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Revolutionary new generating technology to be unveiled Wednesday

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Bonneville Power Administration
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PORTLAND, Ore. – It's about the size of a refrigerator, makes less noise than an air conditioner, produces no pollutants and generates enough electricity to power an entire home. It could be as revolutionary as the personal computer.

No, it's not cold fusion. It's a fuel cell, and it will be available for inspection by the press tomorrow at the Portland Convention Center at 10 a.m.

The Bonneville Power Administration is about to run the first commercial test of home fuel cells in the Northwest, beginning this month. One such cell will be on display tomorrow at the Portland Convention Center.

"We are taking delivery of the first of 10 units manufactured by Northwest Power Systems (NPS) of Bend, Ore.," said BPA Administrator Judi Johansen. "We will place these units with Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative of Portland, Central Electric Cooperative of Redmond and other Northwest utilities for field testing."

Fuel cells are a next step in generating technology – they are clean, efficient and can be installed where they are used. They extract hydrogen from natural gas, propane and other common fuels, then strip electrons from the hydrogen. No combustion is involved, and therefore no carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide or other harmful gasses. Water and heat are the only byproducts.

The manufacturer expects the price will be about \$10,000 when the units become commercially available in 2002 and less when they are mass produced.

BPA and NPS representatives will be available for interview in the exhibit room of the northcon/99 Conference Thursday at 10 a.m. Appointments for individual interviews can be arranged by calling 230-5131.

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