

# 'Hog fuel' too costly Physical plant seeks new fuel

By Steve Hooks  
Of the Emerald

Faced with a drastic increase in the price of "hog fuel," or processed wood chips, the physical plant is looking into processed solid waste to fire the University's electric generator.

The nuts and bolts of this project, as well as the direction of Lane County's fuel-from-waste program, were the topics of a Survival Center-sponsored discussion Thursday in the EMU.

The University paid 25 cents per unit of hog fuel (five cubic yards) in 1955 but now must pay \$48 for a unit of specially-processed wood chips because little hog fuel is available, said Harold Babcock, physical plant director.

Even the price of hog fuel has recently jumped to the \$40 range, he said.

The physical plant is studying a joint project with Lane County to use the County's resource recovery facility to convert solid waste into refuse-derived fuel (RDF) for the physical plant power station, Babcock said.

The project would require a \$2.5 million loan — with possible state financing, he said. About \$1 million would be needed to modify the Lane County facility to convert waste to fuel, and the other \$1.5 million would modify the University's power generator to use RDF.

The money sunk into the power plant would upgrade one of the boilers and a filter system so the plant could comply with pollution standards when burning the RDF, Babcock said.

The resource recovery facility has been plagued in the past by explosions in its shredding unit and failures in other equipment. Its original builder, Allis-Chalmers Corp., no longer makes parts for the facility, said Jim Guthrie, a Survival Center representative.

The \$1 million would improve the efficiency of the facility by 25 to 30 percent, said Craig Starr, head of the county's solid waste division. New technology will make it safer from potential explosions and the facility will not become obsolete because other companies manufacture parts that may be needed, he said.

Starr says he hopes sales of RDF to the physical plant can help pay off the county's share of the loan. The amount can be recovered "within a reasonably short period of time," he said.

Opponents of the proposed project say the county would be better off converting the resource recovery facility into a "source separation" recycling facility. The source separation method "has saved an incredible amount of resources" and is "vastly more efficient and effective," Guthrie said.

"The alternatives we're suggesting cost more in the line of

one-half to one-fourth of what they (the physical plant and county) are suggesting," he said.

David Shellabarger, a member of the county's Resource Recovery Advisory Committee, has studied implementing a comprehensive county-wide recycling program and converting the resource recovery facility into a source separation facility and self-supporting recycling center.

Modifications in this area would include adjusting the facility to service self-hauled waste as well as commercially transported garbage, Shellabarger said.

But, Shellabarger said, even if a "massive amount of recyclables" can be handled and processed, a market may not exist. "Recyclers are hanging on by their fingernails" finan-

cially, he said.

Babcock said those involved with planning the recycling program should not take an "either-or" position when studying options. Cooperation is essential to find working results, he said.

Money earned to pay off the loan for the plant modifications could come from selling surplus electricity to the Bonneville Power Administration or the Eugene Water and Electric Board, he said. By selling excess electricity to the BPA the \$2.5 million could be paid off within five years, Babcock said.

As far as what the University would get from the project with the county, "that's pretty questionable," he said. The physical plant "won't get five cents out of it," but heating costs for the dormitories and the EMU would be reduced, Babcock said.



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## U.S. arms increase deters Soviet threat

The nuclear arms buildup is a tragic — but necessary — waste of resources, says William Taylor, director of political-military studies at the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"The arms buildup is lamentable and increasingly dangerous," says Taylor, who is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. "But given what the Soviets have done in the last 10 years, the course the United States has taken is perhaps the most effective.

"Nobody can afford to take unnecessary risks. The U.S. must have bargaining chips."

Taylor says nuclear disarmament is a "morally impeccable goal," but a goal that must be reached through an understanding of the threat the Soviet Union produces.

"Nuclear disarmament is a goal we all ought to pursue, everyone agrees with that," he says. "The argument is not over the goal, but over the means we should use to reach it.

"Until we can be assured that disarmament is possible, we'll have to fund programs that we hope we'll never use. We need them to leave some room to negotiate with the Soviets."

Peter Jones, a journalist active in the European Nuclear Disarmament movement, says there is no reason for the buildup of nuclear arms.

"We see the Cold War as a kind of addiction for America. Both of them (the superpowers) are locked into a numbers game."

Jones says the buildup of nuclear arms in Europe is the result of the United States' desire to have first-strike capability against Russia.

The 13,000 tactical nuclear warheads in Europe are meant to be used for a limited nuclear war, says Jones. While America wouldn't feel the effects of a Russian retaliation — because tactical weapons are short range only — one third of Europe would be wiped out.

"The opposition (to nuclear arms) in Europe is because we see ourselves sandwiched between the superpowers," he says.

"We just want to free ourselves from the two blocs. It's not anti-American. Nobody can be anti-240 million people."

Both Taylor and Jones will speak at the National Security Conference, which began Thursday and continues through Saturday night.

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