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BPA, city of Richland upgrade energy efficiency on water, wastewater facilities

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Bonneville Power Administration

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RICHLAND, Wash. – The city of Richland is the first municipality in Washington to upgrade energy efficiency at its drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities under a pilot program funded by the Bonneville Power Administration and the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance. The upgraded projects are expected to permanently reduce power use by over 1.7 million kilowatt-hours per year, saving over \$61,000 annually.

In an agreement inked July 10, BacGen Technologies, an environmental contractor, will improve the aeration pumps and other electrical equipment at the Richland facilities. The projects should be completed in the next three months.

Stan Arlt, Richland's public works director, said "The city of Richland is very pleased to be working with BPA on the identification and implementation of projects where the city can save energy during this period of critical energy and water shortages. As a result of this cooperative effort, both short-term and long-term benefits for the city and the region, in energy savings, will be realized."

For the last two years NEEA and BacGen have been working to bring energy efficient practices to drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities in the region. Starting in March, 2001, BPA set out to build on NEEA experience and agreed to fund the program.

"So far we're doing five plants – two drinking water and three sewage plants – for \$430,000. That's about 1.8 cents per kilowatt hour – a very low cost for permanent efficiency," said Jon Biemer, BPA's pilot project manager. The other three projects are located in Reedsport and Bandon, Ore.

According to a 1999 study by the Electric Power Research Institute, the wastewater industry is responsible for about five percent of the total energy consumed in the Northwest, and that amount is on the rise. There are 842 municipal waste treatment plants in the Northwest and almost as many drinking water facilities, so there should be many other cost-effective opportunities to save both energy and money, according to Biemer.

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