

Power of the People

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



To Build or Not to Build, That is the Question!

Having been hit by flood waters twice in the last 11 years and still recuperating from this last one, we have a decision to make regarding the relocation of the WOEC Headquarters buildings. After five months of looking at possible options and directions we could go, we are ready to present our findings to our members and obtain feedback. This decision is a major one that

will affect the present and future of West Oregon Electric Cooperative and its members. We want to make sure we provide all of the information we can and our recommendation to the membership.

To best inform all of our members and allow for interaction with them, we will be providing newspaper articles throughout the next three months, an 8-page insert in the July issue of Ruralite, holding a series of District meetings during the last week in June, meeting with our members at our Annual Meeting in August, and conducting a member survey during the last week in August and first two weeks in September.

The District Meetings will be held during the evenings in each District and are open to all Co-op members. You do not have to attend the meeting that is held in your District, but are welcome to come to any of the District meetings that fit your schedule and location. Please refer to the list of dates and locations at the end of this article. We will have a presentation on the different options we have considered and the recommendation for a new site and building, discuss the financial aspects of the project, and have a question and answer period. There will also be a door prize and free compact florescent light bulbs given out at each location.

While we remodeled the existing building to pre-flood conditions as required by insurance and FEMA, we know we are sitting ducks for the next flood. It is not a matter of if, but when we get hit again. As an essential and emergency service, we need to be focused on keeping the lights on dur-

ing an emergency, not on which boat to take staff out in as we vacate the building when members need us the most. Another important factor and concern I have as the General Manager is not only the financial impacts each time we go through an event like this one, with almost four feet of water in our office, but the mental and emotional impact on my staff and crews. It takes a lot out of them, and we definitely do not want to go through this a third time.

We have a unique opportunity due to the coverage of this event throughout the country and the sincere interest and support of our legislators. We have funds committed to help relocate our facilities. These funds of almost \$2 million are available to help with the costs, but are a one-time offer to the Co-op. This is the best opportunity we will have to replace a 52 year-old building we have already outgrown that sits in an active flood plain, with a new facility that will serve us for the next 50 plus years, and solve a lot of other issues at the same time. To have available almost \$2 million in financial assistance is a real blessing to the Co-op and its members. Please take the time to come and view the presentation, discuss the issues with us, and help us make this important decision for all of us, for now and in the future.

All meetings will start at 7:00 p.m.:

June 23; Scout Cabin, Hawkins Park, Vernonia

June 24; Banks Library, 111 Market St.

June 25; Banks Christian Academy, 22785 N.W. Fisher Rd., Buxton

June 26; Scappoose Library, 52469 S.E. 2nd St.

June 27; Natal Grange, 68175 Nehalem Hwy N.

June 30; Jewell School Auditorium, 83874 Hwy 103.

See you there!

Head Start is now enrolling

Head Start, a federally funded preschool program, is seeking students for the 2008-2009 school year, applications are being taken now, through June, in Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook Counties.

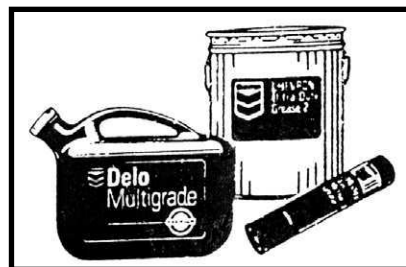
Prospective students must be three or four years-old by September 1, 2008. Eligibility is based on income, family situation and needs of the child, including whether there is a disability or serious illness.

Head Start offers a total family program that includes nutrition, education, medical or dental services for the enrolled child and home visits. Training on various subjects and on-the-job training is offered to all enrolled families. USDA approved meals are served. Limited transportation may be available.

Families who live in the Mist, Birkenfeld and Vernonia areas may phone 503-369-7249 for information. Families living near the Clatskanie Center (503-728-2940), Rainier Center (503-556-2807) and Warrenton Center (503-861-9681) may call for more information.

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