Northwest suffering power deficit



RICHLAND, Wash. (AP) - The Northwest, long known for its cheap and abundant supplies of electricity, has suddenly found itself with a power deficit.

A region that boasts 30 hydroelectric dams - along with a nuclear reactor, coal and other generating plants - can no longer meet its own

Expensive imports are a major reason consumers in the Northwest face rate hikes between 14 percent and 20 percent, according to the Bonneville Power Adminis-

As recently as 1991, the region made up of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Western Montana exported \$258 million worth of power while spending \$21.1 million for

But the BPA is projecting purchases of \$250 million from other areas, chiefly California and Canada, in 1993, and sales of just \$75 million in electricity.

'The main reason for that is the worst two consecutive water years since 1944-1945," said Dulcy Mahar, a spokeswoman for the BPA in Portland, Ore. The BPA markets electricity from federal dams to utilities

The drought forces dams to be managed for the benefit of endangered fish species more than electrical production, Mahar said.

That means mountain snow melt usually stored for winter months must be dumped from reservoirs in the spring and summer to help fish migrate to the sea, she

When winter's peak electrical season arrives, utilities have to import expensive electricity because there is little water left in the reservoirs

The Northwest gets two-thirds of its electricity from hydro dams, while the rest of the country gets just 10 percent from that source

A major reason is the Columbia River system, which covers 258,000 square miles and is the 4th longest river in North America at 1,214 miles

Its dams produce an annual average of 18,500 megawatts of power.

But it isn't enough.

The Seattle-based energy newsletter Clearing Up recently reported that November 1992 was the first time in two decades the Northwest was a net importer of electricity

"Since dollars follow kilowatt hours like night follows day, the region's current trade deficit is putting financial pressure on utilities," the newsletter said.

John Fazio of the Northwest Power Planning Council, also in Portland, said it is too early to say there will be a power deficit for all of 1993.

'But it certainly has changed from the past when that number was always positive," Fazio, a power analyst,

In 1986 the region produced 2,500 megawatts of surplus power, enough to supply the needs of nearly 1.5 million people.

Nude photos cause uproar in Ashland

MEDFORD (AP) - The director of the community access channel in Ashland says he didn't know a broadcast of student artwork contained nude photos until the telephone started ringing with complaints.

"As soon as I realized what was going on, I pulled the tape," said Pete Belcastro, director of Ashland Cable Access.

The tape depicting artwork created by students at Southern Oregon State College was broadcast at 4:30 p.m. on June 11 to 38,000 households in the Medford and Ashland area.

I was sitting at home watching television and when I flipped the channel I saw breasts fill up the screen," said Cynthia Waugh of Medford.

She was among about 30 people who called Ashland Cable Access or TCI Cablevision of Oregon to

A segment showed a woman covered with cutout photographs of various portions of female

Belcastro said the channel sometimes broadcasts material that some people would find objectionable, but normally with warnings after 10 p.m.

BEER

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Major brewers have introduced new beers and even separate brands to court the small breweries'

Miller Reserve Amber Ale is marketed as a British-style all barley ale, much like the products of the specialty breweries.

Rainier Brewing of Seattle, a division of G. Heileman Brewing Co. of Chicago, makes Emerald City Ale in its main brewery. But the label says it is made by the Emerald City Brewing Co

Emerald City Ale is brewed much like the socalled specialty beers, using similar ingredients," said Randy Smith, vice president of G. Heileman

But Widmer said many of the big breweries' entries in the specialty market are just the same beer in different packaging.

"The big breweries are surely capable of brewing beer every bit as good as we do," Widmer said. But the marketing and accounting departments are calling the shots.

Smith of Heileman agrees that the market for specialty beers is limited

'If Anheuser-Busch brewed 40 million barrels of Budweiser and made it taste like the speciality product, I suspect they'd have to throw about half of it away," he said.

Small brewers attribute their success to the quality of their product and the fact that they focus their efforts on brewing, not marketing

Widmer and his brother Rob started in 1984 with about \$65,000 and built their first brewery by hand using secondhand dairy and restaurant

In their first year, they made 1,100 31-gallon barrels of beer. Last year, they made nearly 28,000 barrels of beer in a brewery filled with high-tech professional brewing equipment.

Widmer wouldn't release exact sales figures, but at a \$180 a barrel, sales were approximately \$5

The brewery is so successful that Widmer doesn't advertise or even sell bottled beer because the brewery's full capacity is sold in kegs



Microbrewed beers have rapidly grown in popularity in recent years, and major labels are now attempting to capture a piece of that market by offering more eclectic beers.

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