

Politicians ask who has regional power control

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — The discussion of our energy future has been transformed from a state discussion to a regional one, according to Sen. Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City.

An examination of the Northwest Regional Power Bill passed by the last session of Congress supports Kulongoski.

So the question becomes, "How will those regional decisions be made?"

"Assistant public utility commissioner Roy Hemmingway says the bill gives broad authority to a council composed of two representatives from each of the Northwest states — Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana," Kulongoski explains.

"The council is the planning body, and the Bonneville Power Administration is essentially the executive body charged with taking actions consistent with the plan."

However, Ron Eachus, an aide to Fourth District Representative Jim Weaver, says the relationship won't necessarily evolve that way.

"The BPA administrator has the lead, depending on the nature of the council," Eachus says. "The personality of the people who end up on the council will determine whether the body is powerless in the face of the administrator or not."

House energy committee chair Rep. Wayne Fawbush, D-Hood River, agrees that the composition of the council is crucial.

"Where the BPA will have the real advantage is in the inherent power that any staff organization has over an appointed council," Fawbush says.

"They are the experts — they will be doing all the staffwork. Unless you have some very independent-minded council members, you will end up doing what the staff suggests."

Under the law, the council will develop forecasts for future power needs and establish a plan to meet them. In the event that the council, required by law to be appointed by July 1, makes a decision the BPA administrator disagrees with — such as saying that no more of the region's power will come from the atom — the administrator can override the council's decision if Congress approves.

Eachus contends gaining that approval will be easy.

"The administrator basically has the authority to do what the initial power bills were intended to do. That was to finance more nuclear and coal plants and provide the aluminum companies with the power they want at a rate they feel they can afford."

The administrator will have the same Congressional allies that got what he sees as a flawed power bill passed in the first place, Eachus charges.

Hemmingway says the administrator's task would be formidable if the council disagrees.

Police question man in I-5 Bandit case

A 30-year-old Springfield man was questioned by a multi-agency law enforcement team in Springfield Thursday night in connection with the Band-Aid Bandit investigation.

At press time no arrests had been made.

Representatives from 31 West Coast police agencies began questioning the man at about 4:30 p.m. Thursday shortly after he was picked up by law enforcement officers in Springfield.

The man reportedly is suspected to be the Band-Aid Bandit, but Springfield Police Chief Brian Riley would neither confirm nor deny that information.

When asked if the man being

held was a suspect, Riley would only say, "I wouldn't want to answer that."

"We're still interviewing and following up other leads. The investigation is still in progress."

Police have been searching for the bandit since he began a massive crime spree throughout northern California, Oregon and Washington 2½ months ago. He is a suspect in robberies, rapes and murders.

Police hinted of a breakthrough in the case Wednesday when they issued a statement announcing new information about the case had been received. Police said several agencies were stepping up investigations in Springfield.

Whale group gets evicted

Oregonians Cooperating to Protect Whales has been ordered to leave its headquarters on the downtown mall by Monday to make way for a proposed commercial and office building.

The Eugene Renewal Agency, owner of the property, says that if the group does not leave the premises by Monday it will waive its right to legally contest the eviction, but would be allowed to stay until April 30.

"We might just stay," says

OCPW director Michael Gannon.

The OCPW headquarters, located at 873 Willamette St., is to be the site of a \$5.4 million, six-story building for retail stores and offices. Three years ago, the OCPW had submitted a proposal to create a "Center of the Earth and Arts" for non-profit organizations on the site, but the ERA did not consider the proposal because it was submitted six hours after the deadline.

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