

Update

What's Happening With the Sixth Power Plan

September 2008

It has been just over six months since we identified the Council's Sixth Power Plan as a priority project for PNUCC. We're tracking the behind-the-scenes research and analysis that feed computer models and shape the plan. While that gets us deep into the details, it's important to observe and ask the right questions while the building blocks for the Plan are going together. So far, the Council's work has touched on virtually every issue we identified as one to keep our eyes on.

- **Syncing on the Energy Forecast.** The Council's energy load forecast matches what we're seeing in our *Northwest Regional Forecast*. That hasn't always been the case. Until recently, the Council was underforecasting load, compared to what utilities predicted. Agreement on the forecast bodes well for a Power Plan that reflects a shared view between the Council and PNUCC members about the ability of the current system to meet load.
- **Questions on Peak.** That said, there is a disparity between our estimate of peak load and what the Council has come up with. As Council member Tom Karier pointed out during a discussion of resource adequacy, while we've made progress on capacity, we need to explore the issues in greater depth. PNUCC is taking a closer look at the Council's peak load forecast over the next couple of months.
- **Gale-Force Issues.** I can hardly overemphasize the preponderance of issues wind has generated for the region and the Plan. Recently I compiled a list of wind-related headlines from various publications and tallied the topics, including transmission interconnections, Supreme Court proceedings, FERC rulings, development plans pushed by tycoons, out-of-region interests snapping up Northwest sites, local land use disputes, and mergers and acquisitions. It's mind boggling. Fortunately, the Council staff, particularly Jeff King, has become quite expert on wind development in the region, and it is essential that the role for wind in the Sixth Plan have a strong analytical foundation. The next question that is challenging the planners is how much additional load following service will be needed as we connect more wind to the grid.
- **How Low Can it Flow?** Council staff is combing the landscape for the latest energy efficiency technologies, and lo and behold, there's a new generation of low-flow showerheads! But there's nothing on the horizon for residential conservation that offers the potential compact fluorescent light bulbs presented

in years past. For low-cost conservation potential, there are more efficient clothes washers, hot water heating, and those showerheads. Staff says there is large potential savings from solar water heating, but the price tag exceeds \$140 per megawatt-hour. That's well above the \$80 per MWhr – the value that staff recently alluded to as a preliminary cost-effectiveness threshold.

I'll check in again next month. As always, email or call if you want to share your thoughts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted.

Dick Adams, Executive Director

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