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COMMUNITY
EWEB makes going solar easy

By Lia Saliccia
 For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The Eugene Water and Electric Board just made acquiring solar energy a little easier. EWEB will now give as much as \$400 in rebates to homeowners who buy solar water heaters to replace their current electric water heaters.

With energy costs on the rise because of a 14 percent to 16 percent increase by the Bonneville Power Administration, many believe that now is the time and that Eugene is the place to go solar.

The amount of the rebate is based upon "the performance of the system and how much electric energy it saves in Kilowatt hours per year," said Don Spiek of EWEB.

Tax credits are also available to consumers wishing to install solar water heating systems.

The credits are measured "directly against state income taxes owed per year ... up to \$1,500 based on the performance of the system. They offer 60 cents per kilowatt hour saved every year," Spiek said. "That means if the homeowner saved 2,000 kilowatt hours a year they would give you credit in the amount of \$1,200," he said.

The American Solar Network is a solar company that has just



Courtesy photo
 Paul Israel (left), owner of the American Solar Network, sits atop the roof of client Ken Nanness with a flat EPDM panel.

moved to Eugene. "Utilities across the country are looking to solar water-heater companies," to join forces and offer solar water heating to homeowners, owner Paul Israel said.

Installing systems such as his "Skylite" water heater will save money for the consumer, cutting 30 percent to 60 percent of the total year of water heating costs, depending on the size of the system, Israel said.

Senate to debate gay rights bill

SALEM (AP) — A bill to block enactment of the Oregon Citizens Alliance's local anti-gay rights measures is headed for a vote in the Oregon Senate.

The Judiciary Committee voted Tuesday to send HB3500-A to the full Senate for debate. If approved there, the bill will go to Gov. Barbara Roberts.

Backers say the bill would bring about a truce in Oregon's war over gay rights by heading off enforcement of anti-gay rights ordinances like those the OCA is trying to pass in various cities and counties.

"This gives me nothing more than what I've had in the past," said Rep. George Eighmey, a Portland Democrat who is a homosexual. "It only says, 'Let's stop passing bills that take rights away from me.'"

But OCA Chairman Lon Mabon, who testified before the Judiciary Committee, said the Legislature is trying to usurp the initiative process by pre-

venting local voters from enacting anti-gay rights measures.

"This is a political maneuver to stop our local campaigns because we are starting to rack up victories," Mabon said. "I think it stinks."

Voters in four counties and two cities adopted OCA measures in mail balloting June 29. Earlier, a similar measure was adopted in Cornelius. Votes in other counties and cities are expected in September and November.

The bill represents a political compromise that was worked out after the House snubbed an earlier bill that would have outlawed discrimination against homosexuals in housing, employment and public accommodations.

The majority Republicans refused to let SB34 out of committee, saying it would confer "special rights" on homosexuals. Instead, they cleared the way for HB3500-A to emerge from the House as a way to block the OCA's local anti-gay rights efforts.

Governor to sign anti-stalking law

SALEM (AP) — A bill making stalking a crime is on its way to Gov. Barbara Roberts for her signature.

The House voted 59-0 Tuesday for SB833, which makes stalking a misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine. A repeat conviction would be a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

The bill defines stalking as knowingly making repeated, unwanted contact with people

for no legitimate reason.

Under the bill, police receiving complaints could order a suspect to stay away from an alleged victim. Victims also could go directly to court to seek an order against a stalker.

A leading proponent of anti-stalking legislation, Rep. Kevin Mannix, D-Salem, said it took a lot of work to come up with a law to protect the victims of stalkers while respecting civil liberties.

"We could have put out some schlock in January, February or March and said, 'Gee, we passed an anti-stalking bill.' Instead, we worked at it and worked at it," he said.

"We worked with the legitimate concerns of civil libertarians but we also especially worked at it from the perspective of the victims and came up with the best possible law you could pass in the United States."

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