

Update

What's Happening With the Sixth Power Plan

February 2009

The pace of activity for drafting the Sixth Power Plan is picking up steam, with the Power Committee doubling up on its meetings and staff rolling out analyses at a steady clip. According to a report this month from power division director Terry Morlan, major chunks of the analyses are complete or well under way, and staff has cranked up the Resource Portfolio model, which is the Council's principal guidance on which resources will be chosen for the Plan. In other developments –

- **The Mother of Plan Assumptions.** The Council has turned loose its demand forecast, which pegs load growth at around 1.5 percent annually over the next 20 years. Staff acknowledged the number may go down before all is said and done with the Plan. Of all of the assumptions in the power plan, this is the biggest, with the most far-reaching impact. Now is the time to take a serious look at what the Council is proposing. PNUCC will scrutinize the forecast for energy and capacity and compare it with our *Northwest Regional Forecast* to see how the two stack up. We have to have a reasonable forecast of future needs in order to have a reasonable plan to meet them.
- **Selecting the Least-Cost Path.** The Portfolio model, which takes days to churn through its initial runs, looks at 750 scenarios to develop a least-cost plan to meet the needs laid out in the demand forecast. Staff has expanded the model since the Fifth Power Plan so the first runs require review and adjustment of new code to make sure it is doing what it is supposed to do. The Council expects preliminary results from the model by the end of February for a presentation at their March meeting.
- **Raising the IQ of the Grid.** There is a lot of buzz about Smart Grid technology and how it will affect the structure and operation of the power system. In a presentation about the potential for Smart Grid in the Northwest over the next 20 years, Council staff called it “new technology that covers a wide range of sensor, communication, and control devices.” They said Smart Grid's effect on the power system is likely to be substantial, including how it will enable demand response and customers' ability to affect their own usage. The Sixth Power Plan is a good platform for a conversation about Smart Grid, and what's ready for commercial application, desirable for the Northwest and cost-effective.

- **System Planners Regroup.** PNUCC has reconstituted its System Planning Committee, which met for a kickoff on January 30th. The Power Plan is one of the committee's top priorities, and members are putting a structure in place to review technical issues in the plan.

While the System Planning Committee will provide PNUCC's first wave of review for the Council's plan, I encourage all PNUCC members to put their expertise toward combing through the Plan and its analyses, as they are released. Next month, we'll see some rubber hit the road with the preliminary Resource Portfolio results. In the meantime, give me a call with you thoughts.



***Dick Adams**, Executive Director*
PNUCC
503.294.1268 phone
dick@pnucc.org