



### Eugene blasted

Quarterback Sean Sehlin of the Pierre County (Wash.) Bengals rushes through a thick-  
et of defenders from the Blast. Eugene's first semi-pro football team in more than 20  
years. The Bengals went on to win the game 26-6, played at Marist High School on Sat-  
urday, making Eugene's record 0-2.

Photo by Sean Poston

## Hanford hydrogen gas tank 'burps'

(AP) — The Hanford nuclear reservation radioactive waste storage tank considered most at likely to explode has belched more hydrogen gas, dropping the waste level about 5 inches, officials said Monday.

Scientists had predicted tank 101-SY would fill with hydrogen and then shoot the gas through its ventilation system sometime in August.

Westinghouse Hanford Co. officials said Monday afternoon the tank vented at 5:30 a.m. Sunday.

No environmental contamination occurred, the company said. The gas is released through filters that trap any radioactivity, company officials have said.

Westinghouse workers now are preparing to take a sample of the tank's contents while seeking to eliminate the explosion risk, said Mike Berriochoa

of Westinghouse.

"That's why we waited until after the burping so we didn't risk running into a hydrogen bubble," Berriochoa said.

Westinghouse manages the tanks for the Department of Energy. The tanks contain wastes from the production of plutonium for hydrogen bombs.

Earlier this year, Hanford officials said a buildup of hydrogen, ammonia and nitrous oxide in 20 of the 177 waste storage tanks had the potential to cause a fire or explosion.

Mitigation efforts have been stymied by a lack of knowledge about all of the complex chemical reactions occurring inside the tanks.

Ron Bliss, Westinghouse vice president for waste management, said last week the company planned to insert a probe into tank 101-SY soon to gather waste samples that will take

months to analyze.

Venting has been occurring about every eight weeks and dates from 1979, Westinghouse said. The last venting occurred in April, when the peak concentration of gas moving through the ventilation system was 3.4 percent.

The peak Sunday was 1.1 percent, well below the approximately 5 percent that Energy Department officials have said would be flammable.

The sample is taken at the venting point, however, not beneath the waste where the hydrogen buildup occurs.

Venting caused the waste in the tank to drop from a depth of 416 inches to about 411 inches by Sunday evening.

Tank 101-SY is believed to contain the greatest hydrogen buildup because it has the greatest fluctuations in waste depth.



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