



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Secretary of Energy Rick Perry speaks about hydro electric power at a press conference after touring the McNary Dam with Rep. Greg Walden, R-Oregon, on Monday in Umatilla.

# Energy Secretary Perry visits Northwest

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry was non-committal Monday when asked about a proposal in the president's budget to privatize the Bonneville Power Administration transmission grid following a tour of McNary Dam along the Columbia River.

Perry, who was joined by congressmen Greg Walden, R-Oregon, and Dan Newhouse, R-Washington, met briefly with reporters outside the dam where he said hydroelectricity will continue to play an important role in America's energy strategy.

The Trump administration has proposed selling off transmission assets owned by BPA, which markets electric power generated by the Columbia River system — including McNary Dam. Northwest lawmakers have roundly criticized the plan, saying it would raise rates for consumers and affect reliability in rural areas.

Both Walden and Newhouse signed on to a letter sent June 5 to Perry and Mick Mulvaney, director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, urging them to support the BPA.

"We believe divesting BPA's transmission assets will harm individuals and businesses, divert capital needed for further infrastructure investment in the Northwest, and undermine regional utility coordination," the letter reads in part. "BPA has helped to develop and administer the complex electrical system that powers the Northwest, now providing affordable and reliable power to over 12 million people and the businesses that help the region thrive."

When asked where he stood on the issue, Perry only said that they should not be afraid to have that conversation before moving on to another topic.

Walden was more direct in his defense of the agency. He expressed confidence that the BPA will remain public, adding that the notion of privatization has united just about every member of the Northwest delegation.

"(BPA) does its job. And it has a darn important

job in our region," Walden said.

On the subject of hydroelectricity and renewable energy as a whole, Perry said he is an "all-of-the-above guy," pointing to the development of wind power and fracked natural gas during his time as governor of Texas. Hydroelectricity will play an important role moving forward Perry said, and he commended the work done at McNary Dam.

"My hat's off to every different part of this operation to make sure it runs smoothly," he said.

McNary Dam was just the first stop for Perry as he arrived in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. On Tuesday, he traveled to the Tri-Cities for a visit to the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, HAMMER Federal Training Center and Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

Perry said Monday that security at Hanford is "as good as there is in the world," despite a partial tunnel collapse in May that contained highly radioactive waste.

"We never like to have surprises, but we have them from time to time," he said. "The long-term cleanup of that site is what's important. That's what I wanted to see."

He described both Hanford and McNary Dam as examples of American strength and ingenuity, including Hanford's role in developing the nuclear bombs that helped end World War II.

"This is a fascinating part of America's story," Perry said. "There's extraordinary history."

# Former mayor's son talks about father's WWII heroics

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
STAFF MEMBERS

As family members celebrate former Umatilla mayor George Hash's 95th birthday, his son Randy is hoping that his father's legacy is not forgotten.

Hash, who turned 95 on Tuesday, was mayor from 1991 to 2004. But many years before Hash worked to promote economic development in western Umatilla County, he was being honored for his heroics during World War II.

Randy said his father never really shared stories from the war with his family until later in life, when Randy was a parent himself. He eventually learned that his dad, a member of the 101st Airborne Division, was one of the first Americans to parachute into Normandy behind enemy lines ahead of the D-day invasion of Normandy in France. He later became a prisoner of war in Holland, but eventually escaped.

"George A. Hash is somewhat of a World War II hero," Randy said. "He's featured in the Smithsonian."

In a video interview with George online, featured with other veterans' oral histories, he said he chose to be a paratrooper when he enlisted because he wanted to be in an outfit "that was going over there to do some business."

"I figured that was the best choice if I wanted some combat," George said.

He also said he was "no kind of a hero," just one of thousands of soldiers following orders.

Randy said one of his father's brothers-in-arms called him out of the blue years ago to tell him about the day his father was captured. The Germans had killed several members of their company, and George grabbed a gun and went off by himself to



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY RANDY HASH

George Hash in 2017 and as a paratrooper during World War II.

ambush the Germans that had been picking them off. The man told Randy they saw George from a distance keep shooting Germans until he had taken too many bullets to his arm and shoulder to continue re-loading. At that point, they thought George was dead. They later found out he had been loaded into the same flatbed truck as the injured Germans he had just shot and taken to Stalag 3C, a camp that held more than 1,500 American POWs, for interrogation and imprisonment.

Hash was imprisoned for 561 days. Randy said many of the prisoners died from dysentery, and his father had lingering digestive problems for the rest of his life from going more than a year and a half with a barely adequate amount of food.

"They were both starving to death and freezing to death," he said.

At one point George was being held in a building where some of the floorboards had been torn up to burn for warmth. As the Germans began to load men into cattle cars to move them to a new camp, George and another man hid under the floor and got some of their fellow prisoners to help cover them back up.

"The other guys didn't want to do anything (to try and escape), because they knew they would get shot if they were caught," Randy said.

He said his father told him that he and the other prisoner waited until they didn't hear any more movement in the camp and then split up and left on foot. George crossed on foot into Poland, where the Polish army helped hide him from the Germans, until he was able to stow away on a Merchant Marine vessel and eventually make his way back to the U.S., where he was sent to California to recover and train.

"They were preparing to ship out to Japan, but the atomic bomb put an end to that," Randy said.

He said when he was a kid he had no idea that his father had led such an adventurous life. There were flashes of the

tough POW, though, such as the day that Randy and his friends were lazing around the gym at Hermiston High School and his dad came in and started doing one-handed pull-ups.

"He said something like 'You guys should use this equipment' and walked out," Randy said. "Boy, my friends were sure impressed with how strong my dad was."

Randy said his dad was also known as a talented boxer. Despite his dad's strength and fighting skills he never once saw his father lose his temper and use physical force on anyone, even when provoked.

Some of George's children and grandchildren followed his footsteps into military service, including Randy, who served in the Coast Guard.

The Hash family moved to Umatilla County in the 1950s, when George got a job as a teacher at Umatilla High School. He then taught shop and business classes — "career technical education" in today's terms — at Hermiston High School.

He served as a Umatilla city councilor from 1989-1990 and mayor from 1991 to 2004. Hash Park in McNary is named after him.

After suffering a stroke, he is in Regency Hermiston Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. His family celebrated his birthday with him over the weekend.

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**Thursday, May 18th at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Brain Fitness for Seniors**  
Brain exercises are important to keep the mind sharp.  
It is important to encourage memory exercises when you are a senior caregiver. Asking your loved one to share a favorite memory or stories about their lives can bring them joy, strengthen their memory and increase their brain function. Learn about a variety of techniques you can use to encourage brain fitness.

**Thursday, June 15th at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Managing Chronic Conditions**  
Self-management support provides tools to improve health.  
In the U.S., statistics reveal that one in four seniors over the age of 65 are challenged with managing one or more chronic medical conditions. Self-management support tools can help you and your loved one better understand how to manage their illness day-to-day and encourage them to take an active role in their health care.

**Thursday, July 20th at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Senior Finances, How to Help**  
Employ strategies to protect the finances of your loved ones.  
As our parents and loved ones age they may lose the ability to fully track their finances. When seniors are unable to manage their daily finances they may become susceptible to financial abuse. Learn their home or risk having their utilities turned off. Learn how you can make arrangements for financial assistance to protect your loved one.

**Thursday, August 17th at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Effectively Manage Chronic Pain**  
Pain management is a crucial component to caring for seniors.  
As a caregiver, it can be difficult to know how to help a senior minimize and manage chronic pain. Older adults often encounter chronic pain as their muscles and joints become stiff and they become less agile. We'll provide tips to understand the various medications used to treat pain and potential side effects.

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\* Study conducted at the University of Northern Colorado, 2015, examined the effectiveness of the new features of primax by collecting and analyzing ongoing EEG data while subjects performed speech testing. For both primax features SpeechMaster and EchoShield, the objective brain behavior measures revealed a significant reduction in listening effort when the feature was activated.  
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