



For Immediate Release
April 23, 2010

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Energy Efficiency Plays a Lead Role for Utilities

Portland, Ore. Northwest utilities are meeting the challenges of providing dependable, affordable electricity in a time of growing demand and changing regulations regarding carbon emissions. According to PNUCC's 2010 Northwest Regional Forecast (NRF), released today, utilities are expecting their energy efficiency and conservation efforts to meet about half of the region's growing demand over the next 10 years, tallying up to 1,800 average megawatts of savings by 2020.

Wind generation and natural gas fired resources are the other big piece of the future power picture. This last year, wind projects figured most prominently in the resources brought on line and will be a hefty piece of the future picture too. Twelve new wind farms and three existing wind project expansions add up to almost 600 megawatts of new capability when the wind is blowing.

"The region's economic situation continues to influence utilities' load projections," deputy director Shauna McReynolds stated. "And although demand is down in the beginning of the forecast, the pace is projected to pick up again." Overall, loads are forecast to grow at a rate of more than 350 average megawatts annually before considering the effects of energy efficiency programs.

Every year, PNUCC produces the NRF, which reflects the utilities' view of the future for load growth and electricity supply in the region. The 2010 NRF shows that utilities need to continue to add resources to meet their customers' electricity demand over the next 10 years.

More information and a copy of the 2010 NRF is on the PNUCC website at www.pnucc.org.

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