

Storm caused power outages plague WOECE crews

By Jim Buxton

A windy weekend, and an especially windy Sunday night, brought out candles and lanterns in almost all the homes in the West Oregon Electric Cooperative service area on January 6.

Power was restored to downtown Vernonia by mid-morning Monday, Mgr. Martin Baughman reported to the board of directors on Jan. 16, with work crews bringing lights to outlying areas as quickly as they were able. Most power was restored by Thursday, though some irrigation accounts and summer cabins will not be reconnected until spring.

Outages were so extensive that six crews were brought in from outside the service area (see related article on the storm). Locating needed crews was difficult since storm damage extended well beyond the five county West Oregon Electric service area.

Baughman said cost figures were not yet available, but suggested an estimate of

\$175,000. The board congratulated the crew and office staff for their service during the storm.

Interim office manager Lynn Williamson reported that a number of consumer complaints concerning damage claims arising from a May, 1989 power surge had gone unanswered. The Coop, she said, had failed to

submit the claims, totalling \$10,353.72, to their carrier, Federated Insurance Co. The claims have now been filed and the carrier is contacting each claimant, Williamson said.

Director Bob Ragsdale reported that he recently studied surge protector devices and concluded that con-

sumers should pay more attention to the device's warranty than its specifications.

A letter from Community Action Team announced a \$2,000 grant for WOECE's low income energy assistance program. Jack Hruska, of CAT, challenged the community to match the funds.

Bonneville Power Adminis-

tration announced that \$22,500 is available to the Coop from the Super Good Cents program, which advocates energy efficient construction. Builders interested in the program may inquire at the WOECE office.

Directors also were told that a recent audit of the Coop will cost \$8,027.50.

\$2,000 granted for energy assistance

The West Oregon Electric Cooperative heat assistance program has just received a \$2,000 grant from the National Fuel Funds Network, a Philadelphia based energy coalition, announced Jack Hruska of Community Action Team, which secured the grant.

The WOECE energy assistance fund was started several years ago to help low income coop members maintain electric service. The program has met with mixed results.

"We have always had requests for assistance in the

WOECE area," Hruska said, "but we have not always had the funds to help."

In applying for the grant, Hruska hoped that coop members would view it as a challenge and match the \$2,000 with local donations.

"When a national group that knows very little about WOECE, or northwest Oregon for that matter, cared enough to give money to help with energy needs, then maybe people in the area would be willing to lend a hand," Hruska said.

Eligibility for assistance is

based on total household income. For a one person household, the gross monthly income cannot exceed \$747, or \$8,970 per year. Maximum income for a two person household is \$1,002 monthly or \$12,030 annually; for a family of four, \$1,512 monthly or \$18,150 annually.

Those who wish to donate to the WOECE heat assistance fund can do so by including a contribution along with their electric bill payment.

For more information about the program, call CAT at 1-800-922-7379.

CRPUD moves to new headquarters

The Columbia River People's Utility District is planning an Open House Week, February 5-9, to celebrate the opening of their new headquarters facility in Deer Island, on Highway 30 at the junction of Chaney Road.

CRPUD Manager Fergus Pilon announced the opening of the new facility on January 2. The dedication will be held February 5 followed by a week of activities and tours.

The public is invited to the Open House Week celebration.

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