

There's a new way to report and/or research unsafe products

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

There's a new way to alert the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the public, about products that could be dangerous. It's a website just launched by the CPSC, www.SaferProducts.gov, where anyone can file a report or look up safety information about a product.

Consumer protection attorney Maria Diamond sees the new site as not just for consumers' benefit. She says it's also a way for the CPSC to find out earlier about potential safety issues in the marketplace. "Unfortunately, until now there

really wasn't a good way for the CPSC to identify hazards quickly and efficiently. They'd find out through the litigation process, which I think everyone would agree is not the way things should work."

Diamond notes the CPSC is a relatively small agency responsible for monitoring the safety of thousands of products, including toys, cribs and children's clothing. She thinks the new website will allow it to do a better job and provide information faster. However, there are a lot of product categories the CPSC doesn't cover, and some people are con-

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Forecast is good for steelhead

Anglers can look forward to another promising steelhead season on the Columbia River and its tributaries this year, based on a forecast released recently by a team of state, federal and tribal biologists.

The report issued in March by the Columbia River Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) forecasts a return of 391,000 upriver summer steelhead for the season that begins May 16 on the Columbia River below the I-5 Bridge. TAC is comprised of state, federal and tribal biologists whose forecasts are used to set salmon and steelhead seasons and harvest guidelines on the Columbia River

"The summer steelhead season is one of our most stable fisheries," said John North, manager of ODFW's Columbia River Fisheries Program, who noted the 2011 forecast is in line with the 10-year average. "It is one of those fisheries where you can go fishing and enjoy good weather and a wide range of locations and fishing methods."

The summer steelhead season also has the benefit of lower effort on the part of anglers.

"It's not as popular as the spring salmon season so there is more opportunity to get out and have lots of river to yourself," he said. "It's low key and low pressure."

The bulk of the forecast is for A-index hatchery steelhead, the earlier of two major runs. Out of the total upriver steel-

head forecast, 312,000 are expected to be A-run hatchery fish, which typically range in size from 5-8 pounds each. The A-run fish typically show up in large numbers in the Portland area below the I-5 Bridge from the opening of steelhead season on May 16 through the end of June, according to Jimmy Watts, ODFW's Columbia River assistant project leader. The B-index steelhead run, which is forecast at 54,000 fish, usually arrives a little later. B-index steelhead typically range from 8 to 12 pounds.

Watts, who supervises ODFW's Columbia River fishing survey crews, says the best fishing for steelhead in the Portland area generally takes place through July. As steelhead numbers peak in July and August, the action moves upstream between the I-5 Bridge and Bonneville Dam. By September, a large portion of the run has crossed Bonneville and the fish are often found holding in the cooler waters of the mouths of the tributaries, in-

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Power of the People

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



Still Some Bright Spots for WOEC

Despite all of the difficulties going on in our world, there are some things we can be thankful for in 2010 and so far in 2011. The weather has been favorable to our system so we have avoided any large outages. Our largest outage came from a wet snow in late February and early March that wasn't even predicted to be of any significance, but still caused outages that lasted a few days, mostly in the Chapman area. We did have to bring in some outside crews to help so the cost of repairs was about \$100,000. That being said, we have been spared the devastation from storms and bad weather others in the country have experienced, or that we have experienced in the past. The La Nina weather pattern has provided sufficient water to provide power from the dams this year and the runoff reports have us experiencing the 11th best water year in the past 40 years. What that possibly means for us is stable wholesale power costs this year. BPA will determine the final outcome in October, but at least it looks positive at this point in the year. We did not receive a rate increase in April from BPA so we can all be very grateful for that.

Though the effects of weather events in other parts of the United States and the world have taken their toll on other utilities, being a predominately hydro-based power purchaser we have not had the adverse affects others have to deal with. We obviously have higher costs in fuel for our trucks and will have to make concessions for those, but our power rates have not been impacted so far.

I am also grateful for the safety of our Line Crews. Working with high voltage in all kinds of weather, at all hours of the day and night, and in all kinds of conditions puts them at risk constantly. They are very professional and take every precaution to work safely and carefully. I am always very concerned with and very thankful for their safety. Our system has performed pretty well this year. We have done, and continue to do, lots of tree trimming, are inspecting our power poles and will begin replacing those identified as in poor condition, and we are undergrounding parts of our system. All of this is being done in order to improve the reliability of our system.

Our subsidiary, Columbia Broadband, has taken a positive turn and we are being successful in our efforts to make it a profitable venture. We anticipate further growth and development in our endeavors to make our subsidiary successful. While the broadband effort through LSN, formerly NoaNet, has not yet brought high speed broadband to our area, we continue to look for avenues and possible partnerships to soon provide this much needed service.

The underground project we completed on the Timber-Elsie Transmission line has proven to be a huge success and is already saving the Co-op significant repair and maintenance costs. The new building is moving along well and we are about to begin the construction of the new Vernonia Substation. We are all hoping for sunshine ahead to help all of our work and projects, and to just put a bright smile on everyone's faces.

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