

EWEB TO TEST SMART METERS

"Smart meters" will be tested in 100 Eugene homes by EWEB starting this month, and every customer could have them beginning in 2013. The meters send power usage data to EWEB by radio, and the advantages are many for the utility: no more meter readers peering over fences and stumbling over tricycles, and EWEB can gain useful information to help regulate power consumption and supply.

But every new technology raises questions, and local energy activist Kathy Ging worries there's a "dark side" to these meters. She questions EWEB assertions that radio frequency (RF) emissions from the meters are harmless. Clay Norris, director of power resources for EWEB, told City Club July 22 that smart meters give off about "one hundredth the amount of emissions that you get from cell phones."

EWEB's website says RF from "smart meters does not pose a health hazard" and the meters will "generally broadcast for less than 10 seconds total each day."

Ging has distributed to her mailing list dozens of documents and website links warning of potential dangers of smart meters, including a letter from local research scientist Michael Lee, saying "these kinds of exposures are cumulative and come from a variety of sources, adding up in individuals." Ging cites eoneEMFblog.net saying radiation from smart meters "may be between 50 and 160 times worse than from cell phones."

Lee and Ging are calling for more research, while Jeannine Parisi, community liaison for EWEB, says in an email exchange that "the information being circulated is misleading at best and lacks context and proportionality." EWEB consultant Josh Skov of Good Company agrees, saying "these assertions, while surely well-intentioned, are unsupported in

the scientific and technical literature ... it's hard to find any reason at all to be concerned." — *Ted Taylor*

BLACK BEAR INJURED IN OAKRIDGE

In the words of Winnie the Pooh, "Bears love honey and I'm a Pooh bear." A bear in Oakridge was injured July 25 by a snare set to keep it from going after beehives. Brooks Fahy of Predator Defense says both the honey stealing incident and the injury to the bear could have been prevented.

Bears, contrary to what Pooh says, don't love honey; they love to eat the high-protein bees and larvae, according to the American Bear Association.

Oregon is home to about 30,000 black bears, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The state was once also home to grizzly bears, but the last one was killed in Eastern Oregon in the late 1930s.

ODFW says once bears become habituated to finding food near homes or campgrounds, "bears can become a threat to human safety and must often be destroyed."

The black bear in Oakridge was reported around town for several weeks. ODFW says it loaned a bear culvert trap to USDA's Wildlife Services, but the bear was not caught.

Lane County no longer funds Wildlife Services, a controversial predator-killing agency, but Wildlife Services gets money from state agencies as well as private landowners. Congressman Peter DeFazio has repeatedly introduced federal legislation to end the agency. Fahy says, "The state is spending more money on killing predators than ever before." This, he says, flies in the face of the fact that "every month there's been another report saying how important predators are."

After the culvert trap failed, Wildlife Services placed a snare, which caught the bear by the leg. The bear yanked itself free. Fahy says the bear could have lost toes and could lose its foot or die of an infection. He also questions setting a snare in city limits where a child or a pet dog could have been injured.

ACTIVIST ALERT

• **Lane County Democrats** are hosting a grand opening of their new office and a celebration of President Obama's 50th birthday from 5 to 8 pm Thursday, Aug. 4, at 228 E. 11th Ave. in Eugene. The local Democrats' monthly meeting will be at 6:30 pm Thursday, Aug. 18, at EWEB, 500 E. 4th Ave. in Eugene. See dpo.org for other meetings around the region.

• **A candidate forum** for the Lane County Youth Services director position will be at 6 pm Thursday, Aug. 4, at the Serbu Youth Campus Carmichael Room, 2727 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

• **The 26th Annual Convention of Veterans For Peace** will be held Aug. 4-7 on the campus of Portland State University. Keynote speakers for the national conference will include S. Brian Willson, Mike Hastie, Bud Brown, David Phillips and Elliot Adams. See www.veteransforpeace.org for schedule, registration and a link for live streaming of selected sessions, or call (314) 725-6005.

• **ELAW** will be the featured nonprofit at the 7 pm Thursday, Aug. 4, Ems baseball game, which means ELAW makes \$3 on every \$9 ticket they sell, and fans can use the tickets as a voucher for any game this season. Contact ELAW's Michele Kuhnle at michele@elaw.org or 687-8454 ext. 14.

• **Susan Lindauer**, the controversial former CIA asset and author who was imprisoned and describes herself as a victim of the U.S. PATRIOT Act, will speak at 7 pm Sunday, Aug. 7, at Tsunami Books at 25th and Willamette. The title of her book is, *Extreme Prejudice: The Terrifying Story of the Patriot Act and the Cover-Ups of 9/11 and Iraq*.

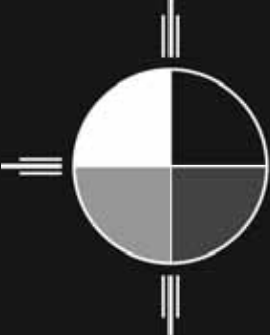
Happening people BY PAUL NEEVEL

PATRICIA CORTEZ

"My grandma taught me that you're put in this world to serve," says Patricia Cortez, who works half-time as a therapist at the Center for Family Development so that she can devote 40 hours to volunteer work. Displaced by civil war in El Salvador, Cortez was raised by her grandma in that nation's capital. She excelled in school and made it to the university, but was drafted into the army after she organized political protests.



She was injured when a soldier stepped on a mine, then escaped the hospital and entered the U.S. illegally in 1985. "I worked three jobs," says Cortez, who also found time to volunteer. "I spent time with people with AIDS." When her application for political asylum was accepted, she found a 40-hour job with an info-tech firm in the Bay Area, and added 20 hours elsewhere as a volunteer. "I heard about green and rain, like El Salvador," says Cortez, who moved to Eugene in 1997. She found work at a candle company and eventually earned degrees from LCC, UO and PSU. A volunteer at Amigos Multicultural Services Center since her arrival, she facilitates the center's youth program, Juventud FACETA, that began as her UO undergrad project. "We're in our sixth cohort now," she says. "Our young people do 375 hours of community service and get 125 hours of leadership training in human rights."



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