

Billions wasted at Hanford

RICHLAND (AP) — The federal government has spent \$7.5 billion since 1989 at Hanford nuclear reservation but has made minimal progress in cleaning up one of the most polluted sites in the Western world, *The Spokesman-Review* reported Sunday.

Millions of dollars have been wasted on projects that were scuttled or postponed after significant investment. Taxpayers bought scores of worker perks including chauffeur services, jewelry and 500 copies of a self-help book, the newspaper reported in a special eight-page section.

"We've spent billions and billions and we haven't gotten anything," said Clark Hodge, who's been an engineer at Hanford for 20 years.

Hanford, a 560-square-mile compound on the Columbia River in southeastern Washington, is home to 18,750 employees assigned to research, management and cleanup of accumulated radioactive waste.

It was at Hanford in 1943 that plutonium was made for the secret Manhattan project. Hanford continued to process weapons-grade plutonium during the Cold War.

In the late 1980s, Hanford's military mission ended and the state of Washington, the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency signed an agreement to clean up the radioactive waste.

The Energy Department has a contract with Westinghouse Hanford Co. to maintain and operate the site. Several other big corporations provide engineering, research and cleanup services.

The federal money spigot is expected to pour out as much as \$100 billion for Hanford cleanup over the next 30 years. That's \$400 dollars for every American.

More than \$450 million has been spent looking for ways to dispose of radioactive material by converting it into cement blocks or glass logs for storage. As much as three-fourths of that money was wasted, said John Wagoner, the Energy Department's site manager at Hanford.

Another \$20 million went into trying to transform an aging plutonium plant into a waste processor.

Even Assistant Energy Secretary Thomas Grumbly suspects one of every \$3 sent to Hanford is wasted, the newspaper reported.

There are generous contract and worker perks, *The Spokesman-Review* reported, including:

- Old-growth fir doors and paneling that costs \$40,000 more than maple or oak for Battelle Northwest Laboratories' new research unit.

- Law firms that bill \$300 an hour and charge for gourmet meals and first-class plane flights.

- A \$13,721 contract awarded in February to provide Westinghouse logo jewelry.

- Last year, Westinghouse spent some \$60,000 at trophy stores for rewards to boost worker morale.

- Taxpayers spent \$533,000 on packaged dinners last year for workers on long shifts.

- Westinghouse spent \$910,000 on chauffeur service for employees in 1991.

Some grocery workers return to work Monday

PORTLAND (AP) — Grocery clerks and meatcutters could be back on the job in 126 Portland-area stores as early as Monday, but 500 general checkout clerks at Fred Meyer Inc. remain on strike, union leaders said Saturday.

The 6,500 grocery workers voted Saturday to accept new three-year contracts with Food Employers Inc.

The contracts were approved by a margin of 60 percent to 40 percent, said Rick Sawyer, spokesman for Local 555 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

"It wasn't an overwhelming acceptance by any means," Sawyer said. "I think that in itself will send a message to the employers that there are still a lot of members out there that are very unhappy."

Sawyer said the new contract failed to meet workers' expectations in the areas of seniority, scheduling and economics. They also were upset by an amnesty clause covering workers who crossed the picket lines during the two month strike, he said.

Meanwhile, Fred Meyer's central checkout clerks, who are governed under a separate contract, rejected their proposed contract by a 60 percent to 40 percent margin, Sawyer said.

Because the checkout clerks also handle general merchandise, they are paid less than grocery clerks, he said.

He said union leaders already had notified Fred Meyer and federal mediator Thomas Drew of the vote and would attempt to renegotiate a new settlement.

■ ET ALS

MEETINGS

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance will offer a drop-in group for women today from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St., Eugene. For more information, call 346-3360.

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Group will meet today from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Koinonia Center, 1414 Kincaid St., Eugene. For more information, call 346-3360.

MISCELLANEOUS

Career Center will sponsor a table for Environmental Control today from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the EMU. For more information, call 346-3235.

Career Center will sponsor a general meeting for Walmart tonight from 7 to 9 p.m. in EMU Cedar Room A. For more information, call 346-3235.

■ CORRECTION

In a Nov. 9 news article, Manuel P. Regino was incorrectly identified as a High School Equivalency program student. Regino is not associated with the program. The *Emerald* regrets the error.

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