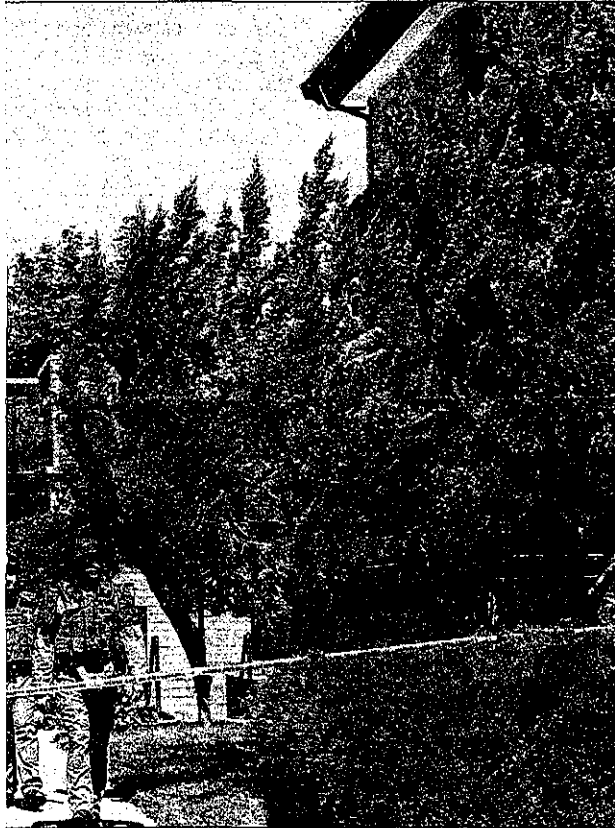


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PHOTOS BY ANDREAS FUHRMANN/RECORD SEARCHLIGHT

ma County Courthouse in Red Bluff on Monday after two

cluded in an evacuation



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SIERRA PACIFIC

EPA

issues

new

permit

■ Plant to
expand to 31
megawatts

By Damon Arthur

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After years of appeals and hearings, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a permit allowing Sierra Pacific Industries, of Anderson, to expand its biomass electricity plant in Anderson.

Mark Pawlicki, a spokesman for SPI, said the permit, issued Friday, was good news for the company.

"It should have been up and running by now. There were delays and appeals, but we persisted," Pawlicki said. "It is a very big deal. We think it's good for us, good for the community and good for renewable power."

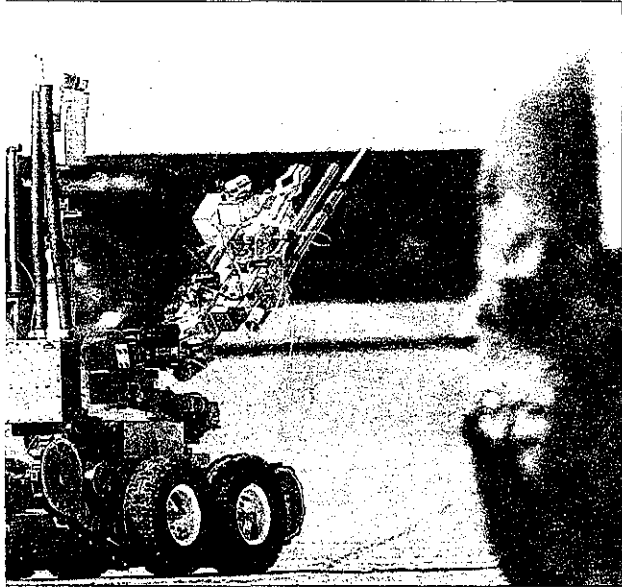
The permit allows SPI to expand its existing 4-megawatt power plant to 31 megawatts. The plant mainly burns wood waste from SPI's sawmills in Anderson and Shasta Lake. It will also burn slash from forest logging and thinning, Pawlicki said.

While SPI officials were looking forward to beginning construction on the plant after Memorial Day, Celeste Draisner, who had worked with a group called Shasta County Citizens for Clean Air, said she was disappointed that the permit was issued.

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two suspicious devices. An investigation with the Tehama Police Department and some state agencies is underway,

Dominick's, an engineering and surveying company in the evacuated area, said the blast "was just like a shotgun sound." Dominick said he saw a picture of the device, which indeed looked like a short pipe bomb. He speculated that someone was trying to get out of going to court.

"It's court day," he said.

Rider also wondered whether that was behind the phony bombs.

"I was thinking it's probably just somebody who had a court date," Rider said. "They just didn't want to go."

Borden, however, said there was nothing to lead investigators to believe that yet.

It was the second bomb scare in as many months for downtown Red Bluff,

though Borden said the suspicious object in March turned out to be an envelope of documents someone slipped into the old courthouse building's door after hours, not an intentional effort to cause trouble.

"This is different," Borden said.

A joint investigation with the Tehama County Sheriff's Office, Red Bluff Police Department and some state agencies is underway, officials said.

Meanwhile, Tehama County Secret Witness is offering a \$1,500 reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the suspect or suspects. Secret Witness can be reached at 529-1268. Tipsters can remain anonymous.

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"It's devastating. It really is. The government wants to build the factory as dirty as they can, without best available control technology," Draisner said.

Gerardo Rios, the manager of the EPA's permits office, said Monday that additional emission controls were not placed on the plant because it was already clean-burning.

The permit regulates nitrous oxide emissions, fine particulate matter pollution, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide. Nitrous oxide contributes to ozone pollution.

The plant's maximum emissions for nitrous oxide are 267 tons a year, 472 tons a year for carbon monoxide and 41 tons a year of fine particulate matter. The plant will also emit 432,439 tons per year

See PERMIT, 2A

...tensive damage west of the city of Athens, said Limestone County Emergency Director Rita White. White said more victims could be trapped in the wreckage of damaged buildings, but rescuers could not reach some areas because of downed power lines.

Separately, Limestone Commissioner Bill Latimer said he received reports of four deaths in the county from one of his workers. Neither the governor's office nor state emergency officials could immediately confirm those deaths.

Numerous watches and warnings were still active in Alabama shortly before midnight Monday, with forecasters warning the severe weather could continue all night.

ously defended his foreign policy record Monday, arguing that his cautious approach to global problems has avoided the type of missteps that contributed to a "disastrous" decade of war for the United States.

Obama's expansive comments came at the end of a weeklong Asia trip that exposed growing White House frustration with critics who cast the president as weak and ineffectual on the world stage. The president and his advisers get particularly irked by those who seize on Obama's decision to pull back from a military strike in Syria and link it with virtually every other foreign policy challenge, from Russia's threatening moves in Ukraine to

the Philippines. Summing up his foreign policy philosophy, Obama said it was one that "avoids errors."

White House advisers argue in part that Obama's approach puts him on the side of a conflict-weary American public, some of whom voted for him in the 2008 election because of his early opposition to the Iraq War.

The Syria scenario has trickled into Obama's relationship with Asia, where anxious allies spent much of the last week seeking assurances from the president that he would have their back if China used military force to take the advantage in the region's numerous territorial disputes.

selves with the Ruger Mini-14.

PERMIT from 1A

of carbon dioxide, according to the permit.

Issues surrounding the plant's greenhouse gas emissions led to the Shasta County Planning Department officials in 2011 twice rewriting the greenhouse gas portions of an environmental impact report on the plant.

Draisner's group had filed appeals with the EPA trying to stop the plant. They were able to get the agency to hold a public hearing on the permit, held in Anderson in December. Most of those who spoke during the hearing were in favor of the plant.

Pawllicki said the plant will cost more than \$40 million and take about a year to build. He estimated that about 50 people would be involved in construction, and that SPI would employ about 18 people at the plant after it is completed.

The Shasta County Air Quality Management District still needs to issue a permit to SPI, but Pawlicki said hearings have already been held on their application.

Electricity generated from the plant would be used to power SPI's sawmill. Excess power will be sold, Pawlicki said.

more heavily on groundwater to deliver part of the drinking water supply for its 6,100 customers.

The plan includes drawing about 2,200 acre-feet from its wells, some which pump about 700 gallons of water a minute.

There was a small bright spot for new development. It will be given limited amounts of water.

Bella Vista also eased up on its restrictions of outdoor water use.

Households will be allowed to water their lawns before 11 a.m. and after 6 p.m. on calm summer days. Residents, however, will not be allowed to wash their cars or driveways. New ponds and lakes will not be filled either.

Going into the meeting, David Hambelton, of Bella Vista, was worried about what his water bill would look like if his family of

eight used more than it was allocated. He moved into the district last year. Previously, the home he is in had gone vacant 18 months. Based on a three-year average, he calculated that meant an allocation of 15 percent and a possible bill of more than \$1,500, provided he used 40 percent this year of what he used last year.

"They are doing the best they can with what they've got. Obviously they've got to take a look at the bigger picture for everybody. But I believe they should take individuals and make variances," Hambelton said.

He was upbeat after the vote. "It is way higher than it was. At that rate, it's going to be totally different numbers," he said. "But I am still going to go in and talk (about a variance)."

ER A

small increase in across the state.

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r boosted Bella supply to 8,247 percent of its av- nption of 12,692 t is by no means will need to rely

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