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Columbia Generating Station Trips Off-Line

RICHLAND, Wash. – Energy Northwest’s Columbia Generating Station nuclear power plant tripped off-line at approximately 4 pm today. The 1150 megawatt power plant safely shut itself down automatically when monitoring equipment on the plant’s turbine generator sensed a low oil pressure condition. The team operating the reactor monitored the condition and confirmed the safe shutdown of the reactor.

Columbia had been on-line continuously for 383 days when the trip happened. According to plant manager Tom Lynch the shutdown was safe but unfortunate. “Our plant produces more than a million dollars worth of power every day. That’s power we provide to ratepayers at-cost. Obviously we are anxious to get the system repaired and bring the plant back on line as soon as possible. However we won’t restart until we have fully identified and corrected the reasons for today’s trip,” Lynch said.

Columbia Generating Station has been operating since safely since 1984.

Energy Northwest generated 8.36 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity in 2007 at its four generating facilities; Columbia Generating Station (nuclear), Nine Canyon Wind Project, Packwood Lake Hydroelectric Project, and White Bluffs Solar Project.

Columbia Generating Station produced approximately 97 percent of that total, and provided it - at the cost of production - to the Bonneville Power Administration, who resold the power to customers in the Western states. The only nuclear power plant in the Northwest, Columbia generates enough electricity to power Seattle.

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