

Advocates sought

Volunteer advocates and investigators are needed to serve as ombudsmen for residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and adult foster care homes. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman will train the volunteers on the aging process, communication skills, problem-solving skills, investigation and other ombudsman skills. The certification training will begin on Thursday, May 14, in Portland.

As Certified Ombudsmen, volunteers work to improve the quality of residents' lives by identifying and investigating complaints and concerns on behalf of the residents, then working with the facilities to make changes. The typical concerns ombudsmen address cover a broad range, and often include resident care, residents' rights, such as privacy, respect and dignity; and quality of life concerns such as appropriate activities and meals. "The volunteers make a tremendous difference in the lives of the residents," said Kathy Walter, Program Administrator. "They are well-prepared and effective."

For information about the program or about how to get involved, call Walter at 1-800-522-2602.

Power of the People

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



It's Official!

With the President's signature on the Omnibus Bill, West Oregon Electric Cooperative will be the recipient of a federal earmark of \$475,000 towards the construction of a new substation in Vernonia. The total cost of the new substation will be approximately \$1.9 million to build. The earmark funds are a grant that will be used to purchase the new transformers for the substation.

U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Gordon Smith placed the earmark last year for inclusion in the 2009 bill. U.S. Representative David Wu then pushed for the earmark to be included on the House side. Their combined efforts made it possible for us to receive this important grant and we are very grateful to them. They originally asked for more funding, (\$1.5 million), but committees reduced the amount of the earmark to \$475,000. Every dollar counts in this project so we appreciate very much their support and work to keep us in the Omnibus Bill.

The timing of this grant couldn't be better, as the transformer in the Vernonia Substation is 39 years-old this year and has been flooded twice. They operate at their optimum for 40 years, so it is time to replace the current transformer. It made no sense to put a brand new transformer into a substation that is sitting in the flood plain, thus began the decision to build a new main substation for Vernonia located well above the high water marks. We will begin the design and engineering of the new substation in May and order the new transformers. It takes a year to make them and have them shipped to us. The permits and site prep will be started this year, as well, with actual construction to begin and be completed in 2010. We hope to have it on line by the end of next year.

I am also excited to report that we have received a \$500,000 grant towards the Timber/Elsie Transmission Line Project and almost \$2 million from FEMA. We are set to begin the rebuild of this line, which was damaged in the 2006 windstorm and further damaged in the 2007 windstorm. We are going to underground most



WOEC General Manager Marc Farmer met with Senator Ron Wyden last week in Washington, D.C.

of this line to avoid continued destruction of the line. This will save us millions of dollars over the lifespan of the underground line. The savings will come from reduced maintenance, outages, and replacement costs. Construction will start in April.

We continue to search for additional dollars from both the state and federal levels for these two projects, as well as funding for a new building out of the flood plain. I traveled back to Washington, D.C., to thank Senator Wyden and Representative Wu for their successful efforts to get WOEC the earmark funds, and made a presentation for the additional funds we are looking for. I also met with Rural Utility Services in the Agriculture Department for funding options. A presentation has also been given to the Governor's office for inclusion in the Stimulus Bill funding. We will keep you apprised of our achievements.

ShoeString Players present a mystery

ShoeString Community Players present *The Hilarious Hillbilly Massacre*, a mystery ala carte by Peter DePietro, in cooperation with Samuel French, Inc.

About the play? The Birch-bumble family, a wild and fun-loving clan from deep in the hills of Tennessee, is celebrating a family reunion and y'all are invited. Before the moon-shine starts flowin', evil befalls as a barbaric IRS agent crashes the party, and murder and mayhem follow. Enjoy a hog slappin' good time with delicious down-home vittles, mayhem, and merriment - it's an audience participation comedy that will leave everyone hootin' and hollerin' for more!

The show is directed by Shannon Vaerewyck. "This has got to be one of the funniest shows that I have seen in a very long time!" said Brian Vaerewyck, and "definitely a

show to forget the rest of the world for a few hours and laugh real hard at the mayhem that ensues as the mystery unravels".

ShoeString Community Players (SSCP) will present four evenings of this dinner theatre, on April 17, 18, 24, and 25 at 6:30 p.m., at the Yankton Grange, 33065 Pittsburg Road, St. Helens, next to the Yankton Arthur Academy.

Tickets will go on sale April 2 at The St. Helens Book Shop at

58527 Columbia River Highway, The Buzz Hair Salon at 139 N 21st Street, and www.sscpmusicals.com with PayPal. Tickets are \$20 each for admission and dinner. Seating will be limited, so get your tickets early.

This play is for adult audiences. All tickets must be purchased in advance. No tickets will be available at the door.

The ShoeString Community Players (SSCP) has been pro-

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