

Know your wood and your wood stove for best burn efficiency

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

Old Man Winter hit Oregon hard again this week, and folks who depend on burning wood to heat their homes may need to purchase a few extra cords. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is offering tips about how to use wood supplies more efficiently and safely.

Alison Davis, senior public affairs adviser with the EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, says it's important to check wood for proper seasoning before burning it.

Wood needs to be kept dry for at least six months before using it as fuel, she says. A simple way to test if the wood is ready is to knock two pieces together. "And if you hear kind of a hollow sound, that means it's seasoned. And you want it to be really dry, because if it's dry it's going to burn hotter and so you're not spending that heat to burn water out of the wood."

It's best to burn hard wood such as maple or oak rather than softer pine and fir, she says. In addition to burning the right wood, Davis says, you can save money by keeping the fire

small and really hot. Also, be sure to have stoves and other burning appliances serviced every year. "If you keep your chimney clean, that provides a good draft for your wood-burning appliance, so it pulls smoke out of the house, but it also reduces the risk of a chimney fire."

Federal tax credits have been extended to help offset the cost of a new, more efficient wood stove, Davis says. There's a state tax credit, too. But new wood stoves must be certified, either by the EPA or the Oregon Department of En-

vironmental Quality (DEQ). At least 80,000 older wood stoves in use around the state, the DEQ estimates, put out too much air pollution in the smoke

they generate.

More information about Oregon wood-stove laws and safe burning is online at ohpba.org.

DEQ seeks input on fee increases

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is proposing to increase fees for most of its water quality permits by two percent to address program cost increases. DEQ is also seeking approval of a one-time, \$230 fee for construction stormwater permits covering sites less than one acre that

are part of a common plan of development disturbing one or more acres. DEQ is seeking public comments on the proposals through Friday, April 1.

For more information, see the news release at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/news/prDisplay.asp?docID=3558>.

Just for Fun

Casey and Kyle by Will Robertson



WWW.CASEYANDKYLECOMICS.COM

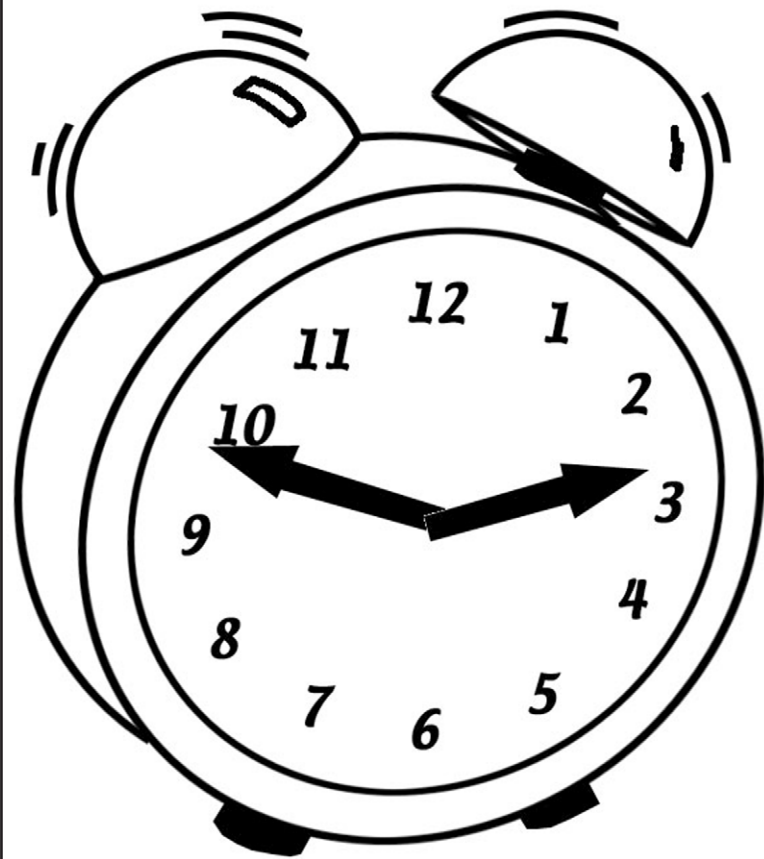
If you would be a real seeker after the truth, you must at least once in your life doubt, as far as possible, all things.

DESCARTES
Philosopher
(1596-1650)

Solve this Sudoku

1				3	4			5
	5				7			
9		6	8					
6	8		4					
		9				1		
					5		2	9
					9	5		2
			3				6	
3			5	4				8

Color this clock to celebrate Daylight Savings Time



Answer to February 17 Sudoku is on page 22