

BATES | Rate relief possible

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BPA spokeswoman ruder said. 3336 million — \$205 million for private utilities and count against whatever agency ultimately decides per rebate should be for next fiscal year. All utilities agree it's a deal to take the money and they will be allowed to file a final resolution in March and collect it this fall. Utilities that decide to take the money then will have to decide what to do with it. "We're looking at, hopefully, a kind of rate relief," said PUD Manager Jean Inman said. The utility is convening its advisory committee next week to discuss just that. One possibility would be giving ratepayers temporary credit on their bills. "If our customers have been paying all this time," Ryck-

man said. "I would like to see it get back to them."

Benton PUD Manager Jim Sanders, who helped negotiate the deal, said he suspects he'll recommend PUD commissioners sign the agreement and collect what could be as much as \$6 million this spring.

"I'd rather have that in our bank than Bonneville's," he said.

So what will the utility do with it?

"Good question," Sanders said.

One complicating factor is that each payment this spring will be "trued up" against the final agreement this fall. While it's expected that could mean more money for some utilities — perhaps \$4 million for Benton PUD — some utilities may have to repay some of their spring rebate.

"We don't want to get too carried away," Ryckman said.

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MAKER | Plans water talks

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to convene a work group to reach agreement on changing the state's use-it-or-lose-it water laws. Irrigators don't encourage waste, but environmentalists like a tool designed to conserve water to rivers. "Although there's been willingness to take up the issue talks have been linked with controversial water issues.

relinquishment?" Chopp asked the group. "To a city boy like me, it's insanity, the way it works."

Chopp also was asked for his thoughts on dam breaching.

"I love dams," Chopp said. "My dad was an electrician. We used to go camping next to them so I could tour them. The last thing I want is to have them torn out."

"Is that pretty clear?" he

Harvard interested in Community Solutions

4 United Way members to participate in problem solving class

MICHELLE DUPLER

HERALD STAFF WRITER

The folks at Harvard University think the Tri-Cities can teach others a thing or two about uniting a community.

A team of four people from the United Way of Benton and Franklin Counties will travel to Cambridge, Mass., during the first week of March to participate in a community problem solving class offered through Harvard University's Executive Education program.

The Tri-Cities team was one of only four in the United States invited to participate, according to a news release.

Beverly Weber, United Way president and CEO; Gordon Beecher, United Way board chairman; and board members John Inman and Rod Webring were invited to share information about the Community Solutions health and human services plan under development in the Tri-Cities area.

"When they found out about what we're starting to work on, it's a bit unique for

our very mixed community," Beecher said. "They're very interested in how we're going to implement that."

Beecher described Community Solutions as a unified approach to solving social problems in the community by putting together a system that better prioritizes community needs and identifies how to pay for the programs that can meet those needs.

A blue ribbon panel of nearly 200 people worked on the draft health and human services plan unveiled in December.

The ultimate community vision is divided into three categories — kids, families and community — and its ideals include seeing children well-fed, healthy and educated; families self-sufficient and having basic needs met; and a community that is unified, embraces diversity and is a safe place to live.

The United Way announced earlier this week that it had raised more than \$4.4 million in its 2007 campaign, and that money will be allocated to agencies who can show they offer a piece of the

solution to the problems identified in the draft plan, Beecher said.

Inman said he thought Harvard invited the United Way team because of the way Community Solutions brings together county and city governments, businesses, churches and nonprofit groups to tackle communitywide problems.

"I don't think it's something they see happening across the United States," he said. "I think the strength of our plan really is our community processes, our community behaviors and actions are about forming partnerships and alliances to work more effectively."

The goal of the Harvard class is to give participants both practical skills and a deeper analytical understanding of how to bring about community change.

Inman said the invitation to participate was an honor for the Tri-Cities.

"I think the community really should be proud of the fact they were looked at for this (class)," he said. "We really do live in one of the best communities in the United States."

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PLANNERS | Taller buildings

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estate developers.

The city's report recommends doing away with the minimum parking requirements, relaxing design standards and allowing the port to construct buildings with heights up to 75 feet in the area where buildings are currently restricted to 35 feet. City planning officials could not be reached for comment.

Port officials say easing

minimum piece of property downtown, beautify the area, promote tourism and create jobs, he said.

The Clover Island Master Plan complements the community's vision outlined in the Bridge to Bridge/River to Railroad plan put together many years ago, Young said, adding the city has an obligation to work with the port.

Port officials say they appreciate the city's and the

DEATHS

Dorothy Rew Rees

Dorothy Rew Rees, 84, of Richland, died Feb. 21 in Richland.

She was born in Minneapolis and lived in the Tri-City area since 1948.

She was a retired secretary for General Electric.

Einan's Funeral Home, Richland, is in charge of arrangements.

Gabriel Farias Jr.

SUNNYSIDE — Gabriel

dent. He was a tractor driver.

Smith Funeral Home, Sunnyside, is in charge of arrangements.

Lyle J. Dickie

GRANDVIEW — Lyle J. Dickie, 84, of Grandview, died Feb. 22 in Grandview.

He was born in Portland and lived in Grandview since 1930.

He was a retired teacher and principal.

Smith Funeral Home, Grandview, is in charge of