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The Daily Tar Heel

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Wednesday, November 15, 2000

Bush's Edge in Florida Certified; Recount Keeps Going

The Associated Press

One week into America's election limbo, Florida's Republican secretary of state certified George W. Bush's narrow lead Tuesday night, even as thousands of disputed ballots were counted into the night at Al Gore's behest. "When is it going to end?" asked Bush aide James Baker III.

There is no answer in sight.

Secretary of State Katherine Harris, a Bush supporter, announced Tuesday night that the Texas governor had a 300-vote lead — with overseas absentee ballots and ongoing recount totals pending.

Her announcement came almost three hours after a 5 p.m. vote-counting deadline, upheld earlier by state Judge Terry Lewis. He turned aside Gore's arguments to lift the deadline but gave Harris the authority to accept or reject follow-up manual recount totals afterward.

Lewis' decision was a setback for the vice president, who wanted a clear order

lifting the Tuesday deadline, but his lawyers found solace in ruling language urging Harris to consider "all appropriate facts and circumstances" when recount totals are filed.

Harris said she will require counties filing late recount numbers to explain in writing by 2 p.m. today why new vote totals should be accepted. "Unless I determine, in the exercise of my discretion, that these facts and circumstances... justify an amendment to today's official returns" the totals will stand, she said.

Gore decided to hold off an appeal of Lewis' ruling and press forward with recounts in four Democratic-leaning counties. Gore's advisers hope Harris will approve the hand-counted ballots and are prepared to appeal if she does not.

"If the secretary of state arbitrarily refuses to accept the amended returns based on the recount and violates what this court has ruled... which is to accept those results unless she has good reason not to, then we will be back in court," said a new member of Gore's massive legal team, David Boies.

With Harris' announcement, the battle lines were clearly drawn: Bush's team says the manual recounts are conducted with no set standards in Democratic-leaning counties with the sole purpose of pushing Gore ahead. The vice president's team argues that the painstaking process is the only way to ensure that every Florida voter is heard.

The next pivot points will be when overseas ballots are counted, with results due by midnight Friday, and when Harris is confronted with the recount totals that could threaten Bush's lead.



The political futures of GOP candidate George W. Bush and Democratic candidate Al Gore remain in limbo.

Waste Wars

By LAUREN RITTER
Staff Writer

Twenty-two miles outside Raleigh, a battle rages about more nuclear waste coming into the area, pitting Carolina Power & Light Co. against environmental activists and government officials.

CP&L, the main power provider for Chapel Hill, Durham and Raleigh, wants to expand its Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant in New Hill to store more nuclear waste on-site.

But many people oppose the expansion, believing it will increase the risk of a nuclear accident, which could threaten residents living in a 50-mile radius of the plant.

Opponents of this expansion plan do not believe CP&L has considered the safety of the public or let residents express their concerns about this issue.

But CP&L officials contend they have had a fair review process and have given the people an open forum to voice their reservations.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which will make the decision of whether the plant's expansion will go forward, has

set Nov. 20 as the final date for all sides to file their findings on the probability of an accident from the expansion.

Until then, the battle continues.

No Other Choice?

CP&L wants to send the extra nuclear waste from its plants in North and South Carolina to Shearon Harris because the two other plants are running out of room to store their own waste.

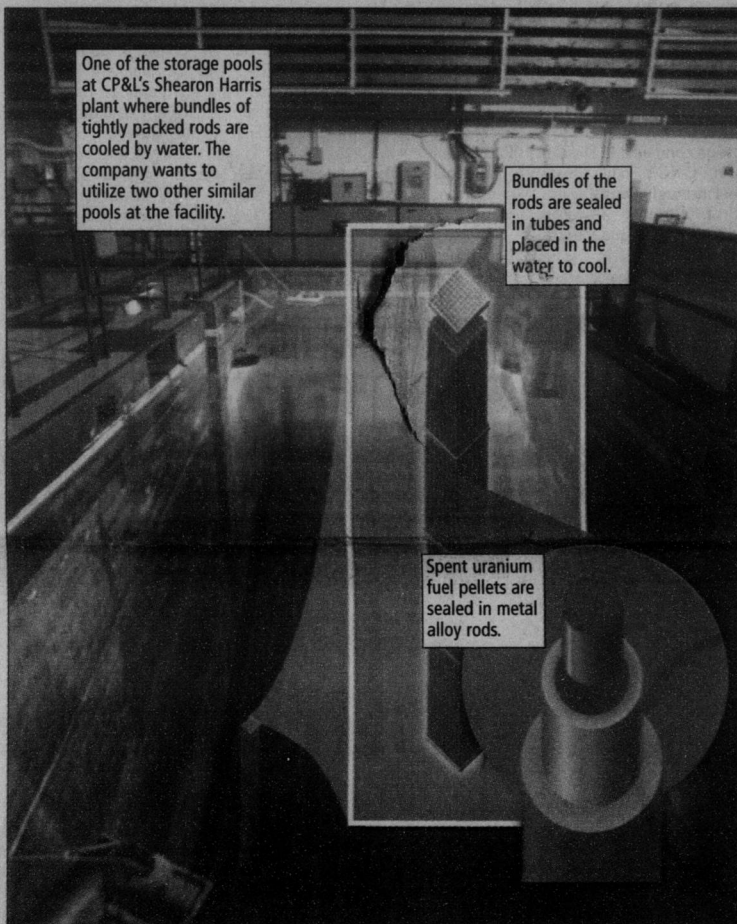
"The Harris plant is a high-performing plant," said Jeanne Bonds, the corporate communications manager for CP&L. "It's in the top tier of nuclear plants with an excellent safety record."

The plant began operating in 1986 and was originally built with four temporary storage pools to keep the radioactive waste. Today, only two of the pools are in use because just one generator, instead of the planned four, was built.

CP&L now wants to open these unused pools to store the waste shipped in by the other CP&L plants, which would make it the largest nuclear waste repository in the nation.

The spent fuel — fuel that already has

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One of the storage pools at CP&L's Shearon Harris plant where bundles of tightly packed rods are cooled by water. The company wants to utilize two other similar pools at the facility.

Bundles of the rods are sealed in tubes and placed in the water to cool.

Spent uranium fuel pellets are sealed in metal alloy rods.

DTH/JASON COOPER AND SALEEM RESHAMWALA

CP&L Supporters Defend Safety of Plant; Activists Cite Risks

By SARAH BRIER
Staff Writer

Officials at Carolina Power & Light Co. say that while there are some minor drawbacks to their plans to expand their nuclear waste facility, they believe it is the best solution to their situation.

But environmental activists and

local officials disagree. They argue that CP&L is unnecessarily putting people in harm's way.

CP&L wants to expand its existing nuclear storage facility at the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant, but opponents of the plan think this will dramatically increase the risk of a nuclear disaster.

Members of N.C. Waste

Awareness and Reduction Network, a grassroots organization that opposes the expansion, are worried by increased traffic of nuclear fuel across the state and the high concentration of dangerous waste in a densely populated area.

But CP&L officials say these concerns are unwarranted. They feel their plant has been a model of safety

and responsiveness to the public. They admit there are some risks, but point to their past safety record and strict procedures in answer to concerns about danger.

"The Same Safe Process"

From CP&L's standpoint, the expansion has no negative implications. The Shearon Harris waste facil-

ity, located in New Hill, consists of four wet-storage pools, only two of which are in use. CP&L wants to begin filling the remaining two pools. The plumbing and equipment are already in place. The expansion of Shearon Harris would involve no new construction or employees.

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Gov.-Elect To Push For Lottery

Governor-Elect Mike Easley wants a state lottery to fund education, but other state leaders oppose it.

By RACHEL COTTONE
Staff Writer

Although Governor-elect Mike Easley is a vocal lottery supporter, some N.C. legislators harbor reservations about using the lottery to supplement state revenue.

During his campaign, a major plank in Easley's platform was using a statewide lottery to fund education.

In an interview minutes after his Nov. 7 victory, Easley said he will continue pushing for a lottery when he takes the governor's office in January.

But he added that the likelihood of establishing a statewide lottery in North Carolina would depend on the passage of a lottery referendum in South Carolina. "I feel like what happens in South Carolina will determine what the (N.C.) legislature feels it has to do."

Later on election night, an S.C. referendum lifted the lottery ban by 54 percent of the vote.

But Easley admitted it would still take some effort on his part to convince the legislature to pass the lottery.

"To get a lot of things passed, you need to go out and sell it to (the legislature)."

And some state legislators — such as

See LOTTERY, Page 4



Governor-elect Mike Easley vows to continue his efforts for a lottery within the state, but he faces a fight.

Fire Fighting

Several fires in the last five years, including the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house fire, have resulted in massive damages, prompting a town ordinance requiring sprinklers in new buildings.

- April 1995 — Fire destroys a student's apartment at 3048 McMasters St.
- March 1996 — Six units at the Old Well Condominium complex are damaged in a kitchen fire.
- May 12, 1996 — Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house fire kills five students at UNC.
- Nov. 11, 1996 — Chapel Hill Town Council passes ordinance stating that all new multi-family constructions greater than 6,000 square feet must install automatic sprinklers. It also specifies a fall 2001 deadline for the installation of sprinkler systems in all fraternity and sorority houses in town.
- Feb. 22, 1997 — Kingswood Apartment fire destroys four apartments.
- Jan. 1998 — Pinegate Apartment fire injures three people, including a firefighter.
- Jan. 19, 2000 — Seton Hall University dorm fire kills three students.
- Feb. 2, 2000 — Couch in ninth floor of Morrison Residence Hall catches fire and causes nearly \$5,000 worth of damage.
- April 21, 2000 — Timberlyne Apartment fire causes nearly \$450,000 worth of damage.
- April 24, 2000 — Foxcroft Apartment fire destroys eight apartments.
- Oct. 31, 2000 — Brookstone Apartment fire kills one man and injures two.

SOURCE: DTH ARCHIVES

Owners Balk at Call for Sprinkler Systems

By STEPHANIE GUNTER
Staff Writer

A recent fire, which claimed the life of one man, has brought attention to the need for sprinkler systems in both old and new buildings.

But owners of many buildings built before a city ordinance required sprinklers say they have no plans to install them anytime soon.

On Oct. 31, Roger Vanden Dorpel died in a fire at Brookstone Apartments that destroyed eight units, none of which had a sprinkler system in place.

Currently, the Chapel Hill Town Council has an ordinance requiring all multifamily structures to be equipped with sprinklers.

The ordinance was passed in 1996,

when five UNC students were killed in a fire at the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house. Chapel Hill Fire Chief Dan Jones said he believes this tragedy could have been prevented if the building had been equipped with a sprinkler system.

"(Sprinklers are) the safest and most effective fire protection known to modern man," Jones said.

Caprice Mellon, Chapel Hill fire marshal, said the sprinkler systems basically provide 24-hour, seven-day-a-week fire protection.

"It's been proven that they save lives," Mellon said. "If a sprinkler system can put out a fire before it gets too big, it gives people more time to escape."

The ordinance requires that all build-

ing with more than 6,000 square feet of floor space must be equipped with a sprinkler system. It also includes a section stating that sprinkler systems must be in place in all sorority and fraternity houses by the fall of 2001.

"The upshot is 22 of those 33 houses have installed operable (sprinkler) systems," said Aaron Nelson, interim director of Greek Affairs. "And there are four houses that are currently under renovation."

"We're clear that on September 12, 2001, if there's no operable sprinkler system in a fraternity or sorority house, then the residents will not be permitted to live there."

Nelson also said exceptions would be made for houses under renovation at the time of the deadline. But once renovations are complete, a sprinkler system

must be installed and the members of the house will have to apply for another Certificate of Occupancy from the town.

The ordinance is not retroactive, so it does not apply to buildings other than fraternity and sorority houses that were built before the fall of 1996, Mellon said.

But Jones said he believes the ordinance should apply to all buildings, regardless of when they were built.

"I don't think you'll find a fire professional anywhere who is against (sprinkler systems), but you'd get a counterargument from builders and developers," Jones said.

The only way the ordinance could be applied to buildings built before 1996 is

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When choosing between two evils, I always like to try the one I've never tried before.

Mae West