

Canal-clearing job requires precise maneuvering

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

CASHMERE, Wash. — It's not a job for the faint of heart, but you wouldn't know that watching Russell Gilmore and Andy Sanders.

Every year about this time, they operate a backhoe and dump truck along a narrow canal road that runs 100 to 400 feet above the floor of the Wenatchee Valley and the town of Cashmere.

They're removing rocks and mud from a 12-mile segment of Wenatchee Reclamation District's Highline Canal. Rocks fall into the canal off steep hillsides when snow melts. This year, there were fewer rocks than usual because there wasn't much snow.

The backhoe is eight feet wide and there are places the canal road is no wider, although most of the time there's a couple of feet to spare on either side.



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Russell Gilmore backs a dump truck up to a backhoe run by Andy Sanders to clean rocks out of the Highline Canal, which is 100 feet or more above Cashmere, Wash., on March 19.

"It's quite the drop. I don't want to go over. I probably wouldn't survive," Gilmore said, noting there are a few spots that make him nervous. He's done the job for 27 years.

He's adept at backing the dump truck along the narrow road by keeping just an eagle eye on the driver door mirror. Sanders runs the back-

hoe, scooping rocks out of the 10-foot-wide canal and dumping them in the bed of the truck.

Gilmore uses a rope tied to the side of the truck to scramble down into the five-foot-deep canal bed with a shovel. He scoops rocks and mud that the backhoe bucket misses and tosses them in.

The canal road isn't open

to the public. Some people who try to drive it find they don't like it, Gilmore said. "It takes them forever."

The canal dates back to 1902 and carries water from the Wenatchee River at Dryden some 34 miles down valley, through Wenatchee and in a pipe across the 1908 Columbia River bridge to East Wenatchee.

Canadian government approves GM apples

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

Genetically modified Golden Delicious and Granny Smith apples have been approved in Canada about a month after being deregulated in the United States.

The non-browning Arctic apples developed by Okanagan Specialty Fruits, Summerland, B.C., have been approved for propagation and sales in Canada after reviews by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Health Canada, the company said.

Government scientists conducted an assessment "that ensured the apple is safe for consumption, still has all its nutritional value and therefore does not differ from other apples available on the market," Health Canada said in a statement.

"The science behind the Arctic apple is quite simple. A gene was introduced into the

Arctic apple that results in a reduction in the levels of enzymes that make apples turn brown when sliced. In every other way, the Arctic apple tree and its fruit are identical to any other apple," Health Canada said.

A thorough analysis of data and protocols of the company was conducted by scientists with expertise in molecular biology, microbiology, toxicology, chemistry and nutrition, the agency said.

"Following this assessment, it was determined that the changes made to the apple did not pose a greater risk to human health than apples currently available on the Canadian market. In addition, Health Canada also concluded that the Arctic apple would have no impact on allergies and that there are no differences in nutritional value ... compared to other traditional apple varieties available for consumption," the agency said.

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