Clark County

OS releases report on pollution at dam

By ERIK ROBINSON

The Army Corps of Engineers has released a voluminous investigation of contamination at an old landfill that has been leaking pollution into the Columbia River from Bonneville Dam.

The report is a part of the larger cleanup plan, which will be formulated for the long-term cleanup plan.

The landfill, at the tip of Brandy Island, had been used for household waste as well as project-related debris between 1942 and 1952.

Materials dumped in the landfill include household garbage, petroleum products such as oil and grease from dam turbines, paint, synthetic resins, batteries, mercury vapor lamps, sealed buckets of grease, plastic fix, scrap metal, switch gear and cables.

In 1999, workers surveyed the shoreline for groundwater seepage and spotted three electrically capacitive pipelines sinking into the water.

Each capacitor contained between 20 and 30 gallons of oil, brackish water, with polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs.

Subsequent testing of fish tissue revealed extremely high levels of pollution, to the point that public health officials warn fishermen to avoid consuming smallmouth bass caught in the pool above the dam.

Crayfish in the area carried even greater levels of PCBs — up to 75,000 parts per billion, compared to “safe” levels of 6 ppb. Not only would it be extremely bad to eat crayfish in the area, a PCB level that high qualifies as hazardous waste.

The corps removed items from the river in 2000 and 2002. Then, in 2005, the corps hired a contractor for $3.0 million to seed down divers who meticulously vacuums PCB-laden soil from an area of river bottom a little smaller than an acre.

“Preliminary work in 2008 revealed PCB levels several orders of magnitude lower than 2002 and 2005,” corps spokesman Scott Clemons said Thursday.

The new report concludes that the remaining contaminant remains on land and in the water, exceeding regulatory levels.

The report proposes a feasibility study to identify remedial actions that would reduce contamination in the water.

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President Bob Knight spells out triumphs, challenges for the institution in his annual address

By HOWARD BRUCK

Clark College President Bob Knight used a quiet of the calendar Thursday to preview his annual State of the College address.

Among other things, Jan. 20 is dubbed “Penguin Awareness Day,” and Google confirms that Knight noted — before he listed Clark’s attributes and many of the challenges for the “Penguin Nation” students and instructors could miss.

The challenges include soaring tuition rates and financial aid needs. Overloaded classrooms and closed class sections. Scarce parking, longer lines, higher stress — and all else that occurs to recession-fueled record enrollment of 16,000 students, postposed against budget cuts that proportioned value programs and programs.

And yet, Clark’s students and faculty surmount such hurdles and continue to excel, Knight told the capacity Gaiser Student Center audience.

“In tough times, people succeed because they are resilient,” he said, accentuating the positive. “Our people are resilient. We believe in our future.”

Knight did take the previous.

“Honestly, this year will be even more difficult,” and the next two years promises more of the same, he said.

Clark leaders are looking to pare $2 million more from the school’s operating budget, in anticipation of state funding reductions for the 2013-14 budget cycle.

“We are going to have to make cuts that no one wants to make,” he said.

Knight said the college will collaborate on decisions on how best to preserve academic programs required by law or accreditation needs. Focus on those that “we take pride in, because they reflect our aspirations for our students and the region.”

Proposed building likely delayed

Clark and school district partners pine for a proposed $36 million science, technology, engineering and mathematics classroom building, originally slated for start of construction by this year. But, groundbreaking in 2013 or later now seems likely due to Olympia’s massive budget deficit.

The delay “is not necessarily disastrous,” Knight said after the speech. Since Clark would meet sufficient funds to staff or operate the building any sooner.

Clark’s financial aid workers doled out $4.3 million to students during 2012-13, an increase of 25 percent, he noted. The record high underscores the workload of Clark staff, who processed nearly 11,000 student files.

More ominous is the fact Clark has already dispensed $31 million in aid during the current year just entering
Two announcements have been made that will have to be followed by action to protect the environment and the health of our children.

First, the state Environmental Protection Agency announced on January 26 that it has won a $4.2 million settlement in its case against a company that dumped hazardous waste at a site in central Washington.

Second, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced on January 26 that it has won a $4.2 million settlement in its case against a company that dumped hazardous waste at a site in central Washington.

The settlement will provide $3 million to the state to fund environmental cleanup at the site and $1.2 million to the company to pay for the cleanup.

In addition, the settlement includes $1 million to fund environmental education programs in the area.

This is a significant victory for the state and the environment, and it sends a clear message to companies that they will be held accountable for their actions.

We should all be grateful for the hard work of the EPA and thestate in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.

Dr. Howard Frank is a professor of public health at the University of Washington.

It’s not just about the elderly, he said. There are multiple benefits.

At a recent meeting of the American Lung Association, a group of experts on the environmental health of the nation’s children discussed the latest research on childhood asthma.

They said that the rates of childhood asthma are increasing at an alarming rate, and that the health of children is at risk.

The experts called for a coordinated effort to address this public health issue.

They said that the government should work with schools, parents, and other organizations to educate children about the dangers of asthma and how to prevent it.

The experts also called for more research on the causes of childhood asthma.

They said that there are many potential causes, and that more research is needed to understand the factors that are contributing to the increase in asthma rates.

Dr. Howard Frank is a professor of public health at the University of Washington.

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In its second quarter, it’s a grim offset for back-to-back 7 percent tuition hikes imposed on students, while Gov. Chris Gregoire has called for 10 percent hikes each of the next two years.

Knight also touched on the “very painful time at the college,” following distribution of a new student handbook to students.

The handbook, which includes information on the college’s policies and procedures, is designed to help students navigate the college’s various programs and services.

The handbook also includes a section on the college’s financial aid programs, which can help students pay for tuition and other expenses.

For a tuition increase to take effect, the college must submit a plan to the state legislature, which will review the plan and decide whether to approve the increase.

The college will present its plan to the legislature in March.