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BPA names utilities to receive first fuel cells

Strong demand for new power plant spurs further testing

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Bonneville Power Administration
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CONTACT: [Perry Gruber](#), BPA (503) 230-3176

PORTLAND, Ore. - The Bonneville Power Administration today announced its initial research partners in a groundbreaking fuel cell demonstration project. These BPA public utility customers and utility organizations will be the first to test proton exchange membrane (PEM) fuel cells as part of BPA's fuel cell program. This brings BPA and Northwest utilities one step closer to making clean, efficient fuel cell generators available for residential and commercial use.

"BPA is extremely pleased to have so much interest and support for this project," said Mark Jackson, BPA's fuel cell development manager. "I think our customers and the region as a whole are beginning to see the potential benefits fuel cells offer as clean, quiet, efficient power systems."

BPA announced in June its desire to work with its public customers to field test the first 10 fuel cells. More than 20 utilities showed interest by attending the initial scoping meeting for the test. The utilities and utility organizations chosen to take part in the initial test are:

- Central Electric Cooperative, Redmond, Ore.
- City of Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Emerald PUD, Eugene, Ore.
- Energy Northwest (formerly Washington Public Power Supply System), Richland, Wash.
- Eugene Water and Electric Board, Eugene, Ore.
- Fergus Electric, Lewistown, Mont.
- Grant County PUD No. 2, Ephrata, Wash.
- Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Eureka, Mont.
- Mason Co. PUD No. 3 & Lewis Co. PUD No.1 (in partnership), Washington
- Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative, Portland, Ore.

Northwest Power Systems, the Bend, Ore.-based company that is manufacturing the fuel cells, expects to have the first unit ready this fall. BPA and Northwest Power Systems will unveil the first unit in a special display at the Northcon/99 Conference in Portland, Ore., on Oct. 7. Northcon/99, sponsored by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), is a technical applications conference that

will explore embedded systems technology. Participants will take delivery of their units starting later this year on through mid-2000.

Participating utilities and organizations will operate the first 10 fuel cell systems at their own facilities. Performance data and feedback from the 10 will help define the next generation fuel cell systems. One hundred second-generation units will be produced to further test and refine the technology. Pend Orielle PUD and Seattle City Light, both in Washington, have expressed interest in being part of this follow-on test phase.

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