



Arctic Gas Pipeline to go through Morrow County

Ross Woodward and Gary McKinney of Pacific Gas Transmission Company spoke to the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Monday on recent developments concerning the Arctic Gas Pipeline. The proposed pipeline would bring natural gas from Alaska into the United States through Canada with two legs at Calgary.

One of the two legs would move southwest through Morrow County and parallel existing transmission line in the county. A second leg would run to a point near Chicago. In a slide presentation to the Chamber, the men reported on alternate proposals as well. The Arctic Gas proposal is now before the Federal Power Commission with a ruling expected about May 1. Thus, it could reach Congress and the President by September of this year. With approval, the major construction is geared

for completion in 1981 or 1982 delivery, it was reported. Approval of this system, backed by the largest study of ecological impact ever conducted, would provide an all land pipeline. In Morrow County, the new pipeline would be a substantial addition to the tax base. Pacific Gas Transmission Company is one of the two largest ad valorem taxpayers in Morrow County, paying \$96,020.77 for 1975-1976 and more in previous years. The contention of Arctic Gas is that the system they propose will be faster, cheaper and environmentally safer than the nine alternative transportation systems. Arctic Gas is comprised of about six Canadian companies and about a dozen U.S. companies, which together are reported financially able to finish the project and also assure coordination between the U.S. and Canada.

Wildlife comes first at Umatilla Refuge

The meadow larks have been singing for a month. The does are pregnant and when the ducks scatter they fly away in pairs. Geoff Pampush, biological technician for the Umatilla Wildlife Refuge, has begun to note these springtime events of late. The residents of the refuge have long since begun their yearly preparation. All winter some 80,000 geese have been gathering in the marshes and fields of the refuge. They migrate to neighboring grain fields for daily meals. The Lesser Canada geese will soon be leaving their wintering ground for northern temperatures. The Great Basin "Honkers" will stay to raise their brood. The main goal of the wildlife refuge system is for the protection of its wildlife. Park visitor recreation is secondary to the safe keeping of the animals that inhabit the 22,216 acres bordering the Columbia River making up the refuge. The land, located between Boardman and Irrigon primarily, was originally purchased in 1965 under provision of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958. Like the newborns soon to appear at the refuge the desert ecology is equally fragile. Rough treatment of the land can take several years for recovery. "Some people don't seem to have as much respect for federal

land as private land," commented Pampush. Four wheel drive vehicles and motorcycles are commonly run across the desert lands. Continuous rough treatment uproots plants, destroys animal burrows and nests and upsets the ecological balance of everything in the path of the vehicles. Often the vegetation never replaces itself and the affected area reverts to a sand blow. "People are becoming more aware of non-consumptive wildlife activity," said Pampush. Bird watching and nature photography is increasing in interest, chiefly in the urban areas. In comparison, rural populations are considerably more attracted to the hunting aspects of wildlife involvement. Umatilla refuge offers closed hunts, during respective seasons, for people with that interest. By permit only, hunters can occupy 32 waterfowl blinds located on McCormick Slough. They may possibly be allowed, through permit, to participate in a controlled hunt for the 150 deer roaming the refuge. That idea is currently under consideration. All animals on the refuge are under federal protection. The only unprotected birds in the United States, also living on the refuge, are the house sparrow and the starling. An estimated 100 swans are currently on the federal lands. A stiff fine is demanded of anyone found shooting a swan. Two dozen snow geese have

also been counted this year. Eagles, both golden and bald, are known occupants of the desert refuge. Four dead birds were turned into the Umatilla office by farmers last month. None had been deliberately killed. One had been hit by a car and the other apparently electrocuted by power lines. In past years the main concentration of management has been focused on deer, pheasant, duck and goose management. That scope is being broadened now to include song birds and amphibians. Refuge management has gone into co-operative alliance with Washington and Oregon farmers like Clarence Ferguson. For the past seven years Ferguson has leased 25 per cent of his land to the refuge. The crop is not harvested. It remains in the field used by the animals for shelter and food. The refuge leases 1100 acres of land for this use. Though geese have been known to tear up half a farmer's winter wheat crop due to their grazing nature, they are also viewed as a dividend by some. "By cropping sprouting grain off at the base it grows back twice as thick," explains Pampush. Geese and ducks are managed through a banding system. This time of year ducks are marked for post (hunting) season banding. After hunting season cages are set up to capture the ducks which swim in the funnel openings for food and can't find their way out. This year the Columbia Basin has been asked to band 2000 or the 250,000 mallard ducks on the refuge. The cages are checked daily and will remain in use until the ducks have moved out. "We're mostly interested in where they are going from here," noted Pampush. Preseason banding takes place in August or September depending on the duck concentration. Geese banding is done in July when geese are molting and flightless. They are either rounded up with boats or nets are shot from cannons to capture them while they are feeding. "There are not as many ducks on the refuge as there were 10 years ago," stated Pampush. To keep that same statement from holding true for the many other plants and animals of the refuge means raising environmental consciousness. Now there is a need for a better understanding of the delicate habitat that for years has been referred to as "just the desert."



Megan Towler of Irrigon holds duck for banding.

Graces heading for Arabia

(Continued from page 1) allow American women to wear short skirts and sleeveless blouses. Moslem law still dictates dress along with heavy penalties for narcotics, liquor, pornography and weapons. While these laws wouldn't seem to concern Ray, they are strict enough to require that he leave his pocket knife at home. There are also strict rules which keep women off streets after dark and prohibit women walking unless they are in a group. Both Ray and Nona have to consider a much higher cost of living, a change to the metric system and another day to live in. They will be living 11 hours ahead of Heppner. One advantage is that English is the second language of Saudi Arabia. When Nona departs, her daughter, Marsha Matthewson, will occupy their home. While they have no firm plans for the future, they at least know they will have housing when they return to Heppner.

If not, Ray will have experience in building a city about one-third the size of Heppner in the space of less than two years. The couple have promised the Gazette-Times a report now and then on daily life in Saudi Arabia.

Injuries sustained in one car wreck

Richard Lyle Cox, 27, Rt. 1, Blackhorse Canyon, Lexington, sustained neck and shoulder injuries early Saturday morning, Feb. 26, when the vehicle he was driving skidded on ice and overturned 4.5 miles west of Heppner on Highway 74. Deputy Steven J. Sigurdson, Morrow County Sheriff's Department, said the 1974 Dodge Charger was westbound when it hit an icy spot on the highway, causing loss of control. The vehicle slid sideways about 90 feet into an embankment and turned on its top to slide another 60 feet before coming upright in the westbound ditch. Speed of the vehicle was estimated at 60 miles per hour from 160 feet of skid marks prior to hitting the ice patch developed from moisture from a farm sprinkler irrigation system, it was reported. The accident occurred about 3 a.m. Saturday morning. Cox was taken to Pioneer Memorial Hospital by his sister. He remained hospitalized this week for observation.

Lexington council moved

The Lexington City Council will hold its Tuesday, Mar. 8, meeting at the Morrow County Grain Growers' building in Lexington. The change of meeting place was forced due to a furnace backfire which deposited soot all over city hall. The council will meet in the conference room at the Grain Growers' building next week to allow time for soot cleanup to be completed.

Engineer hired

Since losing its city engineer two weeks ago Boardman has gone without until this week. Steven Anderson of Anderson and Perry Engineering, La Grande, has stepped into the position as inspection engineer for the city at a temporary rate. Anderson's services were accepted by the Boardman City Council Tuesday night. Anderson is willing to work on an hourly rate of \$27 per hour for engineering and \$16 per hour for inspections. The city will draw up a monthly rate at a later time.