

## Spring 2004

### Clark Public Utilities receives national recognition for tree trimming

The National Arbor Day Foundation named Clark Public Utilities a Tree Line USA utility for the fifth year. The Tree Line USA program is sponsored by the National Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters. It recognizes utilities that meet three requirements: a program of quality tree care; annual worker training in quality tree-care practices; and a tree planting and public education program.



Trimming trees is an important part of providing reliable electric service. Trees make our communities more livable, increase property values, and help clean the air. Trees are also the leading cause of power outages. Clark Public Utilities has an aggressive program to trim trees that are located near our power lines, and it's resulted in more reliable service to our customers.

The award was presented during a ceremony at the foundation's annual Trees and Utilities National Conference in Omaha. Clark was one of 114 utilities that were recognized. More than 2,500 utilities operate in the United States. "The commitment of Tree Line USA utilities to protect community trees while providing reliable service not only helps to provide beautiful trees for the future, but also results in long-term operational savings for the utility," said John Rosenow, president of the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The importance of tree trimming programs, like those of Clark Public Utilities that earned the utility "Best in the West" for reliability, was dramatically illustrated by CN Consulting, the company that prepared the report for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regarding the cause of last year's August 14<sup>th</sup> blackout in the Northeast. The report suggested that the four line outages that triggered the blackout were caused by conflicts between high voltage transmission lines and vegetation.

"Had all these specific trees been pruned or removed prior to these outages, the blackout most likely would not have occurred," the company reported in Public Power Weekly. It is important to note that the report stated that all of the utilities involved had tree-trimming practices that were not substandard within the industry. However, the report recommended the utilities implement a "best practices" for vegetation management program. It also is interesting to note that one of the lines that went down was one where the landowner halted tree-trimming efforts by the utility.

### Winter 2004 Ice Storm Fun Facts

23,051 calls were answered and responded to during the week of the storm (the prior record week was 14,244 calls)

The record day was Thursday, January 8, with 7,435 calls answered

On Clark Public Utilities "PowerLine"

- 64,664 calls entered the reporting system
- 38,372 customers hung up after hearing the recorded message
- 19,262 reported their outage by inputting their telephone number

**Prices remain stable for Clark Public Utilities customers**

Clark Public Utilities electric rates continue to be stable and there are no plans to increase prices next year, either. Although Bonneville Power Administration wholesale power rates to public utilities increased 4.3 percent April 1<sup>st</sup>, the increase will not be passed on to Clark Public Utility customers.

A decrease in the cost of natural gas for the utility's River Road Generating plant will compensate for the BPA increase. Clark gets about half its power from its wholly owned natural gas turbine generating plant. The utility signed contracts from multiple natural gas suppliers that will bring the cost of generating electricity down to \$46 per megawatt hour from \$52 a megawatt hour.

These gas purchases are part of Clark Public Utilities new risk management policy. In January, commissioners approved a strategy to reduce the risks of buying and selling wholesale electricity and natural gas. About 70% of Clark Public Utilities budget is directly related to cost of power we buy or generate for sale to our customers. By carefully monitoring prices for natural gas and electricity, we are able to make decisions that can save millions of dollars.

What does the future hold for power supplies in the Northwest? In the March 8, 2004 edition of *Clearing Up* it was reported that the Northwest Power and Conservation Council expects the Northwest to have a power surplus through 2011 and stable wholesale prices through 2025, according to estimates from two draft studies released in February, 2004.

"Predicting the future is inherently risky," said council chair Judi Danielson, "but our analysis suggest the most likely scenarios based on current conditions." The studies are part of a larger effort to periodically assess the regions power supply.

Since that report the Northwest has experienced two very dry months during March and April with rain levels for each month well below normal. The result is that water levels for the year, though still above last year, have dropped to approximately 77% of average. According to Larry Blaufus, Clark Public Utilities Industrial Accounts Manager, this will be an area to keep an eye on as well as natural gas prices, which have not shown any seasonal downward adjustment. In fact, market prices have recently turned upward.

At the same time the Council is reviewing their forecast models, BPA is working to resolve issues for the 2007–2011 rate periods. BPA is looking at six key areas:

- 1) Long-term power obligations to existing public utilities
- 2) How they will treat new publics and annexed loads
- 3) Identifying conservation and renewable resource responsibilities
- 4) Developing mechanisms that need to be put in place to control costs
- 5) Determining how they will provide service to direct service industries (DSI) load and to other new large single loads
- 6) Determining how they will meet the terms of an exiting contracts with investor owned utilities (IOUs)

There will be a regional dialogue process and a timeline will be established to provide recommendations and ultimately policy decisions that could greatly impact future prices and supply of electric energy. Our goal at Clark Public Utilities will be to continue to provide reliable service while working hard to keep costs down and rates stable.

### **Columbia Vista newest business to support Green Lights – solar and wind option**



Columbia Vista Corporation has become the newest business [to join our Green Lights program](#), which is designed to promote the development of renewable energy resources by offering customers the option to pay more for some or all of their electricity each month. Columbia Vista is now the third largest purchaser of Green Lights power, voluntarily paying a higher price for 15 percent of its electricity.

Columbia Vista's Green Lights purchase is equal to preventing more than a million pounds of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere per year. This has the same environmental benefit as planting 209 acres of trees or not driving more than 1.1 million miles.

Clark Public Utilities Commissioner Carol Curtis (far left) and utility CEO/General Manager Wayne Nelson (far right) presented an award to Columbia Vista Corporation owners Bob and Sharon Lewis.



The purchase was recognized recently in a ceremony at the company's headquarters on the banks of the Columbia River.

"We're delighted that Columbia Vista has joined our Green Lights program," said Carol Curtis, utility commissioner. "The commitment of large customers like Columbia Vista encourages others to join the program, which will result in development of additional renewable energy resources in the Pacific Northwest."

Bob Lewis, president of Columbia Vista Corporation, felt purchasing Green Lights was the right thing to do. "We think it's a good business practice. We're doing things different and it's creating a new synergy that makes our employees more aware of their impact on the environment," he said.

Green Lights power is sold in 100-kilowatt-hour blocks, for \$1.50 per block. The additional money is used to develop environmentally friendly sources of electricity, such as wind and solar power in Northwest states. The funds are administered through the non-profit Bonneville Environmental Foundation.

Green Lights participants are voluntarily investing more than \$6,000 per month in renewable energy products. To learn more about Green Lights, or to sign up, [visit our website](#) or give us a call. Other business customers that have stepped up to purchase Green Lights include Clark County, Shell Solar Industries, Wild Oats, Sharp Microelectronics Technologies and Frito Lay.

**Get to green – get LEED™ certified**

More and more Clark County business customers are calling requesting information about LEED™, a program that works to maximize people, planet and prosperity goals. To gain a better understanding of customer options, Industrial Accounts Manager Larry Blaufus and Commercial Accounts Representative Rick Closson recently attended “Driving Down the Cost of LEED™” a green building professional development workshop.

“I think what we learned is that for some customers this program has a lot of value that connects people and the environment,” said Blaufus. “It’s a process that helps customers work through what can and cannot be implemented in a cost effective manner.”

Customers can earn LEED™ certification, and be part of a growing trend in the public and private sectors towards this environmentally sensitive design and construction process. “Green” construction and official certification goes far beyond the basic issues of energy conservation, creating major buildings that are light, airy, people-friendly, conserve water, utilize recycled materials, reduce environmental pollution and help protect global ecosystems. LEED™ certified structures consider all these concepts and many more, and represents a commitment to buildings that protect the environment and cut energy costs.

In order to earn green certification, there must be a commitment to an extensive process that tries to create healthy indoor environments, reduce pollution, minimizes urban sprawl, cuts down on waste, slashes energy costs, prevents "sick building syndrome" and improves employee morale and productivity. Dozens of specific points are outlined that need to be considered and addressed to achieve one of the four levels of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEEDS certification, designed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

These new buildings will probably include many of these features:

- A large atrium that brings light indoors and allow extensive use of "daylighting" in almost every work, laboratory or office space
- Windows that can be opened to allow localized air and temperature control
- An open spatial design that allows more natural air flushing and ventilation each day with fewer mechanical systems
- Landscaping that is water-efficient and features native vegetation
- Light "shelves" that provide more pleasant, indirect use of sunlight on south-facing rooms
- Use of local or regional building suppliers to reduce material transportation costs and environmental impacts
- The building may exceed code requirements for energy efficiency with LEEDS certification by 30-40 percent
- The building would be convenient to local bus lines, minimize exterior light pollution, and achieve outstanding indoor air quality
- Paints, coatings and carpets that are chosen to minimize chemical emissions

These green construction features may initially cost 3-6 percent more than traditional approaches, but those expenses will be offset by future energy savings and a more functional,

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livable and healthy work environment. In some structures, green construction can be accomplished at the same or lower cost, experts say.

Advocates say the move towards green construction is a critical issue. Commercial, institutional and residential buildings account for up to 40 percent of total energy use, 35-40 percent of municipal solid waste, and more than 25 percent of wood, raw materials and water used. These buildings are where Americans spend 90 percent of their time, and they consume two-thirds of our electricity.

## **Find out how you can cut operating costs and improve efficiency today**

Compressed air can be the most critical component in many manufacturing operations. The production of compressed air can use a lot of electricity – in some facilities it can be one-third of their energy costs. Not only can energy efficiency gains be identified by having an audit done by one of our professional energy specialist but you can also have improved air supply, enhanced maintenance cycle, noise reduction and other efficiency improvements such as identifying air leaks that need repair. Clark Public Utilities continues to offer up to \$3,000 for compressed air audits. Clark Public Utilities also offers assistance to build an energy-efficient motor plan and in reviewing lighting options. Additionally, loans are available to help finance implementation of energy efficient projects. Please contact Larry or Rick today if you have questions or want to sign up. (See [May Training Opportunities](#) for training dates and related information)

Free Department of Energy Audit - If you are a company with gross sales below \$75 million, have fewer than 500 employees, have annual energy bills less than \$1.75 million and lack in-house technical staff to perform an energy analysis you can have a free comprehensive audit performed by the Oregon State University engineering team.

## **E-Manager is your ticket to energy information**

Your business can now have access to their load profile data. This is a great tool to track usage/costs and shave peaks. It can also be used to validate energy efficiency programs you have instituted or identify higher than normal usage. Each night the prior day's load data will be downloaded and made available to you the following day on the web. E-Manager can provide average hourly profiles, periodic reports that are important to your business and assist you as you prepare your annual energy budgets. It's secure and only you and those you authorize can access the data.

Business customers can now sign up for E-Manager. The cost is \$50 per month per meter. This service will include a new meter and will be limited to the first 50 meters requested. Communication links to the meter are the responsibility of the customer. Call Larry or Rick if you are interested.

## The facts about “Summer Spill”

*Editors Note:* Questions 1-4 and answers provided by the [Coalition for Smart Salmon Recovery](#)

### 1. What is spill?

Spill began in the mid 1990's with the intent to help juvenile salmon migrate to the ocean by sending them through an opening in the dam rather than through the dam's turbines. But while the name “summer spill” sounds benign, the experience is not. Operators open an underwater “gate” in the dam, pulling fish 30 to 50 feet down through the opening, and propelling them into the turbulent water another 20 to 50 feet below. This experience can cause fish to suffer from gas bubble disease, similar to “the bends,” and often leaves them disoriented and injured, making them vulnerable to predators. “Summer spill” occurs during July and August at Ice Harbor dam on the Snake River; and John Day, The Dalles and Bonneville dams on the Lower Columbia River.

### 2. How many fish does it help?

Not many, because 90 percent of the juvenile Chinook are barged around the dams, leaving very few in the river to benefit. One ESA protected stock, Snake River fall Chinook, migrate during this time, but they actually receive very little protection from summer spill as they, too, are safely transported downstream.

### 3. What does spill cost?

“Summer spill,” a process that redirects water that would otherwise be used to produce electricity, is proving to be the most expensive mitigation method used by federal river managers. Recent studies (<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/tmt/agendas/2004/0204-mod.ppt>) confirm that “summer spill” is expected to cost ratepayers about \$77 million annually, while saving only 24 adult endangered fall Chinook salmon. It's the most expensive single fish passage strategy. Spill also benefits 19,000 non-listed fish (5% of last year's 384,000 returning adults). Those non-listed fish, which are commercially harvested, are returning in record numbers. The \$77 million cost breaks down to \$3 million for each endangered fish and \$4,000 for each non-listed fish.

### 4. Who performed the spill analyses?

The federal agencies, led by BPA, developed the latest set of studies examining the effectiveness of spill (Presented to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (Council), updated February 11, 2004). Their work was informed by the ongoing effort of NOAA Fisheries, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and others that, year after year, study fish passage in the Columbia -Snake River system. Similar conclusions can be drawn from past analyses. Bruce Suzumoto, Northwest Power and Conservation Council staff presented “Fish and Energy Impacts Resulting from Reductions in Summer Bypass Spill,” to the Council in July 2003 when the efficacy of summer spill was raised ([www.nwccouncil.org/news/2203\\_07/spill\slide1.htm](http://www.nwccouncil.org/news/2203_07/spill\slide1.htm)). Then, during the power crisis of 2000-01, Jim Ruff, NOAA Fisheries, presented a draft analysis “NMFS 2001 Summer Spill Survival Analysis.” (June 13, 2001).

## 5. Does Clark Public Utilities support changes in summer water spills?

Yes. Clark Public Utilities supports the BPA three-year pilot program to reduce water spill at some dams and stepping up other measures to protect salmon and steelhead. The plan is expected to save \$45 million a year.

### May Training Opportunities

**Compressed Air Training –Tuesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>** from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Siltronics Corporation's Portland plant located at 7200 NW Front Ave.

The cost is \$299 but you only pay **\$199**, because Clark Public Utilities is a co-sponsor and will pay \$100 of your cost for technical assistance training.

The workshop is conducted by Scott Stroup of Airometrix.

**Motor Training - Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>** from 9 – 11:30 a.m. at the Clark Public Utilities Community Room. This is a **free** workshop sponsored by Clark Public Utilities and Northwest West Energy Efficiency Alliance.

Electric Motor Management Workshop by Jim Williams, J.C. Williams Consulting, for industrial facility managers and operators.

Benefits of attending include:

- Lower long-term operating costs because of energy savings and improved plant efficiency
- Reduction of downtime as a result of planning ahead for motor failure
- Increased reliability as a result of better specification of motors and repair practices
- Participants will be given a copy of Electric Motor Manager Software
- Participants will be eligible to receive a one-on-one session on your site

For additional information or if you have questions contact:

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