

PGE denied rate hike request

Public Utility Commissioner John Lobdell Monday denied a request of Portland General Electric (PGE) to change its accounting procedures—a move which would have required a 6.5 percent increase in electricity rates.

PGE sought the change in accounting for income taxes in a rate increase request filed last year. An increase of 11.6 percent was granted by former Public Utility Commissioner Charles Davis, with residential customers paying 3.4 percent more. The shift in accounting procedures was rejected. Davis granted a PGE petition for reconsideration,

however, saying he wanted to determine whether the present accounting methods provided a subsidy of today's ratepayers by future customers.

Lobdell became Public Utility Commissioner in April and completed reconsideration of the issue this week. If he had granted the PGE request, the accompanying rate increase would have produced \$21.4 million in revenue for the company.

The accounting question is complex because it involves tax law and utility regulatory law and policy. Basically, Lobdell said, "The issue is whether the company or

ratepayers should receive the benefit of savings made possible by various present income tax laws."

The savings are only temporary, however. Lobdell pointed out that income taxes, like other operating costs, eventually are paid by the utilities' customers.

And, he said, "The company's request is based on the assumption that tax policies will stay the same. This is unlikely, so rather than gamble that future ratepayers might benefit, we should make available to today's ratepayers whatever cost savings are properly available to them."

Lobdell said he has concluded that the present distribution of tax benefits between present and future ratepayers is appropriate and should remain unchanged.

PGE filed on June 1 for another rate increase, this one for 21.1 percent. The case was built on the assumption that the Public Utility Commissioner would grant the request for a change in accounting for taxes.

Lobdell has since directed the company to make an additional filing showing the impact of denial of the request for modification of the accounting procedures.

Helicopter used in slash burn

By Cynthia Dillon

A helicopter spewing highly flammable jellied gas was used by the Zig Zag Ranger District to burn 68 acres of slash in the Wildcat Mountain area Tuesday.

Western Helicopter Services of Newberg had signed a \$17,000 contract with the Mt. Hood National Forest to burn slash using "alumagel," which is capable of burning 60 acres in a minute and a half.

Jimmy Roads, fuels manager for Zig Zag Ranger District, said the 68 acres in the Wildcat area were so heavily involved in new growth that the jellied fuel was needed because it would burn hotter than hand-set fires.

"We can do it for \$38 per acre using the helicopter, which is cheaper than doing it by hand and takes less man hours," said the man in

charge of the burn, Joe Rodriguez, fire manager for Zig Zag District.

"We've been trying to burn these units for four years, but something always came up. Either it was too hot, or too wet, or the east wind was too strong. Everything has to be just right before you can burn," he continued.

Men from the Ranger District had camped in the area for three days prior to the burn, monitoring conditions such as humidity, wind direction and velocity, and smoke dispersal. The monitoring continued up until the actual burning.

"D.E.Q. almost shut us down because of all the smoke in the Willamette Valley," said Rodriguez. He added the smoke in the valley was coming from the Washington side and funneling right down the valley.

Zig Zag Ranger District is far ahead of its scheduled target date of July 15 for completion of slash burning.

"We're all finished now," said Rodriguez. "We've burned 1800 acres since January, when we had to use snowmobiles. We have just a super slash crew this year at Zig Zag. They can get the work done in six months that it takes most a year to do."

Rodriguez said the slash burning must be finished

before the field burning starts this summer in the Willamette Valley.

Approximately 30-35 tons of slash per acre was involved in Tuesday's burn, with mop up crews scheduled to be finished by Wednesday night.

"We'll have this cleaned up and in two or three weeks they'll be in there reforesting the area," said Rodriguez.

Forest Service blames haze on Washington

The increased haze surrounding the Mt. Hood area in the past week has not been due to a sudden rush of forest fires burning in the Mt. Hood National Forest, according to a Forest Service information officer.

The haze is the result of burning in Washington that has drifted down over northern Oregon.

Although the Forest Service anticipates a "very dry season," the only burning now occurring in the Mt. Hood area is slash burning conducted by the Forest Service. That project is nearly completed.

Keeping in mind the impending fire danger for the summer season, the Forest Service has issued some reminders for campers

and backpackers. It is recommended that each camping party have a shovel and bucket at their campsite. For backpackers, a shovel is recommended because carrying a bucket is unwieldy. Taking along a bucket is not discouraged, however.

For woodcutters using a chain saw, a screen on the spark arrester is necessary. It is mandatory, according to the Forest Service, that each chain saw operator have a fire extinguisher at the site of cutting.

Because of dry conditions, some campgrounds in the Mt. Hood National Forest have been closed already. They are S-25 and S-252 in the Hood River District and S-21 in the High Prairie area.



JOHN KLINE, left, and Jim Wilhite in rehearsal with Judy Sheppard for this Friday's opening of "Everybody Loves Opal."

Curtain to rise on 'Opal' set

The lights go up at 8 p.m. Friday night for the opening of "Everybody Loves Opal" at The Theater on Proctor Boulevard.

The play is the third of the season for the Sandy Community Players, who have taken over the old movie house. "Opal" will be presented seven times, including a special benefit performance Tuesday for the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce.

"We've got a good play with a few technical

surprises," says Katie Ten Eyck, director of "Opal." "There's been a lot of hard work put into the play by a lot of people."

"We're hoping for a good turnout from the community," she added.

Judy Sheppard is cast as the lead in the play. She plays Opal, a good-hearted junk collector who lives in an old run-down Victorian house on the edge of the city dump. Her character is a potpourri of Auntie Mame, Lucille Ball

and Phyllis Diller wrapped up in a lovable package.

Into her life walk three characters of questionable repute. They are door-to-door perfume peddlers who take refuge from the law in Opal's run-down home.

Marlene Tebo, Jim Wilhite and John Kline play the three crooks. Also cast are Ken Fox as the doctor and Dave Eagle as a policeman.

Fox played the lead as the rabbi in Portland Civic Theater's production of

"Fiddler on the Roof" last year.

Ten Eyck played the lead in "The Runner Stumbles" at The Production Company earlier this year. She comes to the Sandy Community Players with a great deal of theater experience.

"Everybody Loves Opal" will run Saturday night as well as the special Chamber benefit Tuesday. The play will continue the following two weekends, Friday and Saturday nights, at 8 p.m.

Diapers, bottles surprise litter patrol

Picking up litter for the state Highway Division sounded like an honorable summer job to 17-year-old Pam Thompson.

She didn't expect to be honored with dirty diapers, cigarette packs and Schlitz six-pack cartons.

Besides, it rains a lot. But the four teenagers who are picking up litter on Highway 26 this summer say they wouldn't trade their wooden sticks with pointed metal tips for a pencil or typewriter in any office.

"I couldn't stand to work in some closed-in place," said Dan Bacon, 17, a senior at Estacada High School. And the \$5 bill he found along the road this week is just another highlight of the \$3-an-hour job.

Bacon finds more cigarette packs than greenbacks on the end of his stick, however. In his second summer of litter poking, he's come up with a solution

that could revolutionize his way out of a job.

"Cigarette packages—I think they should put a deposit on them. Then nobody would throw them out the window."

He might be right. There are very few bottles, or even broken glass, in the familiar plastic bags which the litter crew leaves for highway crews to pick up.

Lots of shoes and gloves, though. They're never lost in pairs. "I never could figure out how you could lose one glove on the highway," Bacon said.

Melody Thompson wishes she didn't have to pick up the dirty diapers she has found on the road. She's met some interesting folks, though. "A lot of people stop to ask for directions," said the junior at Sandy High School. "In one day, we had people ask us directions to Cascade Locks, Seaside and Fred Meyer."

A woman stopped 19-year-old Kathy Jones, the crew chief, to ask if she'd found the top to a chest of drawers. One man offered to pay the crew 50 cents for each reflective highway post they'd find for him—he needed 14 of them.

"One guy stopped to tell us he'd picked up litter in New York," said Jones, a 1978 graduate of Barlow High School and sophomore at Southern Oregon State College. "He got paid more."

The litter patrols are paid with fees collected from the custom license plates issued by the state. Highway crews take over for the less-littered winter months, said Ken Juden, supervisor for the Sandy maintenance station.

Juden hires students for the crew. "I've found girls seem to work better at this particular job than boys," he said.

Bacon, the only man on the crew, has heard that remark before. "That's OK, I guess. I've got a job."

Keeping Posted

Thursday, June 28

The Rebekah Lodge meets at the I.O.O.F. Hall at 8 p.m.

The Golden Age Club potluck will be at noon at the Sandy Senior Center.

A special meeting for

parents to discuss Sandy High School operations with school administrators is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the reference library.

Friday, June 29

"Everybody Loves Coal" kicks off the

summer season for the Sandy Community Players at the theater at 8 p.m. The play will run at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights through July 14.

The Boring Invitational Softball

Tournament gets under way at 7 p.m. The tournament continues through Sunday.

Monday, July 2

Mountain Days begins today and continues throughout the week with special events. A pet show is scheduled for today.

The Rainbow Girls meet at the Masonic Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 3

A boys basketball camp begins at Sandy High School under the direction of Len Eaton, the school's junior varsity coach. The camp is divided into two sections. The first section meets from 9 a.m. to noon. It is for boys in the eighth and ninth grades.

The afternoon session meets from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and is for boys in the fourth through seventh grades.

A benefit performance of "Everybody Loves Opal" for the Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce is scheduled for 8 p.m.

Wednesday, July 4

There is a fireworks display scheduled for dusk at the Sandy High School athletic fields. Musical entertainment at 8 p.m. will precede the display.

Thursday, July 5

The Clackamas County Bookmobile will be at Firwood School from 9:30 to 11 a.m.; at Brightwood Store from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; and at Hoodland Plaza in Welches from 2 to 4 p.m.

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