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Before Carty permit, more analysis

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Citizens will now have until April 30 to weigh in on the permit request from a Boardman generating plant — but some took the opportunity to deposit their two cents Thursday evening.

About 20 people, from Pendleton to Portland, attended a public hearing held by the Department of Environmental Quality regarding the Portland General Electric Carty Generating Plant in Boardman. The facility, on Tower Road, has applied for a permit to increase its volatile organic compound (VOC) emission limit from 24 tons per year to 194 tons per year. They've also asked for an increased annual limit on carbon monoxide emissions, from 99 to 324 tons.

Doug Welch, the permit writer for DEQ, said startups and shutdowns are the major source of emissions for the plant, and there were specific provisions in the permit about the number of each the plant could have. He said in both the original and new permit, numbers are calculated based on 80 cold startups (where the plant has been down for several days), 80 hot startups (where the plant has been down for only a few hours), and 160 shutdowns.

"At the initial permit during startups, (emissions were) assumed to be about 75 pounds per hour," he said. "The new permit assumes about 112 pounds per hour."

Before the permit will be granted, Welch said, a two-part analysis will take place: looking at the plant's control technologies, and looking at the emissions coming off the facilities.

"The application we received doesn't contain any limits for startups and shutdowns," he said. "We went back and forth on what defines a startup or shutdown. We've tried to ratchet down where we can."

He said regulating startups and shutdowns for

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Umatilla County Emergency Coordinator Alan Polan reads out his call sign on a ham radio during a test of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region 10 ham radio network on Wednesday in Pendleton. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A little more prepared

Umatilla County making progress in emergency plans, state still has some work to do

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

When a wind storm knocked out power to Hermiston last Saturday, it sent residents scurrying to nearby towns in search of food, fuel and Wi-Fi.

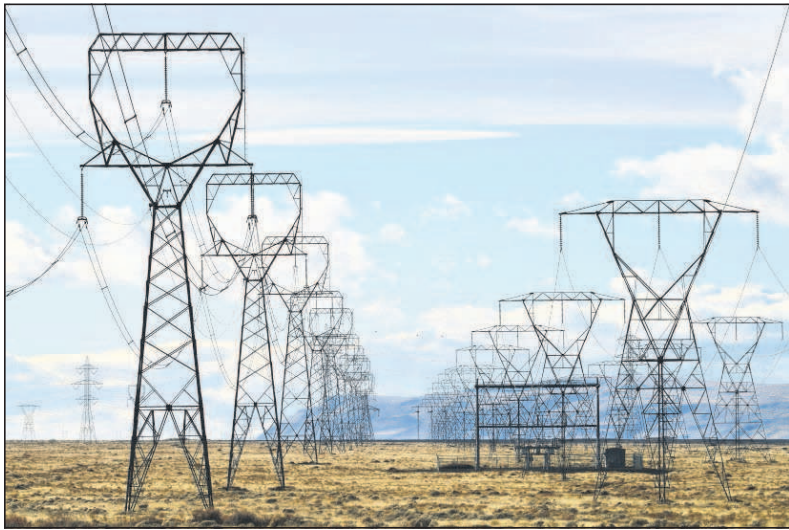
If the Cascadia earthquake hits, those same people who couldn't last three hours without electricity will likely have to last several weeks without it.

No electricity. No internet. No landlines. No cell phone reception. No debit/credit card readers. No gasoline for sale.

That's the prediction for Eastern Oregon residents if "the big one" hits, which seismologists at Oregon State University give about a one in three chance of happening in the next 50 years.

In Umatilla County, a collection of nonprofit and government entities keep chipping away at preparations year after year.

"It goes back to what we preach to the citizens," Umatilla County emergency manager Tom Roberts



If a major Cascadia earthquake hits there will be widespread power outages that could last for weeks. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

said. "The more prepared you are, the less others have to worry about you. The same goes for the counties, the more prepared the they are the less the state has to worry about us."

Some progress has been made since a summit last May brought

various public and private leaders together to discuss earthquake preparations. Recently the ham radio equipment in the county's emergency management center was modified so that the county now has the ability to contact the Federal

Emergency Management Agency's Region 10 office in Bothell, Washington, and other federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security directly in the event that the Oregon Emergency Management command center is down.

It very well could be if Cascadia strikes. According to a state audit released in January, the Oregon Office of Emergency Management's command center is not seismically retrofitted, meaning there's a good chance it could collapse or be damaged in a quake. There are three alternative sites identified, but two of those are also at risk of collapse, and OEM has not practiced running a command center out of any of them.

The audit also found that only two-thirds of state agencies have a plan for continuity of operations should catastrophe strike, and far fewer have actually trained staff on the plans.

"Without these plans in place," the audit warns, "Oregon's government is at serious risk of failing to

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Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Easy peckin'

Wild turkeys feed on hay meant of cattle on the Platt Ranch off of McKay Creek Road on Friday east of Pilot Rock.

U.S. Interior makeover would diminish D.C. power

By MATTHEW BROWN
and DAN ELLIOTT
Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. — U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke disclosed Friday in an Associated Press interview that he's revamping a sweeping overhaul of his department that's supposed to speed up permitting for development on public lands, but Democrats asserted it was just a ploy to let the energy industry get its way.

The changes follow complaints from a bipartisan group of Western state governors that Zinke did not consult them before unveiling a plan last month to decentralize the Interior Department.

The agency oversees vast public lands, primarily in the U.S. West, ranging from protected national parks and wildlife refuges to areas where coal mining and energy exploration dominate the landscape.

Zinke wants to divide the department into 13 regions, with boundaries that more closely follows state lines instead of the natural boundaries he initially proposed, he told AP.

"At present we are mismanaging and squandering our assets through a layered bureaucracy that reflects a very old department that really has not reorga-

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