

Power of the People

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



Building Projects Update

First of all is good news on the new substation project. We successfully received the funds from our first-ever Federal Earmark Grant of \$475,000 that will go toward the construction of the new Vernonia Substation. These funds will greatly reduce the cost of the project, and since it is a grant, will not have to be paid back. We are grateful to Senator Ron Wyden, Representative David Wu, and former Senator Gordon Smith for obtaining these much needed funds for West Oregon. The substation project will allow us to replace an aged transformer and relocate one of the Vernonia substations out of the flood plain.

The new transformers have been ordered and shipped. They are being held at a site in Portland until we are ready for them to be installed. The Federal Earmark Funds paid for the new transformers and toward engineering work for the project. We are now working on the final permits to begin construction of the new substation. We anticipate beginning site work and construction in June.

I would like to answer another question I received

on the new building. I was asked why we are putting cedar siding on the building. The answer is really a two-part one. First is that, originally, the truck bays and warehouse were scheduled to be metal with a skin on them to achieve the answer to the second part, that of appearance. That was before metal prices escalated to levels that greatly exceeded our budget. In fact, since the contract was signed, metal prices have increased over 44%. The amount of metal we would have purchased to cover the truck bays and warehouse would have significantly run us over budget. We then made the decision to switch to a wood building as lumber prices were declining.

While obtaining cost estimates on lumber pricing, we came up with another idea to not only save us money, but also to accomplish the other objectives of appearance. We were offered the opportunity to harvest and cut some local cedar trees. Other than the framing studs and plywood, most of the wood in the project we are milling ourselves from local timber using local labor. So the first answer to the question of cedar siding is we saved money by doing so instead of purchasing lumber at market prices, and especially by not building with metal.

As for the appearance, we made a commitment to the City of Vernonia that we would construct an aesthetically appealing

building, not an industrial looking building. As it is one of the first buildings you will see as you enter Vernonia, they wanted it to represent the City in a pleasing manner and set a positive tone. We chose to go with a timber theme to represent the rich historical culture of the community as a logging and timber town. To build it out of locally logged and milled trees definitely kept with that theme. It also kept our commitment to use as many local products, goods, and services in the construction of the headquarters as possible.

So, to answer the question, we were able to create a beautiful timber and logging community theme building, using local trees that were locally logged and milled using local labor, and save money while doing so. Seems like a real win-win decision for everyone.

Grill safety tips for the summer season

From page 13

stops, bring your grill to a professional to be serviced before further use. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.

- Use only equipment bearing the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Use the manufacturer's instructions regarding assembly, use, and proper care of the grill.

- If you smell gas while using the grill, get away from the grill immediately and call the fire department.

- Do not store propane tanks indoors in houses or garages. If storing your grill indoors during the winter months, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

Charcoal grills:

- If using a "charcoal chimney" to light charcoal for grilling, use a long match to avoid burning your fingers while lighting the paper.

- Never add starter fluid to coals or kindling that have already been ignited – and use only charcoal starter fluid. Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquid.

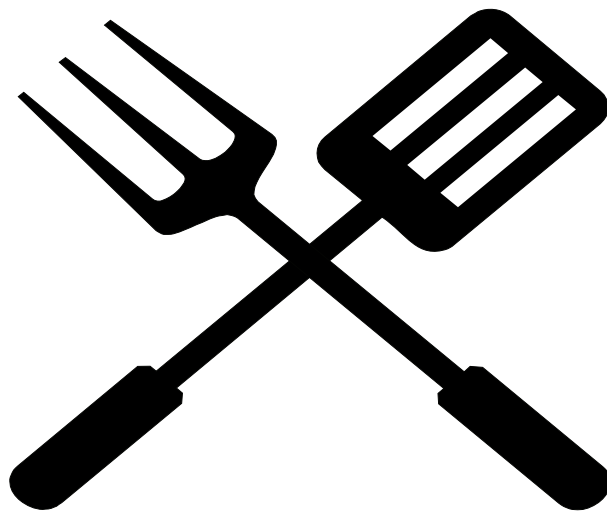
- Keep charcoal fluid away from heat sources and out of reach of children.

- When finished grilling, wait for the coals to cool completely

and then dispose of them in a metal container.

For more safety tips, videos,

facts and figures, and audio clips, please visit <http://www.nfpa.org/grilling>.



CPAC elections occur on June 14

Columbia County will hold Citizen Planning Advisory Committee elections for expiring terms.

CPACs provide advice and recommendations to county land use planning entities, including the Planning Department, the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

Each CPAC is divided into neighborhoods. Members represent neighborhoods where they live or own property. There must be at least five voters who

live or own property in a neighborhood to hold an election for the neighborhood.

Voters must show picture identification that verifies residency in the neighborhood or a tax statement that shows property ownership.

Elections will be held for Scappoose-Spitzenberg on June 14 at 6:30 p.m. at the Scappoose Library and for Upper Nehalem on June 14 at 7:00 p.m. at Vernonia City Hall, 1001 Bridge Street.

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