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Oregon Daily Emerald

Museum hosts open house

■ The Museum of Natural History offers many volunteer opportunities for those interested

By Anna Seeley
for the Emerald

The Museum of Natural History will be opening its doors after-hours today to serve refreshments and get the word out about its volunteer program.

The museum is hosting an open house to give out information about its volunteering opportunities. The event, which will be held from 5:15 p.m. until 6:15 p.m. in the museum lobby, will be an informal way for people to talk to current museum staff members and volunteers.

"This is going to be a very low-key event," said Linda Yoder, museum store manager. "It's a way for us to talk to people that come in and give them some preliminary information and paperwork to consider."

People who go to the open house will not be committing to volunteering at the museum just by attending. Museum employees want interested people to consider the time commitment before volunteering. However, the museum relies heavily on

its volunteers and is in need of more, Yoder said.

"When I first started, we had a lot of volunteers," said Nancy Draper, a volunteer. "But now poor Linda [Yoder] has a hard time filling the schedule."

There are many opportunities for people to get involved at the museum. The museum needs volunteers to work in the museum gift shop, work at the front desk greeting guests and answering questions, and work in the courtyard with native planting, Yoder said.

For a more outgoing person, being a docent is another way to aid the museum. A docent (Latin for "guide") is in charge of leading tour groups that visit the museum.

"A lot of people who do that are teachers, but anyone interested in learning and teaching can do it," Yoder said.

Denis McCarthy has volunteered at the museum for 15 years, both as a docent and as a front desk worker. He said he loves being a volunteer and would recommend it to others.

"[Being a volunteer] didn't threaten me, but it challenged me," McCarthy said. "I benefit more than anyone ever taken through here because we have all these interested

people coming and interested people working here."

The museum does not have a huge training program, Yoder said, but it does have some procedures to help new volunteers get acquainted with the museum. Most of the jobs are not difficult to learn and can be taught by shadowing, and museum employees ask that volunteers attend meetings periodically, Yoder said.

"We don't expect people to be experts when they first come in," Yoder said. "Part of the fun of volunteering is learning."

To be a docent requires more training. There is no set script for the docents to follow, so they start out by doing a tag-along with the other docents.

"Docent training is more one-on-one," Yoder said. "They usually start out by being comfortable with one exhibit and I shadow them and give them feedback on their tour."

The museum volunteers said they love the job and the people they work with.

"This is the most wholesome, rewarding, relaxing thing I do," McCarthy said. "It helps you understand a lot about the world, and it's a great way to learn about Oregon."

EWEB

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would be short-sighted.

"We don't want to be forced to endanger our reserves," Anderson said.

Varner and the EWEB staff decided not to propose the previously discussed inverted rate model, which would charge residents more for the power that exceeded a certain level of use.

Varner said a flat rate would be more effective to enact now than an inverted rate model.

Public opinion has been split between an inverted rate and a flat rate, and on Tuesday night, one community member said he supported the inverted rate because it would best promote power conservation.

"The purpose of the board should not be to protect some people or some businesses, but to promote conservation," Bob Cassidy said. "Save the salmon, keep the air clean and promote conservation."

Hugh Perrine, another Eugene resident who came to speak about

rate increases, said the 5.4 percent increase was good, but a 15 percent increase was better.

"We need an increase that reflects the economic reality of what's happening right now," Perrine said. "If anything, it's important to make the increase as soon as possible so people can prepare for them."

Varner said some EWEB staff members thought a 15 percent increase would send the best conservation signal, but 5.4 percent is the minimum threshold for rate increases to start at.

"This rate sends a good foundation," EWEB general manager Randy Berggren said.

Despite Varner's confidence in 5.4 percent as an appropriate increase, EWEB Commissioner Sandra Bishop was still hesitant to make a decision.

"It's difficult to make a decision when the information we are getting keeps changing," Bishop said. "But I know we need to take action in this sitting."

EWEB Vice President Peter Bartel agreed that a decision needed to be made, and said the board should

The Eugene Water and Electric Board's rate increase in comparison with other rate increases by Northwest publicly owned utilities:

- Snohomish Public Utility (Snohomish County, Wash.):** raised rates by 35 percent.
- Seattle City Light (Seattle, Wash.):** raised rates 18 percent.
- Clark Public Utility (Clark County, Wash.):** raised rates by 20 percent.
- EWEB (Eugene, Ore.):** raised rates by 5.4 percent.

vote on the 5.4 percent if that was the most beneficial to the public.

"If 5.4 percent gets us to a safe place, then let's do it," Bartel said.

The board also looked at what EWEB can do within its own business to cut back on electricity use, and how businesses on special contracts could help in the conservation efforts. Both of these issues will be decided at a later date.

The board will also still be looking at the possibility of an inverted rate later in the year.

Gambling

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Gambling Impact Study Commission to report on the effects of gambling nationwide. In November 1998, the commission reported that sports betting legally takes in \$2.4 billion, and as much as \$380 billion is spent on illegal sports gambling.

H.R. 3575 is a direct response to the commission's recommendation to eliminate legalized betting on college sports. The House Judiciary Committee favored the bill by a 19-9 vote. Congress has read the bill, but it has been referred back to committees.

"The NCAA is very supportive of the legislation," said Jane Jankowski, the NCAA's assistant director for public relations. "Quite frankly, when the bill was first introduced, we did not think there would be sufficient members behind it."

"Now we know the bill has a chance to pass, and we are behind it."

Reps. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Tim Roemer, D-Ind., originally introduced the bill in February 2000. Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Sam Brownback, R-Kan., are sponsors of the Senate counterpart.

Graham Spanier, president of Pennsylvania State University and chairman of the NCAA's Division I Board of Directors, has testified be-

fore Congress in favor of the bill. Several other sports figures, including Big Ten Conference Commissioner Jim Delany, University of South Carolina head football coach Lou Holtz, University of Kentucky men's basketball head coach Tubby Smith and Dean Smith, former head coach of the University of North Carolina's men's basketball team, have gone before Congress to testify in support of the bill.

The Nevada Gaming Commission made several counter-proposals to the NCAA regarding collegiate sports wagering, including a proposal to limit all college sports bets to \$550 and eliminate legal wagering on high school and Olympic sports.

In an October 2000 press release, the NCAA called the proposals "a smokescreen" and rejected them. The press release also said that by proposing a \$550 limit, the Nevada Gaming Commission is acknowledging that illegal bookmakers come to Nevada to pay off large sums of money.

The Emerald attempted to reach management at Las Vegas Sports Consultants, a sports gambling agency that establishes point spreads and over-under numbers for games, but a receptionist said that the company will not allow employees to talk to media for "the next few months," and that the company re-

cently changed management.

The gambling impact commission found that legal gambling on sports feeds illegal gambling activity. Opponents of the bill argue that it would not address the larger issue of illegal college sports wagering and bookkeeping, or management of a gambling organization. The bill's proponents argue that it is intended only as a starting point.

Jankowski said the NCAA does not feel that the bill will lead to increased illegal gambling on college sports.

Randy Sealby, a special agent in the FBI's Chicago bureau, said that to his knowledge, the FBI has released no official statement about the bill because its effects cannot be determined.

Sealby also said that most bookkeepers rely on point spreads created at Las Vegas consulting agencies. If sports gambling is made illegal in Nevada, the bookkeepers would not have access to the currently available range of betting odds and may decide to stop taking bets as a result. A sports wager is legal only if one is physically in Las Vegas, according to Sealby.

"Point spreads start in Las Vegas," said Sealby. "If you didn't have that, you might not have the offshoots, and it might just dry up. We really don't know."