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Cheney agrees to reduce load on BPA

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Bonneville Power Administration

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CHENEY, Wash. – The Bonneville Power Administration and the city of Cheney, Wash., signed a load reduction agreement on June 22 that will reduce the utility's demand on BPA by ten percent, or 1.3 average megawatts, for one year starting in October 2001.

"The Cheney community has a long history of supporting energy conservation, and this load reduction commitment continues that tradition," said Tom Richardson, director, Cheney Light Department. "Now more than ever, conservation and energy efficiency are needed to keep electric rates down. We would like to commend Eastern Washington University and our other customers who have made such a tremendous effort to reduce electricity consumption over the past several months."

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

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.

According to Richardson, the reduction will be made up mainly with major conservation programs.

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