

# Pacific Power pursues clean energy

Pacific Power continues to pursue cleaner energy as it moves forward in providing “smarter” and more affordable energy for its 750,000 customers, according to a recent report released by Pacific Power and their parent company PacifiCorp.

Pacific Power reports that their more integrated usage of production has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 12 percent for 2016 versus the previous five-year average.

That comes out to 6 million tons of carbon dioxide, the equivalent of taking over 1.1 million

passenger vehicles off the road for a year.

Making the grid more flexible in using available renewable generation also reduced energy costs for Pacific Power customers, by nearly \$50 million for the year, the company reported.

The amount of renewable energy capacity connected to the parent company PacifiCorp grid increased 41 percent last year.

The 2,960 megawatts of solar and wind energy generation capacity now serving customers represents 29 percent of customers’ peak energy demand and rep-

resents an important milestone towards more zero-emission generation.

PacifiCorp provides electric service to 1.8 million customers in six western states. Operating as Pacific Power in Oregon, Washington and California and as Rocky Mountain Power in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho.

In 2016, nearly one-third of all PacifiCorp’s electric generation capacity was from zero-emitting plants.

On April 4, the company announced a long-term energy plan that includes investing \$3.5 billion

in expansion, including repowering existing wind power, adding 3,000 MW of new wind and solar.

Long-term projects also include building 1,100 megawatts of new wind projects, primarily in Wyoming, by the end of 2020; adding another 859 megawatts of new wind capacity (85 megawatts in Wyoming and 774 megawatts in Idaho) between 2028 and 2036, and building 1,040 megawatts of new solar capacity between 2028 and 2036.

The plan incorporates the company’s environmental compliance obligations for its coal-fired plants.

# One injured, one killed in ATV crash

One man was killed and another injured in an All Terrain Vehicle crash at Wallupa Road, about 16 miles south of Troy, on the evening of March 31.

Brent Lewis Bieren, 64, residence unknown, was pronounced deceased at the scene.

An unidentified passenger in the side-side vehicle was airlifted from Wallowa to St. Joseph’s Regional Medical Center in Boise, Idaho.

Wallowa County Dispatch received the call at 6:08 p.m., and responding units included Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office, Oregon State Police and an Enterprise Police Department officer.

— Steve Tool

## STRONG

Continued from Page A1

Strong visibly blanched at the bail amount and even West looked surprised.

Frolander cited the statute for commercial-related drug offenses.

“I’m not a criminal; at most I’m an addict,” Strong said.

After an April 10 preliminary hearing was set, Strong was transported to Umatilla County jail.

The bust highlighted the use of a canine officer from the Baker City Police depart-

ment.

Upon entering, “Capa” went to work and alerted officers to a number of locations within the residence. Approximately 9.8 grams of methamphetamine, scales, packaging materials, drug records and \$347 cash were seized, along with a butane honey oil (hash-

ish) lab and components, honey oil product and 10 adult marijuana plants.

EPD Chief Joel Fish said that he greatly appreciated the use of the K-9 unit from Baker City. Wallowa County deputies and a probation officer were also part of the bust.

“Sgt. (Wayne) Chastain

was really in touch with that dog,” Fish said. “Every alert from Capa turned up evidence. I really want to thank (Baker police) Chief Lohner for the use of Chastain and Capa.”

In a post on the EPD Facebook page, Chief Fish wrote: “We want the drug trade in

Wallowa County to stop. It’s devastating to our citizens. We have active drug cases going. We have warned several suspected drug dealers to stop dealing. We will continue to put cases together, and we will come after those who choose to continue the drug trade.”

## FUNDS

Continued from Page A1

The USFS did exactly that for Wallowa County on March 7. Because of the decline in timber revenue from lack of harvest, Wallowa County received \$74,906.28 – 25 percent of the revenue generated from forest service land and nearly 93 percent less than the county received last year: more than a million dollars.

### History

The act is properly called “The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Deter-

mination Act of 2000.” It was the brainchild of Oregon U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D) and Idaho’s Mike Crapo (R) in response to ailing rural counties with large tracts of U.S. Forest Service land. Counties from Alaska to Louisiana and beyond benefited. SRS was designed to run into 2006 to give its beneficiaries time to find other sources of revenue, but many communities, such as Wallowa, are too isolated from main thoroughfares to attract industry, so the act was renewed each year with some grumbling that participating counties needed to survive on their own. The last few years have seen a steady decrease in

allocated funds, but nothing so drastic as this year.

Although the act is called Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, most of the money from the act goes to fund the county’s road department. In the past about \$200,000 yearly went to local schools. The state will make up the education shortfall this year and in the years to come according to local school officials.

### Politics

The U.S. House of Representatives did not renew SRS, which is handled under the auspices of the House Appropriations Committee. U.S. Rep. Greg Walden is not on the committee, but wields clout through his seniority. When asked about the failure in the House, his press representative Andrew Malcom spoke of the need for more activity.

“We have to change federal forest policy to increase timber harvests,” Malcom said. “This will improve forest health and provide needed revenue to counties for schools, roads and law enforcement. We need a sustainable solution, rather than one more year of a patch.”

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee

oversees SRS, and although Wyden is on the committee, it is chaired by Alaska republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski. The SRS renewal never made it out of committee onto the senate floor, usually a decision of the chair.

Sen. Jeff Merkley is on the Senate Committee for Appropriations and his media representative said that Merkley would use his position on the committee and every tool he has as a senator to fight for programs critical to rural Oregon. His top priority is reauthorizing SRS and PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) with mandatory funding to ensure that counties have a reliable and consistent stream of funding for essential services.

The future for renewing the funding doesn’t exactly look bright. On Feb. 17, Wyden and Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, D-Ore., led a bipartisan group of lawmakers in submitting an urgent request to Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, to include adequate funding for the Secure Rural Schools program in the president’s budget for fiscal year 2018. The recently released proposed 2018 budget includes very little, if any money for SRS.

“Restoring Secure Rural Schools funding for rural counties in Oregon and nationwide is urgent business because those funds help pay for dependable law enforcement, safe roads and strong schools,” Wyden said. “I am proud to have co-authored the original SRS legislation and am committed to working on a long-term solution in this Congress to provide rural Oregon with the certainty it needs

to plan budgets and ensure resources for their citizens.”

Chris Marklund, Associate Legislative Director of the National Association of Counties, is advocating for SRS funding, but noticed it’s getting increasingly difficult.

“For the last few years, it’s been difficult for programs with spending associated with them, and SRS is one of those programs,” he said.

Although SRS has strong support from both parties, it apparently has not been a high priority.

Marklund said it was possible the bill was shelved last year due to the uncertain political climate, but with the new president in place and the congressional leadership determined, he’s hopeful.

“If we’re talking of investing in American infrastructure, as the president said he desired to do during his campaign, Secure Rural Schools provides a direct investment into local communities and helps promote infrastructure in very rural, public lands counties across the United States,” he said.

### Local repercussions

All of the county commissioners see the ultimate problem as one of resource management. While all agree that the newly approved Lower Joseph Creek Restoration Project is a step in the right direction, no other resource-based projects are on the horizon. While growing tourism has helped fill the gap, it does not pay into the county’s coffers in the same way timber revenue does.

“We’re a natural resources-based county,” said newly elected commissioner Todd

Nash. “I don’t like to see us going to the government with our hats in our hands when we have what we need right here to keep this county going.”

Senior commissioner Susan Roberts echoed the sentiment. Since utilizing natural resources is not something the county can depend on in the near future, tough times are ahead. She’s not happy with congressional inaction on SRS and blames both parties.

“With the way things are, people in congress are worried about losing their own funding, so they’re not willing to take a chance on giving it away,” she said.


### Roads

The county’s road department will take the biggest hit, with its budget essentially shaved by half – down to \$800,000, a tough blow after the long winter. However, the commissioners said they foresaw future funding problems and planned accordingly.

Lon Andrade, head of the county’s road department, said that some of the preparation included not replacing retiring road crew personnel. The road crew had 16 members 10 years ago and is now down to 11. Andrade said that the past winter led to a lot of overtime, and most of the crew tries to take comp time in exchange, but the increased plowing also led to increased fuel consumption.

“We’ll actually run all right for the next two or three years. We’ve known for quite a few years that SRS was in danger of not being replaced. We’ve been tightening our belts for a day like right now. Hopefully, they’ll come up with some money,” he said.

**Student of the Week**



Daniel Delancey is the son of Tim and Gabriella Delancey. Daniel is a junior at Wallowa High School. He has been involved in baseball, honor society and cross-country. Daniel’s teachers state that Daniel is a delight to have in class and is a natural born leader. He is also extremely witty, creative and honest. Daniel is also a dedicated student academically and is currently enrolled in AP English, Spanish II for college credit, and trigonometry, earning high marks in each of these classes. Daniel’s claim to fame is that he makes really good homemade macaroni and cheese.

**Daniel Delancey**  
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