

Plug-in school bus coming to Chelan

A school bus that runs on electricity as well as diesel fuel is expected to join the Chelan School District fleet this fall. Scott Logan, transportation director, said the plug-in hybrid electric bus will be powered entirely by electricity when it's running in town or idling. The bus will be able to go a minimum of 30 miles on electricity before a traditional internal combustion engine will run in combination with electric power.

The school district is part of a national consortium interested in plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. The consortium is in the process of securing grants to purchase 20 buses, which are more expensive

initially, but should save money in the long run in reduced fuel and maintenance costs. And, Logan noted, they cut down on pollution.

Logan said the Chelan School District already has a no-idle policy, meaning school buses with diesel engines must be turned off when they're parked near a school.

The district will pay \$60,000 -- about what a traditional bus costs -- toward the \$200,000 hybrid bus. The 72-passenger bus will

look like a standard school bus but with a lower center of gravity, which improves safety. Logan plans to try it on several different routes and to keep records for five

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years comparing the hybrid's performance and costs with those of a traditional bus.

Chelan County PUD is a "plug-in partner" in a national grass-roots initiative to demonstrate to automakers that a market for flexible-fuel Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) exists today. To learn more about the national campaign, visit this Web site: www.pluginpartners.org.

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Additional water rights requested

Fish habitat will be the focus of a study at Company Creek this year. PUD staff, along with staff from the state departments of Fish and Wildlife and Ecology, will visit Stehekin several times to perform the analysis. A full hydrological cycle, from spring through winter, must be analyzed as part of the PUD's application to use additional water from the creek to generate electricity.

Keith Truscott, Permitting and Environmental manager for the PUD, said the PUD would like to use an additional 5 cubic feet per

second (cfs) from the creek to run the hydro turbine. The current water right allows the PUD to use 17.86 cfs for hydro generation.

"Overall, the environment would realize a net benefit," Truscott said, "because we could reduce the hours we run the diesel generators by nearly 50 percent at certain times of the year."

Department of Ecology officials will make the decision on the application. The National Park Service also is involved in coordinating issues related to the PUD's proposal.

Leaning trees are a hazard



Old trees or trees damaged by wind or other forces can pose a hazard to power lines – and the public. If you spot a tree that's potentially hazardous, please let us know. Contact operators Robert Nielsen, Dick Bingham or John Wilsey in Stehekin, or call Wenatchee headquarters at (509) 661-4508.

Power plant improvements under way

One of three diesel generators used to provide back-up power at the Company Creek power plant has failed and is slated to be replaced this fall. In the meantime, the two existing generators are providing back-up power.

Two new governors also have been installed, one on the hydro unit and one on one diesel unit. New governors will be installed on the other diesel units later this

year. The upgrades are intended to improve power quality in the valley, meaning fewer cases of dim lights and slow clocks.

The hydro turbine was removed for maintenance last fall and a crack repaired. This is the second crack discovered in two years, said Jim Gray, Hydro Operations Supervisor. The turbine is being checked monthly to make sure the repair work holds.

We'd like to hear from you

Do you find this newsletter beneficial? Are we providing information you can use? Do you want the newsletter to continue?

We'd like to hear your comments. Contact Customer Service Administrator Susan Gillin. Her address and phone number are in the "How to reach us" segment of this newsletter. Thank you!

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