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A puff of dust signaled the end of the nuclear energy era in Oregon. Trojan owner PGE is already moving into alternative energy sources and conservation. (See page 5)

Governor visits Centralia College Center of Excellence, lends support to Satsop proposal

The Satsop site along the Chehalis River is a reminder of successes and failures in public energy projects, changes in energy use, and ways to meet new demands as fuel and other energy costs rise almost daily. The unfinished cooling towers are viewed as a gravestone by some, a milestone on the road to prosperity by others.

At Centralia College's Center of Excellence, the 1,800 acre site is seen as a nearly complete facility perfectly suited to training a new generation of power operators and energy workers. The never-completed power plant, according to COE director Barbara Hins-Turner, has energy-related equipment and systems that simply aren't available anywhere else. "This is a place that could provide a training base for energy producers throughout the region," Hins-Turner said. "It's a facility we simply couldn't duplicate in any other kind of campus setting."

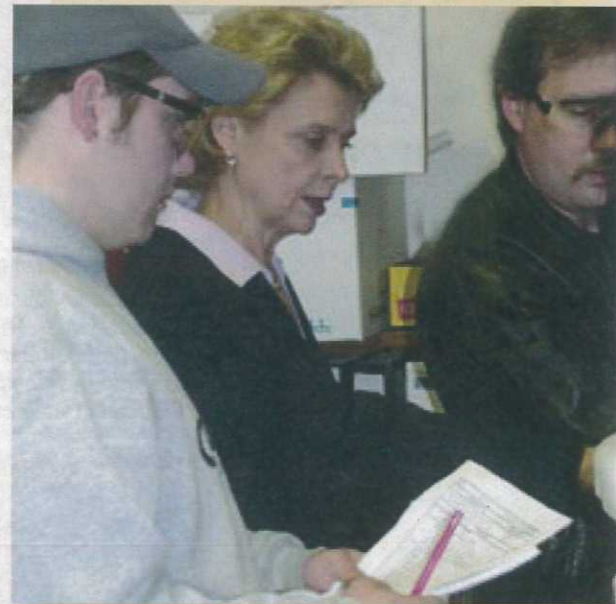
Hins-Turner has carried a message she's dubbed "Energize Satsop" to community development and civic groups throughout the region as she works on the Satsop plan. Hins-Turner has found broad industry support for the project.

It's a project that has Gov. Chris Gregoire's attention as well.

"Is it not a tragedy to have that Satsop facility sitting there? It has so much potential," the Democrat said at Centralia College in early May. "Satsop has a lot of promise. The whole region will benefit from it."

In a presentation to the governor, Barbara Hins-Turner explained the energy industry's need to find as many as 10,000 replacement workers as baby boomers start to retire in the next five to eight years.

The reality of a declining work force has been well known throughout the energy industry for years, according to Steve Milistefr, a representative of the Bonneville Power Administration. "The cold, hard truth is that we're going to suffer a tremendous brain drain," he said. "Centralia College is starting to put some action behind this, and things are starting to happen."

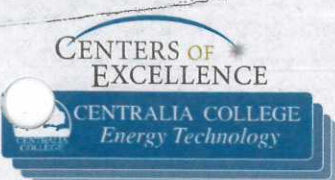


Governor Gregoire checks training materials at the Center of Excellence classrooms. Current energy tech students explain the process to the governor.

That need was one of the impetuses behind the energy focus at the college, according to Jim Walton, president of Centralia College.

"TransAlta came to us three years ago, saying, 'we get a lot of people applying, but not a lot of them are trained. What can you do to help?'" he said.

Walton said he hopes to have a Satsop training facility, complete with on-site dormitories, up and running in two years. Gregoire's presence on campus was encouraging, he said. "She's been supportive before," Walton said after the presentation. "By having the governor understand this need, it places the project on a higher level of government."



Energy Research Summit

The Energy Research Summit will convene on June 21 at the Satsop Development Park in Elma. Keynote speaker is Jerome Ringo, president, Apollo Alliance. Ringo is a dedicated champion of environmental justice and a vocal advocate of clean energy. He was invited to open the Satsop Summit by Washington Senator Maria Cantwell.

The day-long meeting will unveil the new skill standards developed for energy technology training. It's also a chance to tour the Satsop facility with an eye toward a regional energy training opportunity with regional, national, and international implications.

For a complete outline and agenda, please call Cindy Mann at the COE, at (360) 736-9391, ext. 280 or e-mail cmann@centralia.edu.