P.O. Box 968 • Richland, WA • 99352-0968

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – April 6, 2011**

John Dobken, Public Affairs, 509-377-8369
Angela Smith, Public Affairs, 509-377-4154



# Columbia Generating Station Begins Refueling Outage

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – Columbia Generating Station today began its largest and longest refueling outage in the more than 26-year history of the plant.

Energy Northwest and the Bonneville Power Administration time the outage to coincide with spring time snow melt and runoff that maximizes power output from the region's hydroelectric system and minimizes the impact of taking the nuclear station offline.

"The work we do over the next 78 days will help ensure Columbia continues to produce safe, reliable and cost-effective power for the region," said Brad Sawatzke, chief nuclear officer of Energy Northwest.

More than 1,800 skilled outage workers were hired from across the country to support extensive maintenance projects throughout the plant. The added workers join Columbia's normal work force of about 1,100 employees and bring substantial economic value to the region.

Work crews will focus on replacing 244 of the 764 fuel assemblies in the reactor core during the outage. The outage scope also includes about 3,300 work orders involving 16,000 separate tasks. But by far, the largest project is the replacement of the main condenser.

The condenser turns steam exiting the turbines into water on its way back to the reactor for re-use. The condenser project has been a four-year effort, costing approximately $113 million. The installation will require 350 workers. The new condenser will provide up to an additional 12 megawatts of power generation, essentially paying for itself over time.

Columbia was initially scheduled to power down today but powered down Saturday instead following a request from BPA because of high water flows expected through the federal hydroelectric dam system. The shutdown ended Columbia's longest continuous operation record at 505 days, besting the old record of 485 days set in 2006. The current run began on Nov. 13, 2009.

The 1,150 megawatt plant, located 10 miles north of Richland, is scheduled to restart and reconnect to the Northwest power grid in mid-June.

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## Refueling Outage – By the Numbers

11…….…..... Major projects

78……..…..  Approximate number of days

244…… New fuel assemblies

1,800……. Outage workers

16,000……. Number of tasks

$154 million…. Total outage budget (including $42 million for the condenser project)

## Condenser Replacement – By the Numbers

12…….. Total condenser modules

350……. People who will work on the project

6,000……. Number of titanium tubes in each module

100,000……... Approximate weight (*in pounds*) of each module

$113 million…. Approximate cost of project (funded over four years)

***About Energy Northwest***

*Energy Northwest develops, owns and operates a diverse mix of electricity generating resources, including hydro, solar and wind projects – and the Northwest's only nuclear power plant. These projects provide enough reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy to power more than a million homes each year, and that carbon-free electricity is provided at the cost of generation. As a Washington state, not-for-profit joint operating agency, Energy Northwest comprises 28 public power member utilities from across the state serving more than 1.5 million ratepayers. The agency continually explores new generation projects to meet its members' needs. www.energy-northwest.com.*

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