

DOE says \$10-million cut not so bad

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — At first glance, it seems the \$10 million gap between the Department of Energy's \$13 million request for the next biennium and Gov. Victor Atiyeh's \$3 million recommendation is a severe setback for the agency.

But Craig Prosser, the department's budget director, doesn't think so.

"It would have been really nice, but there's so much happening that this isn't a make-or-break idea."

The \$10 million would have been raised through the sale of state bonds and the money would have been loaned to developers of small-scale, local technology. It was a program pushed by ex-Gov. Bob Straub, but one Atiyeh doesn't think the state can afford.



"In the main, people understand that we are in a period of more control on government spending."

Even still, Prosser says Atiyeh's recommendation reflects a commitment to the development of alternative energy sources.

"It looks very good when you remember that Gov. Atiyeh has cut back the total number of state employees (about 500) but recommended an increase of four positions for us. Alternative energy right now is at a threshold. He realizes that with just a little bit

more, there's going to be a lot happening."

One of the positions Atiyeh recommends would expand the department's program to push development of wind and geothermal power and another would be earmarked for solar energy.

Not that the move for state loans to aid development of alternative energy facilities is dead.

Sen. Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene, chairs the Senate committee on Environment and Energy and promises that a formula will somehow be devised where some state funds are freed.

Fadeley gives one criterion for measuring projects that should get state funding.

"It has to be renewable resource and the renewable part of the resource has to be available in Oregon. It can include waste industrial heat, usually traveling

under the name of coal generation, small hydro-electric projects, bio-mass and solar."

In November of 1977, voters were asked to approve a loan program for non-nuclear energy development allowing the state to sell bonds totaling up to 1 percent of the state's assessed value or more than \$400 million. While the proposal passed in Lane County, it lost statewide by about 14 percent.

Part of the reason for its defeat was fear of access to the funds by large utilities and corporations. Fadeley says you simply can't take the utilities out of the electricity business, but adds he'll take steps to allay suspicion of utility misuse of state funds.

Nuclear plant turns itself off

RAINIER — The Trojan nuclear power plant was shut down again Tuesday night when a problem developed in an electric circuit.

The plant was restarted Jan. 6 after a nine-and-a-half month shutdown ordered by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission when a wall of the control building was found to be in non-compliance with federal earthquake resistance standards.

During a maintenance inspection of a turbine, Tuesday, a ground wire was found to have a loose connection, according to Steve Loy, public information officer for Portland General Electric Co., the major owner of the plant. (The Eugene Water and Electric Board owns 30 percent of Trojan.)

At 7:30 p.m., the fission reaction between uranium pellets under extreme pressure inside fuel rods ceased.

"It's a very conservative operation," Loy said. "It will shut down automatically in these cases."

Trojan must be restarted gradually, he added, and by 9 a.m. Wednesday, the plant was operating at 50 percent capacity. It was up to 75 percent Wednesday.

PGE also had problems with electrical service to its customers in the Portland metropolitan area Wednesday.

An ice storm swept across west Portland and into the east and southeast Tuesday night, causing a major power outage affecting from between one-fourth and one-third of PGE's 445,000 customers.

Ratepayers were without electric service for several hours Wednesday and repairs are gradually made.

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