

PENDLETON

# Planning Commission approves solar project

Array would be installed near airport

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**  
East Oregonian

A California-based startup company plans to break ground sometime next year on a utility-scale solar farm just west of Pendleton.

Cypress Creek Renewables will build a 6-megawatt solar facility on 44 acres of bare industrial land leased from the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport. The project received its conditional use permit Oct. 1 from the Pendleton Planning Commission.

Solar panels will run along the

steep hill north of Interstate 84, west of Airport Road. The land was previously used for grazing cattle.

A report from the Federal Aviation Administration determined there is no potential hazard to air travel, and the Oregon Department of Transportation says glare from the panels will not affect drivers on I-84. Evan MacKenzie, with the city planning department, said there were no other special conditions imposed on the developer.

Cypress Creek Renewables now has two years to obtain a building permit.

“Basically, they’re good to go,” MacKenzie said.

Jason Carr, spokesman with Cypress Creek Renewables, said

the company launched less than two years ago and focuses solely on solar power. In addition to California, Cypress Creek has offices in Arizona, North Carolina, Missouri and New York.

The project applicant is technically NorWest Energy 9 LLC, a subsidiary of Cypress Creek. They also have two more solar arrays under development east of Bend.

“It goes without saying Eastern Oregon has plentiful sunshine,” Carr said. “That is certainly one of the attributes we were interested in.”

Another appealing feature of the Pendleton airport land was close proximity to a Pacific Power substation where the electricity

could connect to the grid. Carr said they have already worked out a 15-year purchase agreement with Pacific Power, as required for qualifying renewable energy projects under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act.

And, though Pacific Power has asked Oregon regulators to limit the length of so-called PURPA contracts from 15 years to just three years, Carr said their existing contract would be grandfathered in should that rule be changed.

At six megawatts of electricity, the solar panel should generate enough power for 1,200 homes. The development is expected to generate \$42,000 in annual tax revenue for the city.

“We’ve seen the city of Pendleton overall has been very proactive when it comes to utilizing solar,” Carr said. “I think there’s just an understanding of what solar can bring to the community, not only providing clean energy but tax revenue as well.”

Meanwhile, Umatilla Electric Cooperative began work Nov. 3 to build a 1-megawatt solar farm east of Umatilla. The co-op bought 80 acres from the Port of Umatilla south of Highway 730 in April. The array is expected to take up only six acres of that site.

Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0825.

## IRRIGON Elderly man with Alzheimer’s still missing

By **GEORGE PAVLEN**  
East Oregonian

After a second full day of searching, the trail appears to have gone cold for a missing Irrigon man with Alzheimer’s disease who walked away from home at about 2 a.m. Monday.

John Getman, 78, was last seen near the Irrigon Fish Hatchery between 8 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. Monday, three miles northwest of town. He was spotted earlier that morning walking west on Washington Avenue.

A helicopter flew in from Salem on Tuesday to scout the surrounding area, including the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge. Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said the search so far has come up empty.

“We still have no idea where he is,” Matlack said. “At this point, we don’t have a whole lot of options.”

Authorities have issued all-points bulletins in Oregon, Washington and Idaho, and alerted truck stops from Biggs Junction to Ontario in case Getman was picked up somewhere along the road. Police also checked with local hospitals from The Dalles and Pendleton to Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities.

Matlack said they’ve received no other tips or sightings since Monday.

“We’re hoping we will get calls from somebody who’s seen him. It’s not too late for that,” he said. “But the reality is that time isn’t our friend anymore. We need to catch a break.”

Getman came to Irrigon from New York in February to live with his sister and is unfamiliar with the area. Matlack said Getman gets confused when he can’t find his way.

This isn’t the first time Getman has gone missing. On Feb. 10, a news station in Utica, New York reported Getman went missing in his pickup truck from the nearby city of Little Falls. He was found safe the same day by New York State Police in Marcy, New York, 33 miles away.

Matlack said he will talk again with the family on Wednesday. Temperatures in Irrigon Tuesday night were expected to fall to 42 degrees, with winds gusting as high as 44 mph.

“We’re just hopeful we’ll get a lead today from someone who might have seen him,” he said.

Getman is described as 6 feet tall, 190 pounds with very short gray hair, brown eyes and no facial hair. He was last seen wearing a heavy brown Carhartt jacket, brown plaid shirt, blue jeans and sneakers. Apart from Alzheimer’s, he has no other serious medical problems.

In addition to the aerial search, Matlack said volunteers on horseback rode east from Irrigon to the Umatilla County line, but found no sign of Getman. Deputies used a patrol boat to check the banks of the Columbia River from Irrigon to Boardman, but found nothing.

There was a report Monday afternoon of an elderly man walking on old highway 30 near Frederickson Farming, though Matlack said they could not confirm it was Getman.

Anyone with information on Getman is asked to call the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office at 541-676-5317.

Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0825.



Getman

## Flowering rush flourishes along Columbia

Regulations delay removal of irrigation-clogging weed

By **MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI**  
EO Media Group

Flowering rush, an aquatic weed that clogs irrigation canals, has spread to multiple new sites near McNary Dam along the Columbia River since its discovery in the area last year.

Meanwhile, the federal government must again clear environmental regulatory hurdles before removing new patches of flowering rush found growing below the dam, which is under the jurisdiction of a different regional office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

“Because we’re part of the federal government, we have to follow federal laws and regulations,” said Diana Fredlund, spokesperson for the Army Corps’ Portland District.

Flowering rush was first found growing on the Oregon side of the Columbia River in August 2014, with surveys eventually locating 15 sites near McNary Dam.

That portion of the river is governed by the Walla Walla District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which had to obtain approval under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Archeological Resources Protection Act to remove the weed with diver-assisted suction hoses.

“This should be straightforward. We’re just going in and by hand removing some small sites,” said Tim Butler, Oregon Department of Agriculture’s noxious weed program manager.

By the time the agency cleared those hurdles and scheduled a dive team to yank the flowering rush patches in August 2015, the weed had expanded to 45 total sites in the area.

While divers were able to treat 39 of those sites, six of them were growing on the Columbia River below McNary



E.J. Harris/EO Media Group

Diver Andrew Hannes, with the Army Corps of Engineers out of Portland, gestures while searching for flowering rush on the bottom of the Columbia River near Umatilla in August 2015.

Dam, which means they come under the purview of the Army Corps’ Portland District, said Mark Porter, an integrated weed management coordinator for ODA.

For that reason, the process of obtaining clearance under NEPA, ESA and ARPA must now be repeated by the agency’s Portland office, which is unlikely to occur in time for the patches to be removed before next year, he said.

The agency expects that the regulatory processes will be completed over winter, when the plants disappear below the water line, so they can be covered with mats or removed when they re-emerge next spring, said Fredlund.

“We do want it to keep it from becoming a bigger problem,” she said.

The Army Corps’ Walla Walla District can continue removing the weed without re-clearing regulatory barriers, and its experience is expected to speed up the Portland District’s compliance with those statutes, said Damian Walter, wildlife

biologist for the agency.

Apart from sites on the Columbia River, there’s a large population of flowering rush upriver on the Yakima River in Washington, which state regulators are attempting to control, he said.

“There is a constant source currently in the system,” Walter said. “We’ve got to address the source of it.”

As part of long-term plans to battle flowering rush, Washington State University is studying predatory beetles in Central Europe that feed on the weed’s roots in that region, limiting its spread.

The weed poses a serious threat if it’s able to enter irrigation systems along the Columbia River or its tributaries, said Porter. Flowering rush grows so thickly that it greatly slows the movement of water and changes aquatic ecosystems.

“This plant seems to be a very aggressive aquatic invader. This isn’t just another weed,” he said. “It has the big potential to do some harm.”

## Co-worker testifies murder suspect returned gun with blood

Tri-City Herald

A former co-worker of Francisco Resendez Miranda testified Monday that the triple murder suspect from Umatilla returned a revolver with blood on it shortly after the killings.

Archie Marquez testified he gave his .38-caliber revolver to Resendez Miranda hours before the three Pasco victims were shot in a Benton County cornfield.

Marquez apparently gave the gun to Resendez Miranda after a break-in at the accused killer’s Umatilla apartment.

The break-in is a



Resendez Miranda

possible motive for the deaths of David Perez-Saucedo, Abigail Torres-Renteria and Victoria Torres. The trio were found dead in August 2014 after going to Umatilla.

Worried that he may be linked to the killings, Marquez testified he threw the gun off a

bridge into the Columbia River. The revolver has not been found.

The trial is entering its third week. Resendez Miranda is charged with three counts of aggravated murder.

The prosecution is expected to rest its case this week.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 3:30 PM

Join us for an afternoon to increase your understanding of cholesterol levels and how proper diet and nutrition can be combined with exercise and medications to keep your cholesterol levels in check. Learn the consequences and risks to your health when cholesterol reaches unhealthy levels.

### Advance Directives

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 3:30 PM

What is an Advance Directive? When a loved one is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease there are many questions. One of the most confusing aspects can be the legal documents that need to be signed while your loved one can still make decisions.

For more information or to RSVP, call us at (541) 276-1987 or visit us today!

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Thank you to the many volunteers! There were many behind the scenes individuals who gave their generous time and talents. All proceeds go towards OSU scholarship fund in memory of Don Horneck.