

ISSUES AN DATTITUDES

Panel discusses natural disasters

By Jennifer Brown
Staff Reporter

"Issues and Attitudes: Nuclear Energy," hosted and moderated by journalism professor Janice Collins, presented the risks and concerns Illinoisans may have about future disasters. The panel addressed whether or not Illinoisans are prepared and how the state can prevent these disasters from occurring.

"The earthquake in Japan has reminded us all that disaster can strike us anytime and in many ways we can hardly imagine," Collins said.

She said four of the 10 nuclear plants in Illinois are active, and these four plants are similar to the design of Yukushima, the nuclear power plant in Japan.

The nuclear power plant closest to Charleston does not have this design.

Steven Daniels, the chairman of the physics department, said that humans constantly get radiation from the soil and the cosmic rays.

"It has some damage to cells almost no matter what so the question is 'How much can you take?'" Daniels said.

Daniels said while the waste of the nuclear plant may be dangerous to a person in the direct area, by the time it gets around the world it would be diluted enough and become low radiation.

Jonathon Munken, the director of Illinois Emergency Management Agency, said Iodine 131 has been identified to be ten percent gamma, which humans should be concerned with. "We take samples on a regular basis, whether there is a disaster globally or not," Munken said. "We've detected more than 2,000 below the level at which there would be any amount of concern. As an isotope, it has a life of eight days so it will go away fairly quickly."

Cameron Craig, a professor of geology, said once the radiation gets into the atmosphere it is carried through the air and over time its disperses and falls from the sky.

Munken said there are many things that are capable of threatening the state of Illinois, including the Wabash Valley Fault Line and the New Madrid Fault Line, which are close to Charleston.

"For the past two and half years, Munken said they have been working on a bill to prepare for a disaster.

"We're participating a 7.7 magnitude earthquake on the New Madrid Fault," Munken said.

Illinois is coming up to the 200th anniversary of the major earthquake on the New Madrid fault.

Every six months, each of the nuclear plants are tested for emergencies so they are in the position to be prepared for any emergency.



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Cameron Craig, a professor in the geology department at Eastern, discusses how radiation travels at the Issues and Attitudes: A Town Hall Meeting hosted by WEIU-TV Monday evening in the Buzzard Hall Auditorium. During the event, Craig discussed the role tectonic plates played in the tsunami that hit Japan in March.

"Each time an earthquake goes up a number it is a factor of 10 times stronger," Daniels said.

Munken said each of the plants in Illinois were designed to sustain the threats that are most significant.

"Earthquakes are one, but floods are another issue. There's a plant in the Quad Cities right along the Mississippi River," Munken said. "Tornadoes are also an issue."

Fire Chief Pat Goodwin, from the Charleston Fire Department, said the city of Charleston and Coles County trains for the unknown the best they can.

"Charleston and Mattoon fire fighters have the technical rescue teams and also the HAZMAT team," Goodwin said.

Goodwin said there are radiation detectors in all the vehicles throughout the fire and police departments.

"We can call in resources from four states," Goodwin said. "They can deploy those resources and have them here within a few hours."

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CITY

Council to vote on resolution with Eastern for updates

By Elizabeth Edwards
City Editor

The council will vote on a resolution to continue the agreement with Eastern to provide the city with update information on their infrastructure today.

Steven DiNaso, a professor of geography and the coordinator of the Geography Information Services Initiative, said the department has worked with the city since 2005 and provided them with updated maps about water utilities such as hydrants and water valves.

The map shows every part of the infrastructure such as water lines, stoplights and property lines, DiNaso said.

Mayor John Inyart said the maps have helped public works officials, because before officials only knew the waterlines position by memory.

"This is a win-win relationship between Eastern and the city."

Steven DiNaso, professor of geography and coordinator of the Geography Information Service Initiative

Now, public works officials can access the maps on their laptops when they are on the field, DiNaso said.

"The city is on the forefront and has mapped all of their infrastructure," DiNaso said.

The department of geology and geography has provided students in-

ternships to input the raw data into the GIS system, DiNaso said.

The agreement has given students the opportunity to work on the system and provides the city with updated information on its infrastructure, DiNaso said.

"This is a win-win relationship between Eastern and the city," he said.

If passed, the city will pay \$6,250 to Eastern for additional mapping services though DiNaso said most of the money will go toward fees for the equipment and toward student internships.

On other matters, the council will vote on approving the city budget for the 2011 and 2012 fiscal year.

The proposed budget has \$25,605,198 in revenues and \$25,006,223 in expenses and a net income of \$598,975.

At the last council meeting, the

ordinance for the increase water/sewer rate was put on file for public inspection and the council will vote on the ordinance.

Inyart said the he has not received any feedback from the community regarding the water/sewer rate.

If passed, Eastern will pay \$ 11.21 per 1,000 gallons of water. Eastern currently pays \$10.72 per 1,000 gallons, which is paid in a bulk rate.

Also, the council will vote on a proportion of the tax incrementing finance, which the TIF helps businesses in downtown Charleston improve their buildings.

Karate USA at 505 7th St., Southside Café at 614 Jackson Ave., and the Charleston Police Department at 614 6th St. will use the tax incrementing finance to update their buildings if the ordinances are passed.

The council plans to also vote on

an ordinance to change the Yield sign to a Stop sign of 15th and 16th Streets and Adams Avenue.

The council will also vote on granting tourism fund for Celebration: A Festival of the Arts, IHSA Girls State Badminton Championships, and IHSA State Track Meets, and the Red, White & Blue Days.

Inyart said the tourism fund helps these events advertise and increase tourism in Charleston.

The council will also vote on the raffle licenses for the Sixth Annual Autism Benefit, CASA at the Coles County Fair and the Cornerstone Christian Academy, and Coles County Fair Queen Pageant.

The council meets at 7:30 p.m. today at City Hall at 520 Jackson Ave.

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