

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 5, 2009**News Release 09-14****Rochelle Olson, Public Affairs Manager, 509-377-4728****Page 1 of 1****Gary Miller, Public Affairs Specialist, 509-377-8728**

Columbia Generating Station Off-line Due to Electrical Fault

RICHLAND, Wash. – An electrical fault resulted in a short duration fire causing the region's only commercial nuclear power plant to automatically disconnect from the Northwest power grid and shut down the reactor at approximately 8 a.m. today.

Plant safety systems operated as designed and there is no threat to public health and safety. There were no injuries.

Instrumentation in the plant's control room indicated the location of the fire, which occurred in an electrical distribution area typical of many industrial facilities.

The fire was extinguished by on-site fire crews in about 20 minutes. The nearby Hanford Fire Department also responded but the fire was already extinguished when they arrived.

An "Unusual Event" was declared at 8:12 a.m. and officially terminated two hours later. An Unusual Event is a Nuclear Regulatory Classification describing a condition at a commercial nuclear power plant or its surroundings that could potentially compromise the normal level of plant safety, or that warrants increased awareness by plant staff. It is the lowest of four NRC emergency classifications.

A comprehensive investigation is under way to determine the cause of the event that plant officials believe started in an overhead cable-way or tray that holds electrical cables.

Notifications to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Bonneville Power Administration and other agencies were made shortly after the fire was discovered.

The plant will remain offline until the investigation is concluded, repairs are completed and the plant can resume safe operations.

Energy Northwest is a not-for-profit public power, state Joint Operating Agency headquartered in Richland, Washington. Chartered in 1957, Energy Northwest now has 27 public power members; 22 public utility districts and five municipalities. The consortium's nuclear, hydro, wind, and solar projects deliver nearly 1,300 megawatts of reliable, affordable, environmentally responsible electricity to the Northwest power grid. Energy Northwest continually explores and develops new generation opportunities while offering a wide range of energy and business services. Energy Northwest -- www.energy-northwest.com.