



Okanogon County PUD agrees to load reduction

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Bonneville Power Administration

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OKANOGAN, Wash. – The Okanogon County Public Utility District and the Bonneville Power Administration signed a load reduction agreement on June 21 that will reduce the utility's demand on BPA by 10 percent for one year starting in October 2001.

Steve Wright, BPA's acting administrator, praised the PUD's commitment, saying, "Okanogon County PUD has taken a very important step toward reducing the rate increase planned for Oct. 1 and is helping ensure economic stability in the region. Okanogon is doing its part, and we hope that other public utilities will do the same."

"In spite of the economic difficulties in Okanogon County, it is imperative that we join with other BPA customers to avoid the devastating rate increases projected by BPA," said Harlan Warner, manager of Okanogon County PUD.

Beginning in October, Okanogon County PUD will reduce its load on BPA by

5.2 average megawatts, or 10 percent of its purchases from BPA.

BPA's goal is to reduce loads for the next two years so the agency does not have to buy power in the extremely expensive wholesale market, which could result in far higher electricity rates for Northwest ratepayers. BPA expects that within two years sufficient new generation will have come online so that market prices will stabilize. Consumers can help by conserving as much energy as possible.

"Negotiations are ongoing with all our customer groups," said Wright. "We hope that our recent load reduction agreements with other customers and now with Okanogon PUD will encourage BPA's other customers to firm up additional agreements – and soon."

On June 6, BPA announced that the region's federal electricity system is headed for wholesale rate increases of 150 percent or more beginning Oct. 1 unless its industrial and utility customers make additional commitments to reduce energy use by the agency's June 22 deadline

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