

# Officials break ground for new computer science building

Workers broke ground Thursday on the University's \$2.85 million computer and information sciences building west



of Oregon Hall, which is being funded with money received through the State Lottery.

After viewing a model of the \$4.6 million science complex under construction, officials from the State Lottery and the University turned a shovel of dirt to mark the start of the new building.

University president Paul Olum participated in the groundbreaking ceremony, saying the project "will help our faculty provide better and more advanced instruction to students interested in careers in the computer industry."

The program is one of five Centers for Excellence at the University funded by the state Legislature through a combination of general funds and lottery proceeds designated for the promotion of economic development.

"Both kinds of support are vital," Olum said. "The Centers for Excellence support here has already meant a five-fold increase in external research and equipment grants in the past five years,"



Photo by Andy Cripe

University President Paul Olum (far left) prepares to break ground for a new computer science building Thursday. The ceremony drew several onlookers to the site (above), located beside Oregon Hall.

he added.

The project is the second at the fund. University paid for from the state lottery

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## Expert talks about nuclear waste sites

By Paula Green  
Emerald Reporter

The search for the nation's first permanent high-level nuclear waste repository was the subject of the University's Department of Geological Sciences seminar yesterday.

Guest speaker Richard Forester of the Hanford Nuclear Facility and Basalt Waste Isolation Project (BWIP) in Washington noted the recent controversy regarding nuclear waste disposal, which sparked national concern and pressure to find a permanent resting place for nuclear waste.

Congressional action signed by President Reagan on Dec. 22, has stripped Hanford and the Permian Basin salt sites in West Texas of the opportunity to house underground nuclear wastes. The only remaining site, the Yucca Mountains in Nevada, is being given congressional consideration should it meet federal regulations, expectations and costs.

According to Forester, BWIP has championed Hanford as a possible nuclear waste site since 1976. Although Hanford no longer is under consideration, BWIP's objective to develop needed engineering technology has been achieved.

"We learned a lot about engineering problems and technological design," Forester said. "The technology learned



Richard Forester

with the repository could be useful in other projects," he added.

Forester favors the Hanford site because of the basalt rock composition. He explained basalt has a fine-grain size. And at the repository depth of 3,200 feet, a low oxygen pressure also could be maintained, avoiding a mixture of the nuclear wastes with a surrounding, free-flowing environment.

"For a repository, you want to have low oxygen pressure and reducing environment because the radionuclides, when they eventually reach

their canisters, will start to migrate with surrounding fluid," Forester said.

"The site, being surrounded by the basalt, is very conducive to maintaining a low oxygen gas and reducing conditions," he explained, addressing environmental concerns.

Forester also noted the importance of the site's ability to meet federal requirements necessary to be licensed as a national repository for high-level nuclear wastes. He said a test facility at the surface, such as Hanford's, is fundamental in showing a site's suitability through its core samples.

Forester also explained the BWIP activities during the study were monitored by peer reviews, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Geological Survey, the National Academy of Sciences, Washington state, effected Indian tribes and the public.

"In a repository, you want the technical merits to come to the forefront...but this is one of the few examples where the politicians admitted freely that politics was a main consideration in the site selection," Forester said.

Forester said he has confidence in the repository program, and explained most scientists admit Nevada is a better site because of its dry environment.

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