

## Power of the People

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### Updates and Information

A lot of our members are asking why their electric bills are high when they were without power for a few days. The explanation is simple, when the temperature drops, the amount of electricity used to heat a home increases dramatically. When printing out a daily usage for the month, members are quickly finding out that they have used considerably more electricity during the days they had power due to the extremely cold

temperatures in December and January. The days without electricity actually kept the bills from being even higher.

Speaking of the power outages due to the storm, we are getting closer to the actual costs that WOEC incurred to restore power and repair the system. To date, we are over the \$1.7 million mark, making this event the costliest storm in WOEC history. We have been in contact with Commissioners for each of the four counties we serve and with the Oregon Emergency Management people to give them our numbers.

Hopefully, together, there will be enough financial impact to trigger a disaster declaration. If we are successful, then the state will send its disaster declaration to the federal level, where the President could declare a disaster, which paves the way for FEMA funding. West Oregon Electric Co-op would then submit a request for funding up to 75 percent of the actual costs resulting from the 2008-09 snow

## DEQ says, "Go green to save green" OSU offers recession tips online

Conserving energy and water and using environmentally friendly products can save money for your business. The following actions can reduce air and water pollution and global warming. They also can result in more effective business practices and efficiencies that often translate into bottom line benefits. Many of these actions qualify for a 35 percent Oregon Business Energy Tax Credit.

Business site characteristics:

- Make your next building a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building.
- Use a landscape maintenance contractor who uses environmentally friendly practices like those included in the EcoBiz landscape program. Make sure they...
  - Use alternatives to pesticides, herbicides, or any other chemicals.
  - Landscape with native plants.
  - Incorporate storm water management into the landscape.
  - Manage all of their air emissions, water discharges, and hazardous and solid wastes properly.
  - Collect rainwater for use in toilets or landscaping.
  - Purchase non-toxic and low- or no-VOC products for building maintenance and

cleaning.

- Use night lighting that doesn't contribute to light pollution.
  - Purchase furnishings made with renewable materials and non-toxic adhesives and coatings.
- Resource conservation:
- Provide all employees with training on how their individual activities impact the environment.
  - Get an energy audit.
  - Purchase renewable energy or credits to off-set your company's carbon footprint.
  - Use water and energy efficient plumbing and lighting fixtures and controls.
  - Maximize the use of daylighting and passive solar heating.
  - Maintain your HVAC system regularly.
  - Incorporate renewable energy systems into your building, like solar or wind
  - Set the default on all printers to double-sided.
  - Use paper with percent post-consumer recycled material.
  - Provide recycling bins for paper, plastic and metal containers, newspaper in common areas around the office.
  - Provide employees with the opportunity to bring in from home hard-to-recycle items such as Styrofoam, old batteries, light bulbs, ink cartridges,

and other materials that are routinely recycled at work.

- Equip break rooms with Energy Star rated appliances.
  - Provide reusable utensils, bowls, plates, glasses, and mugs for break rooms.
- Transportation:
- Use a fleet maintenance contractor who uses environmentally friendly practices like those included in the EcoBiz auto repair program. Make sure they...
    - Perform regularly scheduled maintenance including oil changes, tire pressure and wear checks, fluid and leak inspections, filter replacements, and tailpipe smoke inspections.
    - Manage all of their air emissions, water discharges, and hazardous and solid wastes properly.
    - Join a group, like a transportation management association or a chamber of commerce that can provide businesses better access to transit options.
    - Provide employees with alternatives to driving alone to work, including carpooling, vanpooling, telecommuting, and flexible work schedules.
    - Provide employees with a transit subsidy.
    - Install bike racks for bicyclists and showers for those who walk, run, or bike to work.
    - Maximize the use of video
- Please see page 20

storm. We are doing everything we can to support and move this process along.

If we are unsuccessful, we will be hard-pressed to cover costs of this magnitude. We always keep a reserve account to protect us in case of major storms, and it saved us during the 2006 wind storm and the 2007 wind storm and flood. Each of those storm events was declared a disaster and we received FEMA funds to help replenish most of the reserve. We had the reserve account back up to the full amount, but this storm exceeds that amount by almost double. Without FEMA funding, we will be in a difficult position, especially if we were to get hit again this winter.

The front office would like to once again request all of our members who change phone numbers, or move to cell phone from their landline phones, to let us know so we can update our records. This is especially important during outages so we can notify or be in contact with our members. Please give us a call and help us to help you.

Also a reminder to let us know when you see trees or limbs that are hazards or potential hazards to our power lines so we can be proactive rather than reactive. We will send out a tree crew to eliminate problems before they result in an outage. The more trees and limbs we can move away from our lines, the better it is for all of us. It is always cheaper and easier to cut trees and limbs in the daylight than after hours with a flashlight. We appreciate your assistance and support for our system and our crews and staff. Thanks everyone!

The final update is in regards to the Timber/Elsie transmission line that went down during the 2006 windstorm. We have the green light from the Board of Directors to proceed with undergrounding the line, thus eliminating the constant outages related to falling trees and limbs. This will increase the reliability of power fed from Timber through Elsie.

Oregonians who are finding it hard to make ends meet during these tough economic times have a new resource at their fingertips that quickly links them to key assistance programs with the click of a mouse.

In an effort to compile useful resources in one easy-to-access place, the Oregon State University Extension Service has created a Web site, "Finding Help in Tough Times," containing links to agencies like the Federal Trade Commission and Oregon's Employment, Education and Human Services departments. These sites help people find information about filing for unemployment, finding a job, avoiding foreclosure, staying mentally and physically healthy, and applying for food stamps, nutrition programs and free or lower-priced school meals.

"The Web site highlights health and social service re-

sources available to people in need," said Sally Bowman, a specialist with OSU Extension who was involved with creating the Web site. "It's aimed at individuals and families who need help, such as people who've had the rug pulled out from under them in bankruptcy, foreclosure or layoffs."

The site is: [http://extension.oregonstate.edu/emergency/tough\\_times.php](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/emergency/tough_times.php)

This new Web site also links to a site provided by the Cooperative Extension System, a nationwide, noncredit educational network, that contains advice on how to weather the economic storm financially and psychologically. Articles on that site offer tips on topics that include how to manage debt, avoid eviction and foreclosure, determine one's net worth, engage in family activities on a budget, and cope with the stress and anger that may follow a job loss.



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