

Rising power costs have WOEC board pondering best strategies

By Jim Buxton

The good news is that West Oregon Electric Coop's electricity rates won't change in the next year. The bad news is that the rates will almost certainly rise after that. The rates will not increase in the immediate future because they were set on the basis of the current contract between WOEC and Bonneville Power Administration. That contract will expire in September, 2001.

It is obvious that electric rates will increase, but the

question is when and how much? In an effort to keep options open and to deal itself as good a hand as possible, the WOEC board of directors, management and legal counsel have been studying the ebb and flow of power politics for the last several years. As deadlines for signing new contracts approach, recent developments in California have helped the board reach the conclusion that purchasing power from BPA is the best bet. But how to go about it?

WOEC could enter into a

"Full Requirement" contract with BPA, which would guarantee power at a certain price per kilowatt hour for a certain period of time, or join a consortium of electric utilities which purchases a block of power and divvies it up among its members in "Slices."

After due deliberation, the WOEC board unanimously voted to join the Pacific Northwest Generating Consortium and purchase a slice of PNGC's block of BPA power. The upside to that would be that WOEC could sell surplus power, if there is any, thereby lowering prices to its members, but the downside is that it would have to purchase additional power in a poor generating year, most likely having to raise rates. The board's reasoning was that there have been only a few bad water years in the last fifty, so it is reasonable to chance the next ten.

The board also made its decision because the block/slice option is the most attractive option at the moment, but the sit-

uation is quite volatile and could change, causing WOEC to exercise one of its escape options. The contract with PNGC will allow WOEC to drop out and purchase power directly from BPA under certain circumstances. Keep an eye on this issue. It can really affect our lives.

WINTER FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Make sure space heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves are in good working condition. Clean chimneys at least once a year.
- Never use fuel burning units without proper venting to the outside, as deadly fumes are produced by burning kerosene, propane and coal.
- Never close the damper with hot coals in the fireplace or stove.
- Always use a screen in front of the fireplace.
- Always use the proper fuel for each type of heater. Using non-approved fuels can be extremely dangerous.
- Never attempt to accelerate a fire with kerosene or gasoline. Both can "flash back" to the container with serious consequences. Store these fuels outside of the home.
- Maintain adequate clearance around all heating devices to ensure they are clear of combustible materials.
- Make sure house wiring is adequate and do not overload circuits when using electric heaters.
- Never use an electric space heater in the bathroom and never touch one when your body is wet.
- Keep young children away from space heaters and other sources of ignition.
- Never dispose of Christmas trees by burning them in the fire place. Avoid creating roaring fires that can ignite soot in the chimney.

Fire Prevention is October topic

This year's Fire Prevention theme is "The Great Escape." The theme focuses on teaching how to plan an escape from homes. The program also include teaching the importance of not playing with matches and the knowledge of what to do in case of a fire: Stop, Drop and Roll, and stay low in a smokey room. The Vernonia Fire Department would like to remind everyone to check your smoke detector and change the batteries.

Children in Kindergarten through third grade will be given materials in school. Parents are asked to review the materi-

als when your children bring them home.

Children who are home-schooled or in private school, or any others who will miss this information in public school, are urged to contact the Fire Department. Arrangements can be made for a tour of the Fire Department, or materials for pre-school through third grade (including stickers and coloring books) may be picked up.

Call the Fire Station if you have any questions or concerns. 503-429-8252.

Remember, too, dial 9-1-1 in case of emergency.

Key Title expands service capacity

Key Title Company, Oregon's largest family-owned and operated title company, has announced the expansion of its Centralized Title Plant.

Key Title's Centralized Title Plant is the largest consolidated property record maintenance plant in the Pacific Northwest. Based in Corvallis, the Centralized Title Plant is currently serving eight Oregon counties and will soon expand to include additional counties.

The Centralized Title Plant assists in streamlining and expediting the real estate transaction process. Title and escrow staff throughout Oregon can rapidly retrieve records and images to facilitate fast and accurate title reports and closings.

In addition, Key Title is expanding its Collection Escrow Division. The expansion of this division includes serving addi-

tional regional and national level customers, along with technological enhancements that provide customers with the most efficient contract servicing available.

Key Title's contract servicing division is the largest collection escrow agent in the Pacific Northwest. It has been servicing seller-financed notes and private party contracts for over 35 years.

State of the art technology, coupled with the staff's combined 70 years of industry experience, provides customers with the security and efficiency they have come to expect from Key Title.

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