

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Sept. 27, 2011John Dobken, Public Affairs Specialist, 509-377-8369
Angela Smith, Public Affairs Specialist, 509-377-4154

News Release 11-11

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Nuclear Energy Facility Connects to Regional Power Grid

RICHLAND, Wash. – Columbia Generating Station nuclear energy facility reconnected to the Northwest power grid today following the longest and largest-scope refueling outage in its history.

Columbia began its 20th refueling outage on April 6th. Originally scheduled for almost 80 days, outage work on the 1,150 megawatt reactor included replacing Columbia's steam condenser and approximately one third of the 764 nuclear fuel assemblies in the reactor core. Due to contractor delays in the condenser replacement project, the outage was extended to 175 days.

"From start to finish, this outage was about improving our generation efficiency and equipment reliability," said Brad Sawatzke, Energy Northwest's chief nuclear officer. "We have been successful in doing that, to the ultimate benefit of Northwest ratepayers."

The condenser turns steam that has flowed through the turbine back into water for re-use in the reactor. The condenser is comprised of 12 modules, each containing more than 6,000 titanium tubes, and nine waterboxes that direct water from the cooling towers through the tubes and back to the cooling towers. It took hundreds of workers and more than \$100 million to replace the 26-year-old condenser with one that will improve both efficiency and reliability.

In addition to the condenser replacement, workers at Columbia repaired and replaced multiple other major components, including overhauling two diesel generators and a low pressure steam turbine; performing extensive work to refurbish or replace hundreds of valves throughout the facility; and replacing a 185-ton main generator rotor. In total, more than \$170 million was invested in the facility, which Energy Northwest plans to operate through 2043.

"This was by far our most challenging outage ever at Columbia," said Mark Reddemann, Energy Northwest CEO. "I am proud of the effort put forth by our Energy Northwest team to get us back to doing what we do best – safely producing reliable, clean, cost-effective power."

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The power produced by Columbia is delivered to the Bonneville Power Administration at the cost of production. BPA, in turn, sells and distributes the power throughout the region.

Columbia Generating Station, owned and operated by Energy Northwest, has been in commercial operation since 1984. At full power, it produces approximately 1,150 megawatts, which is enough electricity to power one million Washington homes.

The next refueling outage is scheduled for spring, 2013.

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.

Energy Northwest – www.energy-northwest.com.



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