

Prof says Oregon's solar future is bright

By RON TAYLOR
Of the Emerald

Solar energy has a bright future, even in cloud-covered and rainy Oregon, according to David McDaniels of the University's SolarEnergy Center. McDaniels expressed his optimistic solar views at one of the solar seminars sponsored by the center Wednesday night.

Physics Prof. McDaniels is also the recipient of a \$60,000 grant from the Bonneville Power Administration for solar research in Oregon. The BPA is underwriting solar monitoring stations at Boardman, Reed, Burns and Whitehorse Ranch in southeastern Oregon.

"Oregon's solar future is one of the brightest in the nation," says McDaniels. There are 1,200 square miles of flat, non-arable and non-grazing land, prime for solar collection in eastern Oregon. "Oregon is extremely fortunate that we have, by far one of the greatest solar electrical generating capacities in the U.S.," he said.

To illustrate his point, he said that only 10 square miles are needed to generate the same electricity as produced by Trojan. In the future, he said, we will be able to produce by solar generation three times the amount of electricity now used in all of Oregon for all purposes.

McDaniels says solar electrical generation on a commercial basis is 15 to 20 years down the road. "Right now we need to know what the basic resource is."

"My view is that they(BPA) are going to take a much more active role in solar energy in the future," McDaniels said.

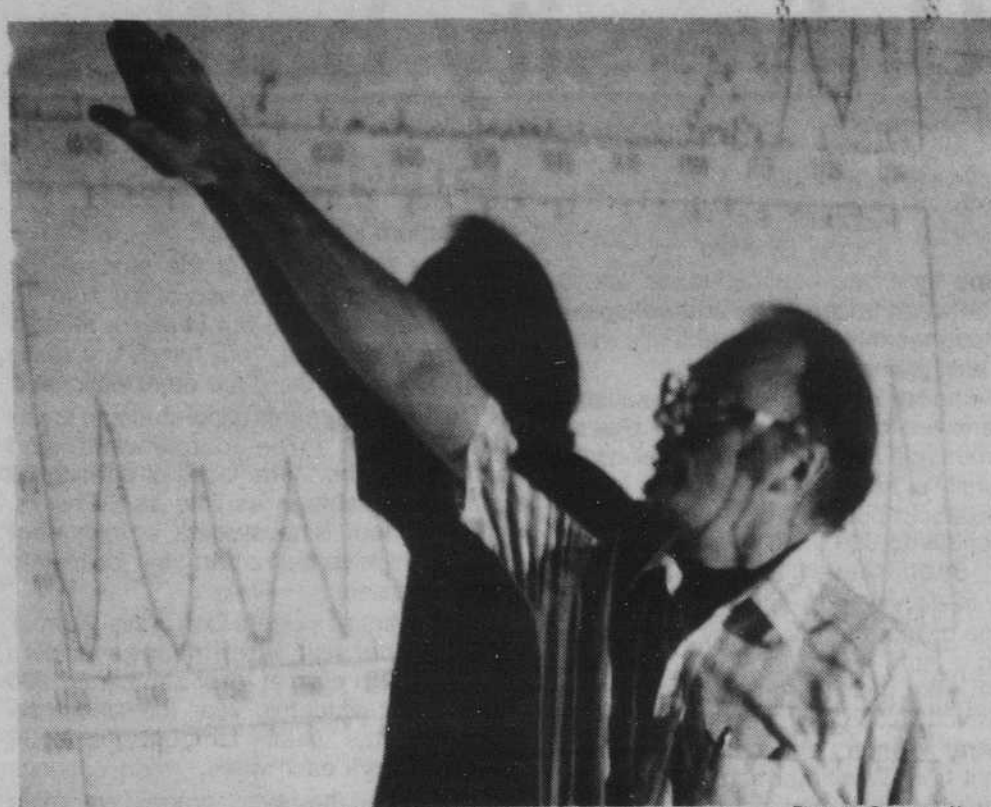
"It is very important to be able to understand total solar radiation," says McDaniels. "Clearly the Northwest can do it, but we have to take special precautions."

The special precautions have to do with the two components of solar radiation, direct and diffused. That can be an expensive proposition, McDaniels says. To do it you need to do calculational work.

That work requires special equipment, like computers and special solar radiation measuring devices called pyranometers. Researchers have used these instruments for years, but only in the last couple of years have they used them to measure the sun's direct radiation only.

Direct solar radiation is the only feasible type of the sun's energy that can be used for truly efficient solar generation, he says.

"For solar generated electricity to be the real thing by 2050 or 2100, we need knowledge of the direct component. It is the only one we can concentrate,"



Physics Prof. David McDaniels

Photo by Suzanne Aigen

McDaniels said.

He pointed out that for solar electrical generation, the sun's rays have to be concentrated by a factor of 50 to 1000.

There is an experimental solar generating plant already in operation in Albuquerque, N.M. that generates 5000 watts of electricity. Another planned for Barstow, Calif. will generate 10 million watts. Even though these plants are only experimental, McDaniels says they are definitely a

sign of things to come.

But he did say that the best place for solar generation is Albuquerque. McDaniels said the reason for Albuquerque's enormous solar capacity is the number of "good" days they have compared to "bad" ones. Good days for solar generation purposes are clear; bad days are cloudy. But even during cloudy days, a certain amount of the direct radiation gets through, and that is what generates the power.

OSPIRG slams Forest Service harvest plan

By JOHN CROWLEY
Of the Emerald

U.S. Forest Service proposals to give several Oregon roadless areas non-wilderness status amounts to "putting the timber industry on welfare," an economic researcher for the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group said Wednesday.

OSPIRG's Randal O'Toole, who last year conducted an economic analysis of the Forest

Service's second Roadless Area Review Evaluation (RARE II), said taxpayers will lose more than \$1 million a year if 30 of the roadless areas tagged for non-wilderness status are harvested.

O'Toole's comments came at an "Oregon Day" press conference. OSPIRG and the Oregon Wilderness Coalition marked Oregon's 120th birthday with slide shows and various sales, as well as the conference.

In addition, O'Toole said another 40 areas cannot produce timber on a sustained yield basis, violating the Forest Service's commitment to sustained yield.

"It is irresponsible of the Forest Service to totally ignore the economics of logging these marginal lands," O'Toole said.

O'Toole said the proposals would amount to subsidizing the timber industry, "essentially putting it on welfare."

"The Forest Service has been in the timber business since World War II," O'Toole said. "They don't want to take the time to get the (economic) data. They want to go in there and cut."

Last year O'Toole undertook the economic analysis of the Forest Service proposals and published his findings in an OSPIRG report, "An Economic View of RARE II."

The report focused on the financial feasibility of the plan, but there are other considerations, O'Toole said.

"The Forest Service sees the value of this land only one way — timber. For them, the scenic importance, the wildlife, the recrea-

tional uses of these areas, have no value," he explained.

"If they have their way, only 10 percent of the natural forest in Oregon will remain natural. This is unacceptable."

O'Toole said it's not too late to change the situation. Within the next few months the Forest Service will make their recommendations, through the president, to Congress. Citizens should write to their federal legislators, and urge them to do all they can to stop the RARE II proposals, he said.

U.S. Rep. Jim Weaver, D-Ore., chairs the forest subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture, O'Toole noted.

But doesn't want to pay for it

County wants L-COG examined

An audit of the Lane Council of Governments' services was unanimously approved by the Lane County Commissioners Wednesday, but there is still a question about who will pay the audit's \$10,000 cost.

The audit proposal was included in a resolution presented to the board by commission chairer Vance Freeman. The resolution was in answer to the question of whether the commissioners should pay half of the audit's cost.

The audit was first proposed by former Commissioner Bob Wood during his last regular meeting in December. Wood criticized the agency for what he considered a duplication of services already provided by other county programs.

During its regular meeting, in January the L-COG board of directors agreed to the audit and asked that the county pay half of the cost.

Freeman, who is the county's representative to L-COG, told the directors that the agency could be responsible for the entire audit cost. Agency chairer Vern Meyer objected, saying L-COG would not be able to pay for the audit from its budget.

The commissioners had originally asked that \$5,000 be withheld from the county's annual dues to L-COG to pay a portion of Oregon Daily Emerald

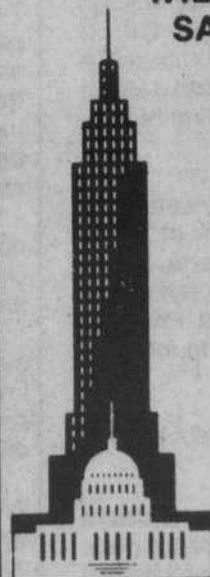
the audit. That request was changed by L-COG directors, who asked that the county provide the money separately from the budget.

Although the question of paying for the audit is still unanswered, agency Executive Director Tom Jenkinson says the commission-

ers' approval of the audit shows "a strong commitment" to the audit's intentions.

An emergency meeting of the agency's directors is scheduled for 5 p.m. today in the L-COG office, 125 E. 8th Ave. to discuss the commissioners' decision and ways to finance the audit.

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