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January 28, 2009

Corvallis tops green cities list

EPA report says city buys more renewable energy than any other in the nation

BY MATT NEZNANSKI
GAZETTE-TIMES REPORTER

When it comes to green energy consumption, Corvallis is tops. Officially.

According to the federal Environmental Protection Agency report on its "green power communities," Corvallis buys more power from renewable resources than any other in the nation.

"There's a broad range of people who are making a commitment to renewables," said Mayor Charlie Tomlinson. "Many people making small contributions can make a

big difference."

Green Power communities pledge to collectively buy green power in amounts that meet or exceed the corresponding percentage for the matching baseload electricity use level.

Locally, consumers and businesses are given the option of spending a bit more each month to buy power produced by wind, so-

lar and biomass, rather than coal-fired generators.

Corvallis purchases more than 100 million kilowatt-hours of green power annually, which amounts to 13 percent of the city's total purchased electricity.

According to the EPA, Corvallis' green power purchase is equivalent to avoiding the carbon dioxide emissions of more than 13,000

passenger vehicles per year. Put another way, it is equivalent to the amount of electricity needed to power more than 9,000 average American homes annually.

Green power options are offered locally from sources such as Pacific Power's Blue Sky, Consumers Power Coffin Butte Land-fill Gas project and the Bonneville
SEE GREEN | A10

Organization Rewards Cautious Driving



CASEY CAMPBELL | GAZETTE-TIMES

Oregon State University employee Stacy Brock parks her motorcycle after commuting to work in the rain on Tuesday afternoon. Brock is a member of Women in the Wind, a motorcycle group whose local chapter has been awarded the 2008 trophy for the highest safe mileage.

Riding safely

Local women's motorcycle group wins award from national league

BY KYLE ODEGARD
GAZETTE-TIMES REPORTER

Water beaded on Stacy Brock's sportbike as she pulled into a parking lot at Oregon State University on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old loves motorcycling and rides to

work nearly every day, except when it's icy, so a bit of rain wasn't a problem.

"It has the potential to be dangerous," she said. But Brock concentrates on riding smoothly, increasing her stopping distance and

avoiding painted lines on the pavement.

Those safety skills have been reinforced through the motorcycle group she belongs to, Women in the Wind. The local chapter has
SEE MOTORCYCLE | A6

Effects of concussion last for life, study says

BY THOMAS H. MAUGH II
LOS ANGELES TIMES

The head-banging collisions that thrill sports fans have lifelong effects on athletes, with impairments in movement and thinking skills showing up 30 years or more after the concussions, researchers reported Tuesday.

The slight deficits resulting from one or two concussions were similar to the problems found in patients with the early stages of dementia although they did not interfere with the daily life of the otherwise healthy men, researchers reported in the journal Brain.

"They were all very functional, working, still playing sports, and really in good health," said senior author Dr. Maryse Lassonde of the University of Montreal. "It is only when we compare them to people who did not have concussions that the problems come up."

For those who have more concussions, however, the results are far more severe, according to a separate study released Tuesday at a news conference in Tampa, Fla., timed to coincide with Sunday's Super Bowl.

Researchers said a biopsy of the brain of nine-year NFL lineman Tom McHale, who died last May of a drug overdose at age 45, showed that he suffered from a severe degenerative brain disease called chronic traumatic encephalopathy. It was caused by repeated concussions.

INSIDE

B1: Super Bowl players try not to think about study results going into Sunday's game.

SEE BRAIN | A6

Novelist, Pulitzer Prize winner John Updike dies

BY MATT SCHUDEL
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — John Updike, whose finely polished novels and stories exploring the virtues, vices and spent hopes of America's small town and suburbs earned him two Pulitzer Prizes and kept him at the pinnacle of the nation's literary life for five decades, died Tuesday at a hospice near his home in Beverly Farms, Mass. He was 76 and had lung cancer.

Updike was best known for peering into the bedrooms and

unquiet minds of suburban couples and small-town entrepreneurs in dozens of novels and stories that mirrored America's march from postwar optimism to the dimming dreams of a chastened generation.

His most famous works were probably the quartet of novels about Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, whose life was a continual search, whether in business or the beds of other men's wives, for the crystallized feeling of joy he had known as a small-town high school basketball star.



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

John Updike seen at BookExpo America 2006 in Washington.

Updike was often labeled the bard of suburban adultery — "a

subject which, if I have not exhausted, has exhausted me," he once said — and many of his early works of fiction were considered scandalously explicit. Updike's reputation as a novelist and a sexual provocateur in print was secured with his novel "Couples," which became a No. 1 bestseller in 1968. The book, which tells the intertwined stories of the longings of five New England couples, landed Updike on the cover of Time magazine under the heading "The Adulterous Society."

"People read it as a report from

the field," The Washington Post's David Streitfeld wrote in 1998, "wondering in amazement if their neighbors were really living such erotic lives."

Updike's literary reach went far beyond a study of the nation's sexual mores. His first novel, "The Poorhouse Fair" (1959), features a 90-year-old protagonist; "Brazil" (1994) sets the timeless Tristan and Isolde love story in modern South America; and the 2006 novel "Terrorist" views the world through a post-9/11 prism.
SEE UPDIKE | A10



CASEY CAMPBELL | GAZETTE-TIMES

Andrew Fields, of Monroe, fills out a skills test to help him look for a job at the Corvallis office of WorkSource Oregon Employment Office on Tuesday.

Benton jobless ranks highest in 25 years

BY BENNETT HALL
GAZETTE-TIMES REPORTER

With a seasonally adjusted jobless rate of 6.7 percent, the latest unemployment statistics for Benton County are the gloomiest in a quarter-century.

"We haven't hit 6.7 since the last recession," said Pat O'Connor, a regional economist who covers the mid-valley for the Oregon Employment Department.

In recent years Benton County has consistently had

the state's lowest jobless rates, with the numbers often hovering around 2 percent. Back in the early 1980s, however, the county was caught up with everyone else in a deep economic downturn.

The low point came in 1982, O'Connor said, when the annual average was 6.5 percent unemployment. Since then, we've hit that number only once, in June 2003, when the post-9/11 downturn bottomed out.

Now hard times are back with a vengeance. Nationally, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate hit 7.2 percent in December. The average for Oregon was even higher, at 8.8 percent.

And as bad as the 1980s were, there are ominous signs that the current nosedive could be even worse, even in normally recession-resistant Benton County.

"This has come on much more rapidly," O'Connor said.

"In June we were at 3.8 percent (unemployment), and here we are nearing 7 percent. We haven't quite doubled, but we're in that neighborhood."

One of the latest casualties of the current downturn is Andrew Fields, a 55-year-old molecular biologist from Monroe.

Fields had been working for the past seven years in Eugene at the University of Oregon's Institute of Molecular Biology, where he had a good

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50 cents



INSIDE

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WEATHER BEAVER SAYS:

We can expect more rain filling the valley today, with a tapering off later this evening. Some sunshine could return as early as Thursday, so make plans for a dry weekend.
For details, see A10.

