

The Benton County report noted that dams in the Willamette river basin were not designed to withstand such big earthquakes and their failure could cause massive flooding. The report said the probability of such a failure is “less than once in 1,000 years and perhaps substantially less. However, the consequences of failure are so high that careful evaluation is certainly warranted.”

But the OSU reactor safety report does not appear to consider the risk of dam failure cited in the Benton County report. OSU states: “There are no lakes or dams near the OSTR and, therefore, seismically induced flooding due to dam failure or seiches is not a risk.”

The OSU reactor is about 40 years old, but it is only a 1-megawatt facility compared to the 500 mw reactors in Japan.

The Benton County report judged the risk of an operational nuclear accident at the Corvallis reactor “negligible, due to the passive safety design” that is less vulnerable to power failures.

Terrorism, not earthquakes, could be the worst threat to the facility. The Benton County report stated: “The possibility, however remote, of deliberate terrorist actions cannot be disregarded for this facility and appropriate security measures and emergency planning are recommended.” — Alan Pittman

PARTICLE PARTY

When you’re a physicist in town for a linear collider conference, what do you do for fun? You hold a physics slam, DUH! At least that’s what members of the American Linear Collider Physics Group decided to do.

Next Tuesday, six physicists will have 12 minutes each to clearly explain a topic in particle physics — with panache. After the presentations, audience members will vote for the most clear and entertaining presenter.

Leah Hesla of the Fermi National

Accelerator Laboratory thinks that some of the audience members will develop a newfound appreciation for physics because of the straightforward style of the talks. “The reason I think that many people are turned off by physics is that they don’t understand it in the first place,” she says. “With understanding comes enjoyment.”

The physicists, or “slammers” as Hesla calls them, are attending the conference from around the U.S., Germany, Japan, Switzerland and the U.K. They will throw down at 7 pm Tuesday, March 22, in Columbia 150 at UO.

Because the audience members grade the scientists, this could also be therapeutic for Eugeneans still reeling from high



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