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An inside look at Haiti

By Regi Seitz

Going into Haiti I was prepared for the worst conditions. I had done my research and seen enough pictures that I knew things were going to be precarious. It was worse than I expected. As we drove from the airport to the compound where we'd be staying, I was sure that the area we were in had to have been where the earthquake hit the hardest. Makeshift shacks and immeasurable amounts of garbage were everywhere. Turns out this area hadn't even felt so much as a tremor from the quake. This was what Haiti had looked like before.

The first night in Haiti there was a mesmerizing rain storm. Pure water poured off the roof and lightning streaked the sky. But then the fascination with the storm morphed into the heavy ache of knowing. Knowing that the rickety old tents we passed on the way in were the only shelter from the storm for thousands of people. It brought me back to the reality that these people really need help.

Regi Seitz traveled to Haiti through the Colline Foundation. She has organized a toy drive in Heppner with drop boxes at Bank of Eastern Oregon and the Forest Service. The drop boxes will be in place through November 14. *-Contributed Photos*

Growing up in a small town community so committed to achievement and success I've always believed that anything is possible. Going to Haiti distorted that ideal a little. Many of the kids we passed on the street didn't have an ounce of fat on their body. We passed a mother cleaning herself and her baby using water from a mud puddle. It's hard to believe that these people will ever have a chance to truly thrive. But the spirit and determination of the Haitian people surprised me. They didn't seem to pity themselves; in fact they had an effervescent vibrant and lively air about them

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Spicer wins Justice of the Peace

Local people gather at the St. Patrick's Senior Center to watch election returns on the television. Tuesday night's vote watching gathering was sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots.

While Nation and State wide the Nov. 2 election was a big deal, in Morrow County the only contested county-wide position, Justice of the Peace, was won by Annetta Spicer over Earl Woods by a 1,716 to 972 vote margin. Write in votes for various city council positions had not be tabulated by press time. Unofficial county vote counts can be found on the internet at morrowcountyoregon.com/clerk.

Wind farm has six months to lower noise levels

The above graphic shows the position of wind towers and the location of three land owners complaining of adverse effects from excess noise from some of the towers.

The Morrow County Planning Commission last week gave a wind farm company with 48 towers near Ione six months to bring noise levels into compliance with state rules.

The commission has been dealing with excessive noise levels from the wind towers after four nearby residents brought complaints against the company saying noise from some of the towers is disturbing their sleep and disrupting their lives.

Chicago based Invenergy, which owns the wind towers, has contended that the planning commission has had "a fundamental misreading of the standard under which Oregon law regulates noise emissions." A conditional use permit was issued to Invenergy in 2005 stating their wind operation must remain within state standards for noise.

In June of 2010 four separate landowners David Mingo, Dan Williams, Mike and Sherry Eaton and Dennis and Lorrie Wade, all living near the towers, filed for an appeal of the conditional use permit, saying the noise levels exceeded the allowable levels.

The planning commission made a ruling May 2010 that Invenergy was indeed out of compliance, and gave the company six months to fix the problem. All planning commission decisions go to the Morrow County Court for final approval, and both Invenergy and the complainants appealed the planning commission decision to the county court. Subsequently the county court sent the decision back to the planning commission

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Big trench digger brought in for tough CBEC digging job

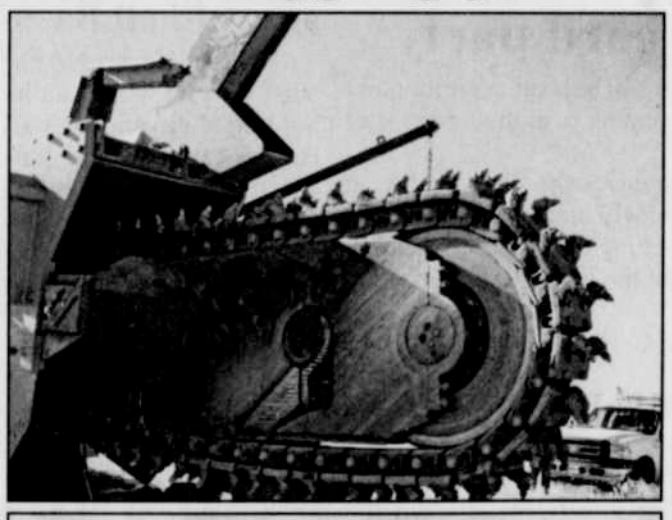
By David Sykes

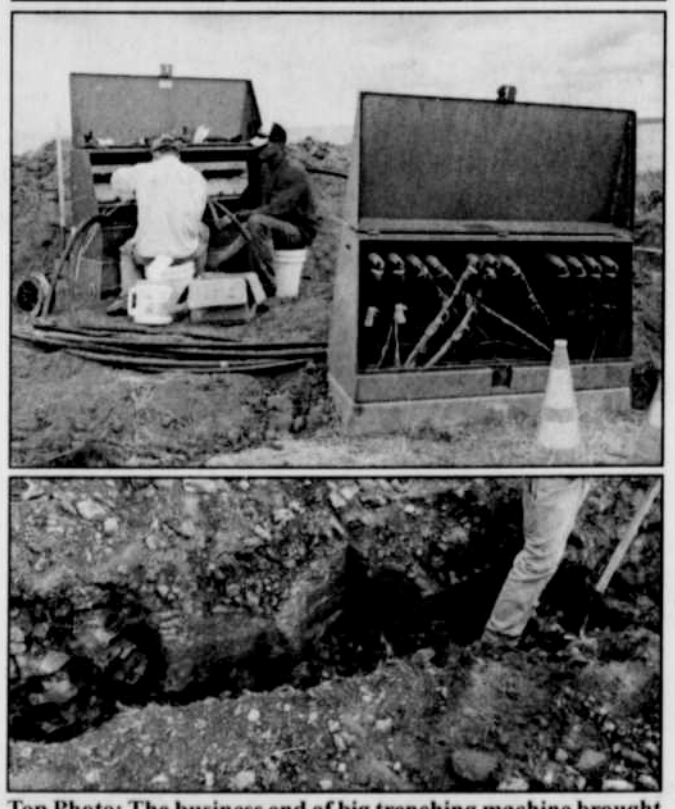
Columbia Basin Electric has years of experience digging in tough ground and rock, but nothing like the difficulties crews faced when they started digging trench for a new 4.5 mile underground power line project near Condon. That is until they brought in a big trench digger from Idaho.

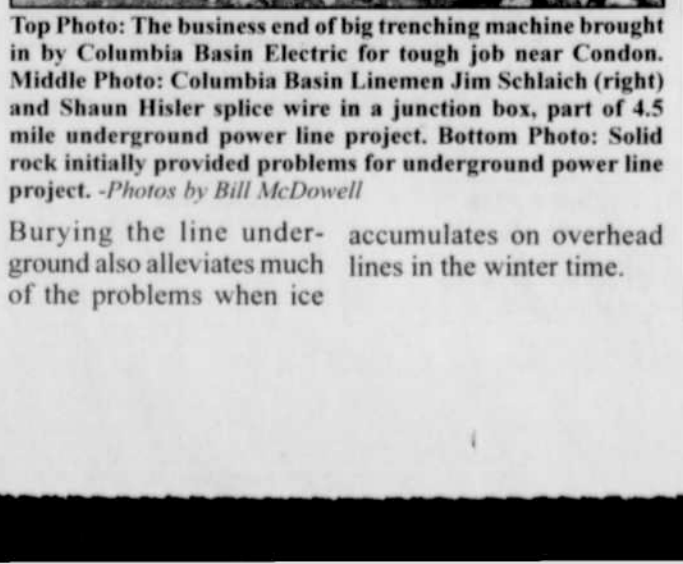
"This digger was designed for difficult types of digging," said Brian Kollman, project manager for Columbia Basin Electric. He said crews had spent some time using company equipment on the job and not making good headway in the thick basalt rock located around Condon. So he and General Manager Jerry Healy went looking for a better way to do the job. "We looked around and found this trencher in Idaho," Kollman said.

He tells how the machine owner was contacted, the equipment was brought in and it went right to work. "They brought it in on a low boy, unloaded it and I had them start digging in the rock right away," he said the machine worked as advertised and dug a 30 inch deep trench right through the rock. He said they had the trencher do the whole 4.5 mile project. "It was pretty impressive," he said.

The project near Condon is to bury electric lines underground to feed a new sub station in the area. Burying the line underground also alleviates much of the problems when ice accumulates on overhead lines in the winter time.







Top Photo: The business end of big trenching machine brought in by Columbia Basin Electric for tough job near Condon. Middle Photo: Columbia Basin Linemen Jim Schlaich (right) and Shaun Hisler splice wire in a junction box, part of 4.5 mile underground power line project. Bottom Photo: Solid rock initially provided problems for underground power line project. *-Photos by Bill McDowell*

Heppner High School to honor veterans

Ten years ago junior high math teacher, Karen Beck, decided to increase student involvement in celebrating Veterans Day. With the help of students she organized Heppner High School's Veterans Day program. When Mrs. Beck retired at the end of that year, responsibility for the program passed to Kyle Huddleston who organized and ran it for three years until he graduated. The reins were then passed to Ginger Bowman who still runs this event with the help of Jeannie Collins, Martha Munkers, Terri Gentry, and Darcy Robinson.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of this event. All veterans and military personnel, past and present, are invited to attend a ceremony in their honor at Heppner High School's gymnasium on November 12 at 10:30 a.m. Lunch for veterans and their spouses will follow. If you are a veteran or are presently serving in the military, and you have not received an invitation, please call Heppner High School at 676-9138. You do not need an invitation to attend; all veterans and servicemen are welcome. The public is also encouraged to attend this program to honor our local heroes.

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