

Tri-City Herald



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HOT READS

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Friday, Aug. 3, 2012

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VIT PLANT

Chu to assemble a panel

Experts will review black cells, where people cannot enter

ANNETTE CARY
 HERALD STAFF WRITER

Energy Secretary Steven Chu has assembled a group of technical experts he will work with to take a fresh look at the Hanford vitrification plant and its black cells.

During his visit to Hanford in June, Chu said the possibility of a serious problem

once the plant begins operating weighed heavily on his mind. He was considering assembling the sort of panel of brilliant and creative thinkers he brought together after the Fukushima, Japan, nuclear disaster and the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, he said.

The Department of Energy announced Thursday the new technical review panel to look at the plant's "black cells" areas, designed to have no worker access during the 40 years the plant operates because of high levels of radioactivity.

"I will be receiving input from each of these highly capable experts to help

improve our ability to detect and address any potential issues in the black cells that could arise during the course of the Waste Treatment Plant's operational life," Chu said in a statement.

"These experts have a reputation for developing creative solutions to highly technical issues and their independent advice will enable us to integrate worthwhile ideas into the design of the plant before construction is completed," he said.

Chu and the independent experts will

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Qin Zhang, center in red shirt, director of the Center for Precision & Automated Agricultural Systems, shows Gov. Chris Gregoire, in yellow, an automated system for tree fruit production Thursday at Washington State University's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension near Prosser. Dan Newhouse, director of the state Department of Agriculture, stands between them. See a video at tricityherald.com.

Police crack theft ring



Kai-Huei Yau | kyau@tricityherald.com

A Kennewick police detective removes stolen spools of wire Thursday from City Lube at 301 W. Lewis St. in Pasco. Investigators spent the day cataloging hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of stolen items, including more than 100 tons of copper wire, windows, chainsaws, furniture and car batteries. Pasco police Capt. Jim Raymond said it was the biggest fencing operation he has ever seen. See a video at tricityherald.com.

4-agency investigation led to City Lube in Pasco

PAULA HORTON
 HERALD STAFF WRITER

An investigation into some stolen property that started in Kennewick led detectives to Richland and then to Pasco where a massive fencing organization was uncovered.

Stolen wire, tools, power equipment,

construction material, irrigation pipes and motors, and more than 100 tons of scrapped wire were among the stolen goods found by investigators when they searched a Pasco auto repair business, said Pasco police Capt. Jim Raymond.

"This is a pretty large-scale operation," he told the Herald on Thursday as officers took pictures and loaded up the items at

City Lube, 301 W. Lewis St.

It was too early to determine a value for the property, but Raymond said it's easily in the "hundreds of thousands" of dollars.

Some of the items already have been linked to thefts and burglaries reported to Kennewick, Pasco and Richland police, and

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Governor says state is facing \$1.5B shortfall

McKenna, Inslee don't have right ideas to fix it, Gregoire says

MICHELE DUPLER
 HERALD STAFF WRITER

PROSSER — Gov. Chris Gregoire told a group of Mid-Columbia growers that the state already faces a \$1.5 billion shortfall in the 2013-15 biennium.

And she doesn't think the two leading candidates to replace her as governor have the right ideas to fix the problem.

Gregoire, who is not seeking re-election, will end her second term in office at the end of this year, and likely will be replaced either by Republican Attorney General Rob McKenna or Democrat Jay Inslee, a former congressman who resigned his Seattle-area seat earlier this year.

"I have listened to both gubernatorial candidates and they're both dead wrong," Gregoire said during a stop in Prosser on Thursday.

Today is the second day of a two-day Mid-Columbia tour by the governor that on Thursday included stops in Yakima, where she met with a work group planning for the Yakima River Basin Water

"I have listened to both gubernatorial candidates and they're both dead wrong."

Gov. Chris Gregoire, during a stop in Prosser

Enhancement Project; Sunnyside, where she met with growers at denHoed farms to survey damage from a recent hail storm; Lamb Weston in Richland for a tour of the company's potato packing operation and a meeting with members of the Washington State Potato Commission; and Prosser, where she toured Washington State University's Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center and met with growers specializing in several types of crops.

Her tour continues today with ground-breaking ceremonies in Benton City for construction of a pump back station at Red Mountain and Burbank for the new Railex storage warehouse. She also will make a second visit to

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2012 OLYMPICS

Golden Gabby helps U.S. medal run in London

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Now this is fierce. Gabby Douglas became the third straight American to win gymnastics' biggest prize when she won the all-around Olympic title on Thursday. She finished with a score of 62.232, about three-tenths ahead of

Viktoria Komova of Russia. It's her second gold medal of the London Games, coming two nights after she and her "Fierce Five" teammates gave the United States its first Olympic team title since 1996. Douglas brought the house down with her energetic floor routine, and

U.S. pals Jordyn Wieber, McKayla Maroney and Kyla Ross jumped to their feet and cheered when she finished. Douglas flashed a smile and coach Liang Chow lifted her off the podium. Michael Phelps also had a smile on his face after he added to his medal collection with his first individual

gold medal of the London Games.

The U.S. star set the tone right from the start to become the first male swimmer to win the same individual event at three straight Olympics, capturing the 200-meter individual medley for his 20th career

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U.S. gymnast Gabrielle Douglas waves to the audience Thursday during the artistic gymnastics women's individual all-around competition at the 2012 Summer Olympics. Associated Press

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FALLON IN TALKS TO HOST OSCARS

Comedian Jimmy Fallon is in talks to host the Oscars in February, with *Saturday Night Live* veteran Lorne Michaels producing, three people with knowledge of the discussions said. ABC has raised objections to having the late-night star from rival NBC play emcee on its Oscar broadcast, these people said, but the network has no authority to veto the choice of host. The show is put on by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

