

OUR VIEW

Is Oregon ready for growth in electricity use?

A question we hear in state meetings about climate, power and even discussions we have overheard at Bend's Midtown Yacht Club: Does Oregon have enough electricity if everybody moves to using electricity for pretty much everything?

The short-term answer is: No, not right at this moment. The long-term answer is: Yes, with the right action. We can't predict the future. We aren't experts on energy in Oregon. We know there is also a very important question: Should Oregon do it? But today we are looking at the is-there-enough question. (And we should thank the folks at Oregon's Public Utility Commission for the help they gave us to try to track down answers.)

The easiest-to-digest answer comes from the Oregon Department of Energy. It looked at how ready Oregon's grid is for electric vehicles. In the next few years, it's not expected to be a big deal.

"But as more Oregonians make the switch to EVs, utilities are already working on potential solutions to meet the increased demand," the department said in a blog post. "To handle peak demands, the electricity sector has long engaged in multi-year capacity planning to forecast future peak demands on the grid and to identify whether new resources (like new energy-generating facilities) are required to meet those demands."

Electric vehicle loads are not unusually large. But they do come bundled with complications.

Charge up a Nissan Leaf in a home and that is only about twice the energy of a typical refrigerator. But multiple EVs charging together on a Level 2 fast charger could gobble up the capacity of a local distribution transformer. So utilities will need to plan for those upgrades. They will need to have an understanding of where and importantly when EVs charge. Moving the demand for EV charging to the late evenings and night would help reduce the need for peak electrical capacity.

Capacity for electric vehicles is one slice of the answer. There are a lot of discussions in Oregon about the future of natural gas for heating and cooking. There's even been talk in Bend of prohibiting new natural gas hookups for residences.

For the bigger picture, we talked to Bob Jenks. Jenks is executive director of Oregon's Citizen Utility Board. It's basically Jenks' job and CUB's job to look out for the interests of consumers when utilities ask for changes in rates and submit their capacity plans to the state.

Jenks says: No. Right now, there is not enough electrical capacity in Oregon if everybody switched to electric cars and electric heating and cooling.

"I think we can get to about 90% to 95% clean (to about 2035) on the electric system even with electrification of transportation and buildings," he told us in an email. "That last 5 to 10% is what will be difficult. Offshore wind might be the answer. New advanced nukes might be. But there is time to figure this out."

Electrical capacity is not just an Oregon question. The grid is regional. The scenario everyone is trying to avoid is energy shortages. They call it loss of load probability. The goal, at least in the Northwest Power Plan, is to have an adequate power supply so the likelihood of having one or more shortfalls in a year is 5% or less.

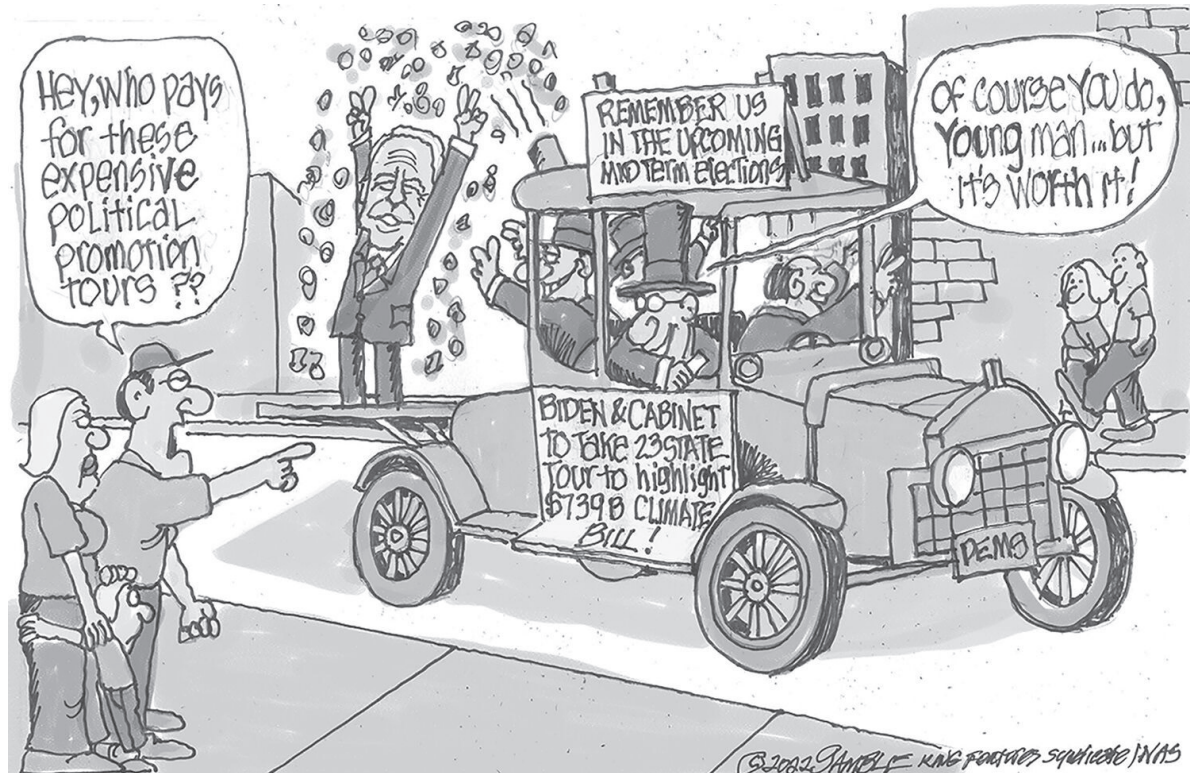
Just a couple years ago, in 2019, the Northwest Power Council was worried that with the retirement of coal-fired power plants the loss of load probability would rise to 8.2% in 2024 and 17% in 2026. Not good.

But the Northwest Power Council's new report published a few months ago in the Federal Register doesn't sound alarmist. It talks about the need for planning. And it talks about the need for preparation.

Oregon's utilities do look at these challenges in their plans filed with the state's Public Utility Commission. For instance, Pacific Power did an independent study of how the electric vehicle market would impact its systems.

We may have tried to take on this question a little early. A key document that will look at the state's energy future is actually scheduled to come out on Nov. 1. It's the 2022 Biennial Energy Report from the Oregon Department of Energy.

If there is a hint of loss of load probability in that report, if there is hint that Oregon is not ready for the energy future, legislators will need to act.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Put an end to John Day socialism

To the editor:
In the Aug. 24 BME, our friend Nick Green opined against another outstanding member of our community. He has chosen to go back in time to 18th century France, when he should have gone into 18th century America and the people's fight to win independence from England. With Green's background with the DC liberals and an education in the socialist element in the Seattle area, he has no choice but to go to his socialist upbringing. Having lauded a "local" upbringing in John Day, he has spent little time in our community and has absolutely no management experience in any municipality. The Morris's challenge is what Democracy is all about. What bothers Green and the city administration is that the people of John Day and the larger community have a different opinion than theirs and we are willing to fight for it. Yes, we are more fiscally responsible and patriotic using our constitution, which our forefathers fought for and died for. The attacks against us have increased since we have had some successes and are getting the truth out about what is going on in the city. We will fight for what we believe in with facts, not backroom deals.

Green uses the power that Mayor Lundbom's administration has given him as a proxy to apply their socialist agenda. He has attacked the Riverside Park, with feckless accusations during the COVID era, costing tens of thousands of dollars. This is his Orwellian method of forcing people to do what he wants at all costs. My annexation is my personal experience with his thumb on the scale. Using Oregon law to leverage people's minds which he appointed, and being like-minded, using dictator tactics.

Councilors Adair and Holland took on this tactic by attacking fellow Councilor Rookstool for expressing what the people wanted four years ago. We need to vote no on the forced-again pool levy. Vote for Heather Rookstool for mayor and Sherrie Rininger for city council. This will be a start in getting control of the socialist agenda which will go to no end, using taxpayer money, using their dictator Third World tactics.

Bob Pereira
John Day

Innovation Gateway breeds noxious weeds

To the Editor:
The Innovation Gateway Project (i.e., the old mill site west of John Day) is a horrible example of stewardship. The city has featured this property to obtain grants, built a greenhouse, used the existing shop, constructed trails, used buildings as a storage facility, and constructed new access points. All of this while disregarding the infestation of noxious weeds. There is, at a minimum, three species identified at various locations on the property: Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) and puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*).

Since there has been a lot of vehicle activity, pedestrian travel, fill material and disturbance throughout the area, there is the potential for other noxious species as well as plant population movement within the area. Patterson Bridge Road to the west is infested with knapweed on the west side. Weeds can rapidly colonize bare ground as well as ground with sparse vegetation, such as areas with cheatgrass and other annual grasses. With the upcoming Cycle Oregon program and the projected number of bicycles, the city cannot expect trail users to stay only on the paved trails; in fact, they will be encouraged to use these trails for short rides and access to and from base areas.

It is obvious many people, including city employees, are unable to identify noxious weeds or ignore their presence. Mayor Lundbom was made aware of the problem approximately three years

ago, not only showing him an example of knapweed but a suggestion to contact Grant County Weed Control for reference material and an employee identification class. Apparently, this does not fit the city's agenda, so it is simple to disregard the problem.

John L. Morris
John Day

We don't really need a pool

To the Editor:
A letter to the editor published on Aug. 24 by Nick Green stated, "Grant County does need a pool." Mr. Green confused wants with needs.

Needs are essentials for survival: food, clothing, shelter and medical care. I would add safety, but that was not in the definition found online. Wants include everything else, things that can improve quality of life. A pool is a want, not a need.

Now, with high inflation, increasing fuel and food costs, loss of the dollar's purchasing value, already stressed families from unexpected increased costs, and uncertainties in employment is not the time for an unnecessary expenditure. Costs for heating will be an added burden with the onset of winter, and food and fuel costs will continue to rise.

I understand a segment of our population wants a pool in John Day, but it is fiscally irresponsible to approve a bond levy during this time of financial instability, committing the community to paying years of added taxes for a want.

If you have extra money not required to meet your family's needs, please consider donating to the Grant County Food Bank or Carrie Young Memorial. Both entities are providing assistance, encouragement, and support to people in need in our community, and the needs are growing.

Do not vote to commit your neighbors, many of whom are struggling financially, to any added, unnecessary taxation to satisfy your want of a pool. Struggling families deserve consideration and compassion, not censure for opposing an added tax levy.

Pauline Loerke
John Day

Rookstool 'option' no option at all

To the Editor:
The Aug. 23 John Day City Council meeting has brought a lot of confusion after Councilor Heather Rookstool made the statement that she's found a pool company that will come build our community a pool for \$2 million. What she failed to do was give any facts or actual information, which leads most people to ask how?

Is Anderson Poolworks going to move the dirt, dig the hole, pour the concrete for the deck, build the fence around the pool, do the construction work for the locker rooms and reception area? What about electrical or plumbing, and of course all of the finish work? And parking? All of this for \$2 million?

When asked by her fellow council members the details of the supposed proposal, Councilor Rookstool had no answers. While she couldn't answer a single question, she did manage to give the illusion to the public that if they voted no on the upcoming ballot measure that we'd still get a pool.

So I decided to call Anderson Poolworks to get the details myself. What I discovered was that the pool company was completely misrepresented, and Councilor Rookstool was not honest or truthful with the company or with the public. Councilor Rookstool's \$2 million pool only includes the pool with mechanical equipment; not two locker rooms, a family room and a reception area like she claimed last Tuesday.

Bob Pereira was right, there is misinformation coming from the city and it's coming from Councilor Rookstool. Public officials have a responsibility to their constituents and the public to provide factual information with supporting evidence. No one owes her an apol-

ogy, but Councilor Rookstool owes this community an apology for her continued and deliberate attempts to mislead the public.

If you want a pool, vote for the pool that's on the ballot. Don't be fooled into believing there's another option as Anderson Poolworks told me myself, there's not.

Susan Pearce
John Day

Due diligence on pool costs overdue

To the Editor:
It may be true that John Day City Councilor Heather Rookstool's proposal to build a \$2 million pool instead of a \$6 million pool facility might weaken support for the \$4 million bond vote in November. But her proposal should have been included as an alternative from the very beginning. Instead, John Day city staff came up with an even grander alternative that included a large gymnasium, an impossible dream.

This is one more example of inadequate due diligence by city staff, to go along with a failed greenhouse and questionable claims for future customers of reclaimed water from the new sewer plant. Call me old-fashioned, but I believe the city council's job is to take a close look at city staff proposals. In that light, Rookstool is doing her job, albeit a little late.

A curious point is this — how can the pool cost only \$2 million while the concrete apron and wooden building cost \$4 million? You could buy land and build more than a dozen fine single-family residences for \$4 million.

Richard Hanners
John Day

Cost to build pool could go up

To the Editor:
I would like to share my thoughts and concerns with everyone about the swimming pool measure that will be on the November ballot.

I read in the BME that a group of people is working towards getting the same swimming pool measure on the November ballot that they put on the May primary ballot.

This group of people got an estimate to build a \$6 million swimming pool about a year ago. They had \$2 million. They asked for an additional \$4 million bond in the May primary. It did not pass. Now they want to put the same measure on the November ballot.

Do you think that a \$4 million bond will be enough to build the \$6 million swimming pool?

Two things come to my mind:
(1) They did not take into consideration the 25% increase in the building materials a year later. It will be another year before the work can be done. In that time, costs may go up another 10 to 20%.

(2) Due to costs going up this next year, they may only have enough money to build part of the swimming pool.

They will be going back to the people asking for more money.

I think that this is a major mistake in their planning.

We have a lot of senior citizens living in the parks and recreation district and the Canyon City/John Day area. With the cost of everything going up, they can't afford additional taxes.

As for the people who rent, their cost is going to go up also. Do you think that the rental owner is not going to pass this increase on to the renter?

If you think that voting "yes" for the swimming pool is a good idea, I have a friend who has some Arizona oceanfront property for sale that you may be interested in.

I think you should think twice before you vote "yes" for the swimming pool. And then vote "no" on the swimming pool measure.

Tom Sutton
John Day

Blue Mountain EAGLE USPS 226-340
Grant County's Weekly Newspaper
Email: www.MyEagleNews.com John Day, Oregon
Phone: 541-575-0710

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

EDITOR Bennett Hall, bhall@bmeagle.com
REPORTER Steven Mitchell, steven@bmeagle.com
REPORTER Justin Davis, jdavis@bluemountaineagle.com
SPORTS sports@bmeagle.com
PAGE DESIGNER Randy Wriughthouse, rwriughthouse@eomediagroup.com
MARKETING REP Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
OFFICE ASSISTANT Alixandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY EO Media Group

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (including online access)
One year \$51
Monthly autopay \$4.25

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery
POSTMASTER — send address changes to

www.facebook.com/MyEagleNews @MyEagleNews

Blue Mountain Eagle
195 N. Canyon Blvd.
John Day, OR 97845-1187
Copyright © 2022 Blue Mountain Eagle

All rights reserved. No part of this publication covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, taping or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.