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## **PUD will add to building**

By KATHY GRAY  
*of The Chronicle*

Northern Wasco County PUD awarded a \$2 million contract to Crestline Construction of The Dalles to expand its headquarters at the PUD board's meeting Tuesday.

Crestline's bid was about \$200,000 lower than its two fellow bidders, Sunwest Builders and T-Gerding Construction Co.

The PUD's project manager Milt Ketchum said it met all the criteria and Crestline was comfortable with its numbers.

The vote on the contract was not unanimous. PUD directors Howard Gonser and Clay Smith both voted against the project. Gonser cited the nation's current economic conditions for his decision.

"I think, right now, our constituents are hurting," he said.

Smith said he had been skeptical of the project, even though there is some need. He advocated for a more modest remodel.

"I don't think we should be spending money in this particular place and time," he said.

The three remaining directors, Barbara Nagle, Bill Ward and Milt Skov all supported the project.

"I support it because it's needed," Skov said. "From the very beginning I've felt it was needed. We're growing and we have grown. I don't believe it's going to be any cheaper five years down the line when we have a problem."

Ward added that the PUD has planned and budgeted for the project, saying it should not adversely affect customers.

Crestline's bid was low enough to allow the addition of several alternates that could have been left out had the bid been larger. Among them:

- use of a certified forest wood supply,
- mold- and moisture-resistant materials,
- screening for rooftop machinery,
- radiant heating for the garage,
- a new front counter, and
- an expanded fire control panel.

The core plan includes office expansion to address overcrowding, long-term storage space, a larger meeting room and other facilities.

In an earlier meeting, PUD Manager Dwight Langer explained the need for more space, noting that customer base growth was not an argument for expansion, but growing demand for managerial expertise is.

"We're going on in an industry that is becoming more and more complex," Langer said at the time.

He listed possible needs including economic development, public information and education, legislation and regulation, noting that in some cases in-house staff was more efficient and effective.

The expanded meeting room will also serve as the location for various demonstration projects related to conservation and green power.