Maybe.

The "maybe" is because, at this point, nobody knows just how well the scrubber will work. The prototype model, installed by Weyerhaeuser Co. at Snoqualmie Falls, Wash., had many initial problems, according to Bill Norwood, head of the physical plant's heating plant. And this one will be twice the size of the prototype.

"There's going to be a lot of bugaboos," says Norwood. So the fly ash problem is, in a manner of speaking, still up in the air.

Fly ash is a black carbonous substance produced because the plant's furnaces burn hog fuel, a wood industries waste product similar to sawdust. When finely chopped, hog fuel makes a good, relatively clean fuel.

The plant's boilers produce about 200,000 pounds of steam per hour, enough to heat the University's buildings and generate three-quarters of its electricity, all for about 30 cents worth of hog fuel per 1,000 pounds of steam, Norwood said.

Compare that to the \$2.54 Oregon State University spends for oil to heat the same amount of steam.

The only problem is the fly ash. York claims it soils his clients' cars, blows into drifts sometimes a quarter-inch deep and gets tracked into the hospital. He says tracked-in fly ash can be a major problem for an animal hospital, which must be kept spotlessly clean.

The air scrubber, a steel tower resembling an inverted skyrocket, is designed to filter the fly ash from the furnace exhaust. It should bring the physical plant up to acceptable standards for emissions and allow the plant to increase its maximum load, Babcock said.

Actually, Babcock says, the plant's operations aren't violating any regulations, even without the scrubber.

"As far as our regulations are concerned, they are in compliance," said Calvin Yoshita of the Lane Regional Air Pollution Authority (LRAPA). "It is almost impossible to run a hog fuel plant without exceeding the limit on particle size. We understand that," he said.

The limit on particle size, according to LRAPA regulations, is 250 microns, or one-quarter millimeter.

Babcock says the plant violates the limit only when the furnaces are being cleaned, a process that occurs twice daily, for less than a minute each time.

But, he says, without the scrubber the plant isn't allowed to run its four boilers at their maximum rated capacity. Each of the three small boilers is rated at 35,000 pounds of steam per hour, but they are currently limited to 31,500 pounds and the fourth boiler, rated at 110,000 pounds per hour, is only allowed to produce 70,000 pounds.

"We could go on without the scrubber as long as we don't overload the boilers," Babcock said. "When we get the scrubber, we can exceed the 70,000 pound limit."

The problem with the scrubber,

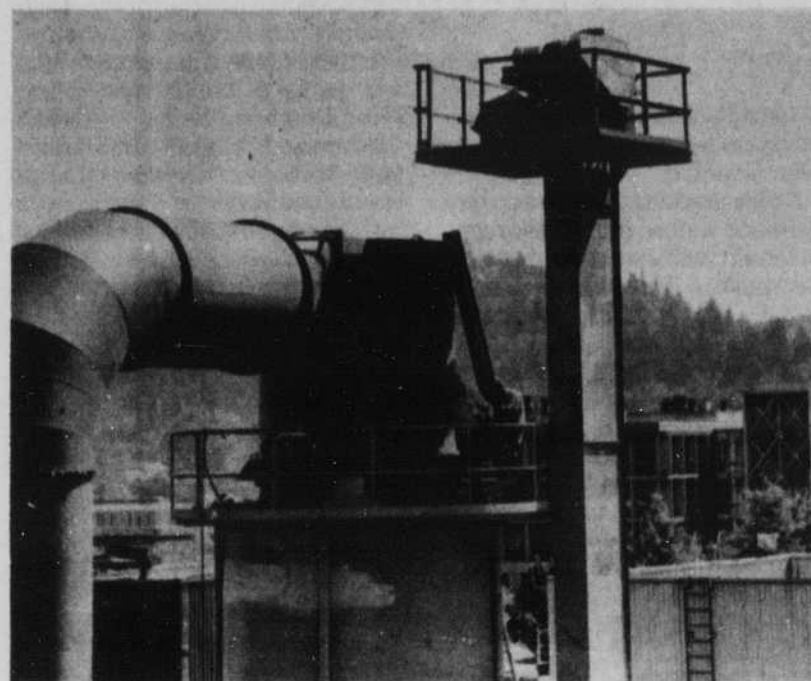


Photo by Perry Gaskill

Although the Physical Plant's new air scrubber is the largest one in the nation, its ability to properly filter the plant's fly ash still remains up in the air, said Bill Norwood of the heating plant.

besides its experimental nature, is that it's hooked up only to the number four boiler. The physical plant didn't have enough funds to connect it to the other three, Babcock said.

"The scrubber is guaranteed to take care of one furnace," he says. The number four boiler, in full production, is rated a little higher than a combination of the other three and produces more fly ash in proportion to steam than they do. Therefore, he says, the scrubber would eliminate about half the pollution.

This leaves York with about half as much ash on his carpet as he has had in the past. And for now he's satisfied with that.

He says he's never had a vendetta against the physical plant — he just wanted to see changes.

"I really believe they'd like to get it cleaned up. And LRAPA wants to clean it up," he says. "But it gets

so unproductive to phone in reports.

"I'm the catalyst that got this going. As long as they're honest and sincere about cleaning it up, I'll be satisfied," he said. "But if they go underground with it again, well then maybe I'll come out again."

Babcock says he isn't sure what effect York had on the proceedings.

"If he hadn't complained, I don't know what would have happened. A lot of people complained. He's the one who zeroed in on it and brought it to a head."

With the scrubber installed, conditions will probably get better in the Eugene Animal Hospital parking lot. Not perfect, but better. And Gordon York has proven again the old American notion that it pays to gripe.

Only it doesn't pay very well.

Garbage

(Continued from Page 3)

Perhats, however, disagrees with the notion that BRING is "competing" with local interests.

"We don't feel we're competing with the garbagemen," she contends, "because we intend to include them in the service eventu-

ally."

BRING, a non-profit organization subsidized by Lane County, will continue the pilot project for a full year while recording results and conducting a composition study on resource recovery.

Death row total now 479

WASHINGTON (AP) — A total of 285 persons were sentenced to death by state and local courts during 1975, bringing the death row population at the end of 1975 to 479, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration reported Sunday.

During 1974, 151 persons were

sentenced to death, it said. All the condemned prisoners were held by state prisons. No inmates were under a death sentence in federal prisons.

During 1975 there were no executions, for the eighth consecutive year, the LEAA said.

BOSTON

\$3.99

Sun Shop

500 E. 13th St. campus



Lane Community College
Department of Performing Arts presents
NEIL SIMON'S
comedy with music

THE GOOD
DOCTOR

based on stories by CHEKHOV

November 26, 27,
December 2, 3, 4

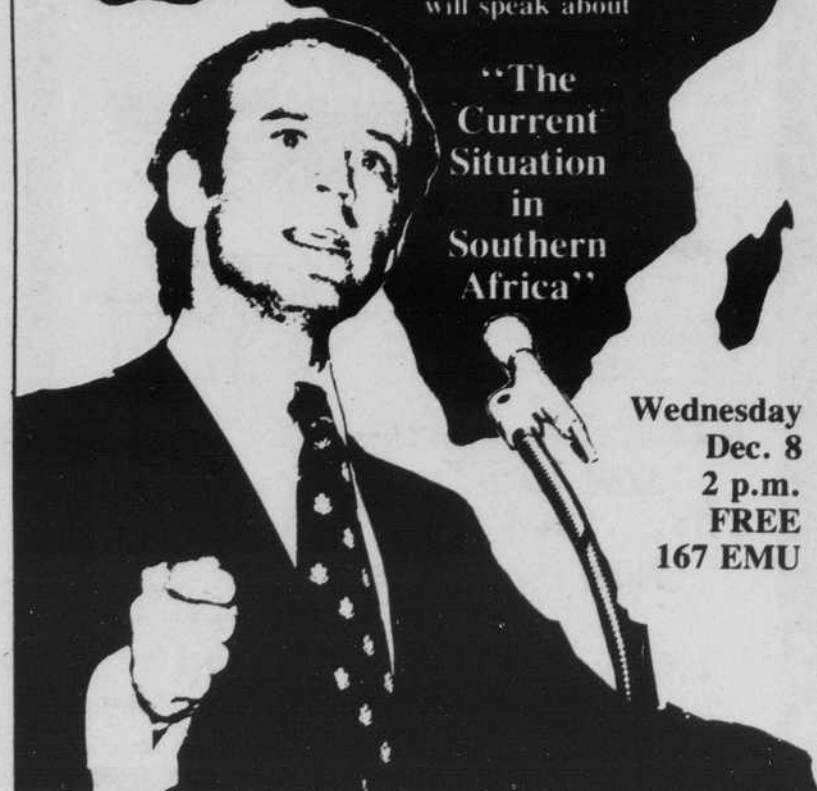
\$3.00, reserved only
Box office: 747-4559

EMU Cultural Forum presents

Senator
Joe Biden
of Delaware

a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
will speak about

"The
Current
Situation
in
Southern
Africa"



Wednesday
Dec. 8
2 p.m.
FREE
167 EMU

The EMU Craft Center
and the Program Office

present a

Christmas Art
and Craft Sale

December 2 and 3

10:00 a.m. to 7 p.m. Room 167 EMU
Entertainment

**2ND HAND
BOOK MAN**

New & Used Books
Top Prices Paid
for Your Quality
Used Books
Beautiful Selection of Cards
101 W. 7TH • 342-2002