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City of Ashland, BPA install photovoltaic system

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Bonneville Power Administration

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PORTLAND, Ore. – The City of Ashland and the Bonneville Power Administration are upping the ante in the "green" power game.

The two public agencies announced today that they are completing work on a power system that will generate electricity from the sun, arguably one of the greenest ways to generate electricity. Surveys have shown that solar is the renewable resource most preferred by consumers interested in purchasing "green" power.

Congressman Greg Walden (R-Ore.), co-chair of the House Renewable Energy Caucus, was encouraged by the announcement.

"This is an important investment in an energy source that holds great promise for the future," he said. "The current oil crisis shows us that we need to be acting now to develop domestic energy sources to ensure the availability of affordable, reliable energy. In the House Renewable Energy Caucus, we are working to encourage more partnerships like the one between the City of Ashland and BPA, and I look forward to great things in the future from solar and other renewable energy resources."

Solar panels will be installed on several landmark buildings in the city including the home of the internationally known Oregon Shakespeare Festival. When the project is complete, 5-kilowatt roof-mounted solar panels also will adorn the Ashland Post Office, Southern Oregon University Library, the Ashland City Council Chambers and other sites. Depending on site availability and system cost, at least 20 kilowatts of panels will be installed. The first systems are expected to be operating by May 30.

BPA will buy a portion of the output for 20 years. The agency will resell the power through its Environmentally Preferred Power portfolio.

BPA is contributing up to \$100,000 for the design, procurement and installation of the systems. Total cost of the project is expected to be about \$200,000. In addition to BPA's contribution, the Bonneville Environmental Foundation will provide up to \$62,500 on a 1:2 match basis with Ashland. The city is funding the rest of the project cost itself and through a state of Oregon energy tax credit and

contributions from local sources.

Ashland plans to offer its residents the opportunity to participate in a new green power program tied to the solar project. Under the Solar Pioneer Program, residents could support the expansion of solar panel installations through voluntary payments of modest premiums on their utility bills.

As part of the project, the University of Oregon's Solar Radiation Data Center will install a solar monitoring station in Ashland using funds provided by BPA.

While solar power may also be one of the most expensive ways to generate power today compared with more traditional resources, costs continue to decline, making the technology increasingly cost-effective in remote site applications. Further investments in this Apollonian resource also may yield new alternatives that someday may wean America of its craving for fossil-fueled energy.

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