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City of Ellensburg commits to load reduction

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Bonneville Power Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: FRIDAY, June 22, 2001

PR 62 01

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ELLENSBURG, Wash. – The city of Ellensburg and the Bonneville Power Administration signed a load reduction agreement today that will reduce the amount of power that this central Washington city plans to buy from BPA by 10 percent for one year starting in October 2001.

"We plan to keep retail rate increases to no more than 10 percent this year," said Bob Titus, energy services director for the city of Ellensburg. "In order for us to reach our 10 percent reduction goal, we are implementing a very aggressive conservation program that will rival any utility in the region. We would much rather spend dollars on conservation and support our local economy than send dollars out of the community in the form of higher wholesale power bills."

Steve Wright, BPA's acting administrator, praised the city's commitment, saying, "The city of Ellensburg has taken an important step toward load reduction and by doing so it is helping reduce the rate increase planned for Oct. 1. Ellensburg is doing its part, and we hope that more BPA customers will do the same."

Beginning in October, the city of Ellensburg will reduce its load on BPA by 2.2 average megawatts, or 10 percent of its total load. Titus said the reduction will be made up with major conservation programs and the purchase of energy from the open market under BPA's innovative "Chase" plan.

"Negotiations are ongoing with all our customer groups," said Wright. "We hope that our recent load reduction agreements with other customers and now with Ellensburg will encourage additional commitments – and soon."

BPA's goal is to reduce demand on the agency for the next two years in order to avoid massive rate increases. 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.

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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