

Power of the People

By W. Marc Farmer, General Manager,
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Summer's Finally Here!?!

With the continuing cooler weather and rain it is hard to tell sometimes, but in other ways we definitely know it's here. Summer is a busy time for us, and this year is no exception.

Between building projects, tree trimming, pole replacements, and getting ready for our Annual Meeting, we manage to keep ourselves going strong.

The weather has affected the tree and brush growth tremendously this year. You can almost see the trees grow, and as a result we are cutting fast and furious. We have one crew working the problem areas and the second crew has been working on one of our transmission lines that continues to have outage problems due to trees. This line, which serves the Chapman area from BPA Warren Substation to the Chapman substation, is in one of our worst areas to access and work on. The terrain is extremely difficult and there is little to no road access, so we are trimming this area in as wide a right of way clearing as possible, to significantly limit and reduce the number of outages on this line. We will then send the crew to other high outage areas while we can, before fire season reduces our tree cutting time. The good side of the weather, though, is that it puts off fire season for a while so we can get more tree trimming done.

Another project taking place involves the Mist Sub-

station and Transmission Line. We experienced an underground fault coming out of the Mist Substation. In digging up the line, we discovered a design flaw that left us vulnerable to losing all of the feeder lines next to the damaged line. We took the opportunity of having the Substation down to redesign the feeder lines and create a better separation between them. We replaced the cable, thus extending the life of the new configuration as well. We will also use the down time to replace poles on the Mist Transmission Line that our pole inspections indicated were at risk.

The new building project continues to progress rapidly, and Five Star Builders is pushing to have it done ahead of schedule so we can hold our Annual Meeting there in August. I have had several members stop me and compliment the new building and what a nice asset it is for the Co-op and for the community. They referred to the building as the Vernonia Lodge. I take that as a compliment, as well, as that is exactly the look I was striving for. It represents the area we serve and doesn't look like a stark, cold industrial building.

I was also asked just how much we saved in dollars by cutting our own siding from local trees with local labor, since I didn't include the specific amount in my last article. The answer is we saved \$44,000 by cutting most of the wood ourselves. To date we have saved in costs and made cuts to the project of over \$106,000, to keep the project at or under budget. By being smart, we can still have a beautiful building that looks more expensive than it is. We have cut our own wood, we have purchased used shelving for the warehouse at 50 cents on the dollar, we are reusing doors, the kitchen, furniture, toilets, sinks, lockers, shelving,

cabinets, water heaters, and more from the existing building, saving thousands of dollars. We have taken advantage of new products that look like the real thing, but are not, so they cost a lot less. This will be reflective on the outside of the building in the rock work, and in the flooring and countertops inside the building. We have combed the internet for items on sale, used bartering and trading to obtain other items, and have made use of left-over materials to accomplish our goal of having a building that looks really nice, stays within costs, and will last for 50 plus years. For example, the left-over wood ends and pieces are being used in the ceiling in the Board room, which will enhance the look without adding additional materials costs, while reducing leftover waste. We selected flooring in the lobby that looks real but is a composite that accomplishes the look we wanted, at not only a reduced cost, but also significantly increased the life of the floor. It will last for 50 years or more because it is stronger, easier to maintain, and cheaper than the real stuff. The roof was changed to metal from the original design because it would be cheaper in the long run in maintenance costs, and would last for 50 plus years. Daily I am on the job site and meet weekly with the contractors to collectively manage the project. Together we have worked out ways to do things smarter, cheaper where we can, and still accomplish the end goal of providing a facility that represents the Co-op and the community very well, is functional and meets all of the Co-op's current and future needs for the next 50 plus years, and does so on schedule and at or below budget. We are on track to meet all of these objectives.

Columbia River sturgeon fishing season extended into July

Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) Fishery managers have extended the recreational sturgeon fishery in the lower Columbia River and reopened recreational sturgeon fishing in the Bonneville Pool during a joint state hearing of the Oregon and Washington departments of fish and wildlife.

The white sturgeon season

from Buoy 10 at the mouth of the Columbia to the Wauna powerlines at River Mile 40 was extended to continue seven days a week from June 27 through July 31. Previously, the season had been scheduled to close after June 26 and reopen for several days around the 4th of July weekend.

Surveys showed that catch rates had begun to increase in

the days leading up to the meeting.

Additionally, the states agreed to reopen Bonneville Pool, the portion of the Columbia River between Bonneville and The Dalles dams, to retention of sturgeon for two three-day periods. The next three-day period will be July 7-9. Then the reservoir will again close to sturgeon retention for

the remainder of the year. This reopening was possible because about 400 fish remain on

the Bonneville Pool guideline from the winter fishing season.

Three caracal kittens born at Zoo in June

Oregon Zoo caracal Peggy gave birth to three healthy kittens, two females and one male, on June 8. According to keepers, the first-time mother and her babies are doing well, with all three kittens nursing regularly and starting to move around their behind-the-scenes nesting box.

"We are very proud of Peggy," said senior Africa keeper Asaba Mukobi. "It's really amazing to see her do everything she possibly can to care for her kittens. She's very protective, makes sure everyone is nursing, and sets boundaries

for the kittens now that they're moving around."

Keepers and volunteers continue to monitor the caracals throughout the day, and their nighttime activity is recorded by camera and reviewed in the morning.

While Peggy and the kittens are spending all of their time in a behind-the-scenes area, the kittens' father, Cricket, is still on exhibit. Cricket was born at the Lory Park Zoo and Owl Sanctuary in South Africa, and moved to the Oregon Zoo in winter 2011. Peggy came to the zoo in 2009 from a conservation cen-

ter in Mena, Ark.

The zoo's caracal habitat, which was built with the support of Portland General Electric, is part of the zoo's Predators of the Serengeti exhibit. The caracals have access to a heated den and a spacious landscape dotted with trees, shrubs, heated rocks and grassy knolls, all of which are enriching for the feline residents.

Caracals live in the woodlands and savannas of North Africa, Southwest Asia and the

See Zoo on page 24

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