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Letters

Time to innovate for affordable energy

To the Editor:

Open letter to Marc Farmer: Marc, I get it. You are in a systemic Catch-22: damned if you do and damned if you don't. The realities are: WOEC is geographically stretched over 1,224 square miles through millions of trees and rough terrain; the power-load is dominated by residential users; it has few, and dwindling commercial users; and no significant percentage of industrial use. There are long-term deferred major repair issues, a huge recession, inflation, rising operational costs, declining revenues (people are leaving); compliance-forced office relocation and a single-sourced wholesale power supplier under Federal control. The situation is like ingesting pure habañera hot sauce by the tablespoon full. Not only you, but your staff, employees, friends, neighbors and all the customers are faced with the pain. And there are those who simply cannot afford WOEC power and are locked out. Everyone is upset and they are looking at you, the general manager ...and your new building (which, per square foot in cost is a technical value but not less expensive than a lower cost industrial grade clear span construction. But that is done with; it's here).

You have said there is nothing that you (and your Board?) can do outside of your 10-year plan and wage freezes, because of the iron grip, and nature of, WOEC's service area, customer base, wholesale supplier and the economy. Yet, you must do something. What? Punt! Look outside the 9 dots!

(1) Go back to the concept of being a "co-operative", and not a pyramidal, profit-focused, CEO-led business model. Co-ops utilize member ownership, an expanded, active board of directors who set policy for you to follow, as their co-op manager, in order to achieve maximum member and employee benefit, rather than seeking to deal with volatile investment risk, lowest labor cost, lowest supply cost and highest, retained earnings and dividends (Our co-op has dividends. Where are they?). The two concepts, co-op vs private profit structure, are diametrically opposed, especially when concerned with public utilities. WOEC needs to operate as a co-operative, not as a private business enterprise.

(2) Next, work with, not against the BPA; they are looking "down the road", as Germany and the Netherlands have very successfully demonstrated with alternative and soon-to-be dominant energy strategies. Otherwise, WOEC will simply go out of business because of avoidable, heritage (old time) costs and independent former-customers who will have their own, home-based energy systems (exclude expanded natural gas developments which require invasive secret ingredients, highly toxic fracking).

(3) Pro-actively embrace lobbying for and developing alternative renewable energy in all its manifestations, including fish-safe micro hydro (we have an abundance of adequate, undammed water flow even in summer).

(4) Put solar and wind turbines on your HQ roofs.

(5) Explore banking relationships that work with WOEC

customers on alternative energy packages, rebates, tax incentives and reverse metering; (6) Hire tree crews locally (we have an abundance of skilled forest talent and crew chiefs).

(7) Clear tree cuts on power-line easements to the max and sell saw-quality logs and chip trees to the mills, corded firewood to both residential and commercial users (like hotels, B&Bs, restaurants) then compost the vast quantity of excess chips (in your clear cut strips) for sale to commercial nurseries, who, by the way, at the right price, will lease your cleared line paths for nursery stock production. This will get employment and cash flow momentum going for the membership, none of which will flow out and away to outside investors. We, out in the yonder, can help lobby the State, Feds and private businesses to participate with us.

And one last thing, no trips to Washington D.C., et al, to communicate with our representatives...they can be dealt with here in Oregon for a lot less money.

So there it is, outside the 9 dots. Lead, don't plead. No explanations needed. I wish you, and all of us, good sailing.

**Jack Phillips
Vernonia**

Thanks for the great 2012 All Night Party

To the Editor:

The VHS Class of 2012 All Night Party Committee would like to thank the sponsors, donors and chaperones for your support of the June 2 event. 51 seniors attended and all reported having a good time. The all-night graduation party is a drug and alcohol free event sponsored by the Vernonia Prevention Coalition. It is organized each year by parents, host families and guardians of high school seniors.

The sponsors were Vernonia Prevention Coalition and DeAnna Pearl, VHS Class of 2012, Curl's Transportation and Shelley Cota, and the Vernonia Christian Church.

The chaperones were Scott Rethwill, Aaron Miller, Christina Morgan, Torie Fallau, DeAnna Pearl, Lisa Edgar, LeeAnne Krause, Darby Dooley, Mary Ann Shaw, Jennifer Butcher,

Kelley Murphy-Shaw, and Betsy Miller.

Donors were Scott, Marla and Janet Rethwill, Aaron and Betsy Miller, Vernonia Florist – Ben and Lisa Edgar, Keith and Kelley Shaw, Jon and Kinnell Steward, Cristi Tungwenuk, Randall Harvey, Amber Bozaid, KaptansKraft, Rainbow Lanes, Bullwinkle's Family Fun Center, Vernonia Sentry Market, Bridge Street Mini Mart, Black Bear Coffee Shop, Napa Auto Parts, Vernonia Golf Course, and Blue House Café.

Thank you again,

**Betsy Miller
2012 VHS All-night grad party committee**

Grateful to Genny's Vernonia home folks

To the Editor:

The family of Genny Fisher would like to thank the community of Vernonia for all the caring support given to us during our time of loss.

We would also like to thank all the friends, co-workers and residents for the kindness and respect you have shown for Genny over the years.

During the last few months of Genny's time with us, she would often say to us "I just want to go back to Vernonia, I want to go Home."

So now she is, home in the community that she so deeply loved. Her favorite quote was "I Love Vernonia". She was so proud of her community. So... Should you be walking down the sidewalk and happen to see some litter, think of Genny and toss it in the beautiful garbage cans that line the community. I am sure you will feel that beautiful smile she had saying "Thank you for helping keep Vernonia beautiful".

In Thanks and Gratitude,

Dale, sister Lois, brother Bob, Gary, Christy, Larry, Robby and families

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Ike Says . . .

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understand or care about is the steady decline in older hunters, who are simply giving up hunting or moving their hunting out of state to better areas. To top this off, non-resident hunters are finally figuring out that Oregon is not the best place to spend their hard-earned money. It is becoming apparent that non-resident hunters are spending their points on lesser hunts, then not

applying anymore. This will impact the ODF&W budget more than a resident hunter dropping out, due to the substantially higher fees that non-residents pay. I will give you one guess as to who they will ask to make up the difference.

**Izaak Walton League,
Nehalem Valley Chapter**
meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call 503-429-7193 for location.

Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.