

Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer,
General Manager,
West Oregon Electric Cooperative



You will be hearing a lot in the next several months about our Ore-

gon Governor's plans for renewable energy. While we support renewable energy and even own some ourselves, through our joint ownership of Coffin Butte, a landfill gas facility located by Corvallis, we do feel that there are some facts that are not being adequately addressed by the Governor's office.

To better inform our members, we would like you to know the following information: Cooperatively owned utilities in the Northwest are long-time supporters of renewable power; hydropower makes up over 70 percent of the wholesale energy they purchase. West Oregon Electric Cooperative, Inc. is fortunate to be able to purchase power from one of the world's largest renewable power systems: the Federal Columbia River Power System.

Northwest cooperatives have been carefully watching the development of – and in some cases, investing in – power generated by renewable technology. Electricity from renewable energy refers to forms of power generation (such as wind, solar, geothermal, or landfill gas) that are not based

on fossil fuel sources and do not have significant air emissions. Large-scale hydropower produces zero emissions and is by definition, a renewable resource. Cooperative leaders and consumers have made it clear that they strongly support incentives for alternative energy sources rather than mandates.

Thus, three key statements should govern any discussion of renewable standards.

- Mandates will increase customer rates. Local utility officials should be allowed to continue to make decisions to control rate increases for their customers.

- Existing hydroelectric power produces no emissions, and should be eligible in any legislative package.

- Reliability must not be threatened. Dependable, firm energy must be a top priority for utilities. Mandates based on politics and not science or economics threaten reliability.

The Oregon Renewable Energy Action plan states clearly that "cost-effectiveness must be considered in state agency decision-making related to energy sources, facilities or conservation." Cooperative boards already face the same requirements and are committed to this principle. Plans for our state should encourage renewable through incentives, rather than mandates.

Recent grassroots surveys confirm that these priorities are shared by our customers:

- 66 percent oppose raising power rates to add renewables for current power loads.

- 87 percent support local decision-making on renewable options.

- 44 percent support incentives rather than mandates to encourage development of additional renewable power. Only 16 percent support mandates.

Oregon's Governor has introduced a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) bill that is being considered by the legislature. Washington's legislature is looking to fix the problems created by passage of Initiative 937 requirements.

Some of the resources chosen to meet future needs will inevitably be renewable. But, state mandates forcing specific power purchase decisions onto utilities has the potential to raise rates and take away the ability of utilities to choose the best mix of generation resources for their individual needs and priorities. As an alternative, with proper incentive-based policies in place, renewable power, including hydropower, has great promise now and far into the future.

My biggest frustration has been the continued dismissal of our current hydro power as a renewable resource. It is renewed with each rainfall and each snowfall and is one of the cleanest forms of energy available. To require us to invest more dollars to replace an already existing, low cost form of energy serves no economic or environmental purpose. The alternative forms of renewable energy are far more costly to build and operate and are not constant forms of energy. You spend a great deal of money for

a resource that only produces power when the sun shines (solar) or when the wind blows. How do they propose we fill in the times that the sun or wind is not available to meet the constant needs of our members for power? Renewable energy just for the "feel good" aspect of it, without thought for the costs, return on investment, integration and transmission of it, and the unreliability of it as a consistent form of energy makes no sense to me. Let's remember the clean, low cost power we currently have and supplement it with a well-thought-out, cost effective, and prudent source of additional renewable energy.

Lose your card, \$8 replacement

The cost of replacing a boater education card increased from \$5 to \$8 on January 1, due to increasing costs of processing and mailing. The Oregon State Marine Board approved the fee increase at their December 14 meeting.

"If boaters have lost their card, had their name changed, or if their card is damaged or stolen, they need to order a replacement card," said MariAnn Koloszar, Education Coordinator for the Marine Board.

The fee for not carrying a boater education card is \$97. In 2007, boaters who are 60 and younger, operating a boat over 10 hp, need to take a

boating safety course and apply for a boater education card. More than 150,000 Oregonians have their boater education cards.

For more information about boating safety courses, visit www.boatoregon.com.

WEATHER REPORT DECEMBER 2006

DATE	TEMPERATURE		PRECIP.
	HI	LO	AMT.
1	41	31	T
2	45	28	--
3	43	26	--
4	43	29	T
5	49	27	--
6	52	27	--
7	50	30	--
8	42	33	.08
9	47	40	.01
10	50	34	.27
11	52	36	1.03
12	51	36	.93
13	52	41	.37
14	55	35	1.91
15	*	*	.17
16	*	23	--
17	39	23	--
18	37	26	--
19	41	25	T
20	43	30	.64
21	48	32	.24
22	40	32	.58
23	47	35	.19
24	47	33	.93
25	45	40	.15
26	49	39	.62
27	46	26	--
28	45	26	--
29	40	24	T
30	40	25	--
31	41	28	T

* power outage, no data available. Temperature and precipitation amounts are from the official U.S. weather station at the Vernonia water plant. Measurable precipitation in December totalled 8.12 inches.



503-429-0280

Basic Auto Repair

Specializing in Brakes & Light Auto Repair

Oil Change Special \$19.95

most cars & trucks - up to 5 quarts

Transmission service

Open Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday call for appointment

62481 Nehalem Hwy 47 North, next to Spartree Restaurant



Rotor and
drum machine
on site



Williams Metal Fab

Custom Fabrication & Welding

All Metals Including Stainless Steel & Aluminum

Portable WELDING AVAILABLE

503-429-8431

17819 Noakes Rd., Vernonia, Oregon