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Could mean 12-15 jobs if plant starts operating again

Sweet Home company signs option to purchase Heppner bio-generating plant at industrial site

By David Sykes

A Sweet Home based company, T2, Inc., has signed a deal with the Port of Morrow to purchase the now idle bio-generation facility in the South Mor-

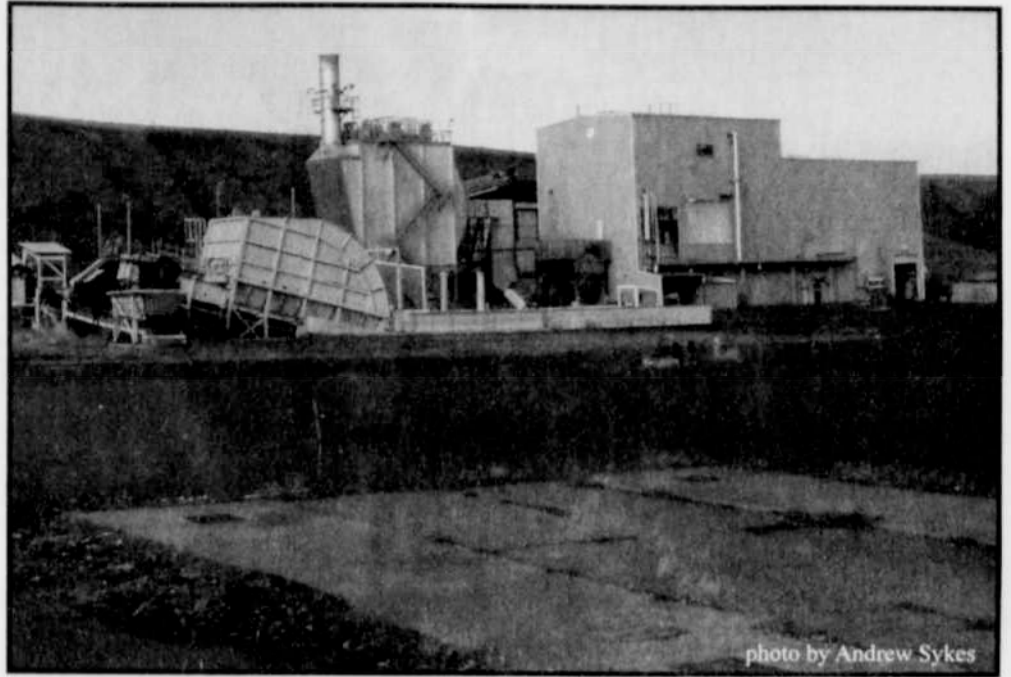


photo by Andrew Sykes

The 10-megawatt generating facility at the industrial site may be back producing power if a deal between a Sweet Home company and the Port of Morrow goes through.

row Industrial Park for \$4 million, it was announced at a special Port meeting last Thursday.

Under terms, T2 has 60 days to accept the deal and another 30 days to purchase the facility, which will include 20 acres of property and various equipment. Company officials estimate if the plant goes into operation generating electricity from wood waste, it could employ 12 to 15 people.

Stephen Lawn, business operation manager at T2 told the Heppner Gazette Tuesday he is working on securing fuel for the plant and also lining up customers to purchase the electricity it generates. Columbia Basin Electric has agreed to "wheel" or transport output of the electricity to the overall electrical grid.

"Finding fuel for this plant has always been an issue," said Lawn, "but we think we have private as well as some Forest Service" fuel to use. "We don't want to be unrealistic, but we are looking at every

source available." He said he was also working now on finding buyers for the electricity the 10-megawatt plant will produce. "In fact I have a conference call today talking to potential buyers," he said.

Lawn said T2 has some experience in bio-fuels and actually operates four "sides" in the forests chipping and grinding fuel for use in bio plants elsewhere. The company also has two other sides available to bring into production if demand warrants it. T2 intends to use forest residuals (waste) and some urban wood, Lawn said, including construction and demolition debris.

"We have a lot of hurdles to make this thing work, but I am cautiously optimistic," Port of Morrow General Manager Gary Neal told the Gazette. He said T2 would be looking for a steady supply of fuel, and a long term contract to sell the power to make things work. "When they feel they have a handle on the fuel they will be able to move forward," said Neal.

"The fuel is the key," Lawn said he would be giving the Port an update report at its next meeting August 12.

Neal also said there was a window of opportunity for the plant to begin operation and then be able to get the power out to the grid. He said with all the wind generation moving into the area that window may not be open for much longer.

The proposed sale includes all equipment, fixtures, and improvements, plus a truck, fuel handling system, boiler, turbines, electric power infrastructure, water treatment system and the truck scale at the industrial park.

The sale also includes the right of water usage from wells on other parts of the port-owned industrial park property for use by the generating facility.

The bio-generating plant has not operated since 2003. The Kinzua sawmill closed at the site in 1998, and the Port of Morrow acquired the property shortly thereafter.

HEPPNER

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Back in the saddle again

1949 court rides in to take up court duties



The 1949 Fair and Rodeo Court (right to left): Dorothy Wiglesworth Graham, Faye Cutsforth, Shirley Rugg, Betty Walker Edwards and Ingrid Hermen Crawford.



The 1949 Fair and Rodeo Court gets together again in 1999 (right to left): Dorothy Wiglesworth Graham, Faye Cutsforth, Shirley Rugg, Betty Walker Edwards and Ingrid Hermen Crawford.

By David Sykes

With no local young women applying for the Fair & Rodeo Court this year, the 1949 court is coming back together to pick up the slack.

When 1949 Queen and local rancher Shirley Rugg heard there would be no court this year, she called the fair and offered the services of the court that reigned 60 years ago. "I like it," say Rugg about coming back as a group. "It is our last hurrah," she says with a smile.

Recalling the time

she spent on the court all those years ago Rugg said the five girls were "pleased as punch to represent our county and our town." She said the girls were 16 to 18 years old. Among the rodeos and parades they attended were Round-up, and Elgin and Fossil rodeos. "We provided our own transportation for ourselves and our horses," she said. She remembers the girls going to a luncheon at the Catholic Parish Hall where they all introduced themselves.

The court got to-

gether five years ago and rode in the Morrow County parade and also in the Pendleton Round-up parade. Rugg said the group had planned to get together this year to ride in the Morrow County parade, but when it was discovered there was no court this year, the group agreed to step in and assume the honorary court duties. The youngest of the group is 75 and Rugg herself is 80, but she is still going strong and rides on a regular basis working cattle for a local ranch. She said this may be the last year the court gets together.

Rugg's four princesses, Faye Cutsforth, Betty Walker Edwards, Ingrid Hermen Crawford and Dorothy Wiglesworth Graham, are coming from the Tri-Cities, Pendleton, Weiser and Sun City, AZ, respectively. When on the court, all the girls were from the Heppner area except Dorothy Graham, who came from Echo.

Heppner man indicted on sex abuse charges

Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Steve Clayton Rollis, 36, Heppner, on July 28 in Irrigon, on sex abuse charges. He was lodged at the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton with \$100,000 bail.

Rollis was indicted by a Morrow County Grand Jury on six counts of first degree sodomy, four counts of first degree sex abuse and two counts of incest. All are felony charges.

The case continues to be under investigation by the Morrow County Sheriff's Office.

Getting geared up for fair

Morrow County Fair & Rodeo underway this week



Patrick Collins, 11, in his first year of sewing, speaks to 4-H sewing judge Darcy Timmons, Milton-Freewater. Also pictured are brother Roy, five, sister Maggie, 13, mom Jeannie Collins and 4-H Superintendent Rita Bergstrom.



Peggy Fishburn, quilt superintendent



Klynn McNamee, 18 months, helps out her mother Kristi McNamee and her grandma Pam Worden, clothing co-superintendents on Tuesday at the fair.



Fair Secretary Ren'ee Yocom, right, with Kellie Nelson, Tim Nelson and Kevin Murray (right), pictured in the fair office Tuesday, prepare for a busy week.

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