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Nuclear Facility Breaks Generation Record *“A year of records” for Energy Northwest*

RICHLAND, Wash. – The Northwest’s only nuclear energy facility transmitted more megawatts to the regional power grid last year than during any prior year of its 28-year history.

Columbia Generating Station throughout 2012 pushed more than 9,340,000 megawatt hours of electricity to the regional electric grid. During August alone, Columbia delivered more than 825,000 megawatt hours to the power grid.

The increased supply of energy is a result of both run time – continuous except for a planned 10-day maintenance outage in May – and efficiencies gained during recent years. Columbia has remained on-line for more than three years without any unplanned shutdown of the facility.

Today Columbia generates approximately 1,170 megawatts an hour. That’s enough electricity to power Seattle, and annually accounts for nearly 10 percent of the electricity generated in Washington. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission also renewed Columbia’s operating license in May, enabling the facility to continue generating vast amounts of clean energy through 2043.

“2012 was a year of records for us,” said Mark Reddemann, CEO of the state joint public power agency that operates Columbia. “These achievements reflect a focus on both safety and quality of work.”

Safety First for Workers, Public

Last year marked the second consecutive year without an accident resulting in lost work time among the agency’s more than 1,100 employees; Columbia’s lowest number of Occupational Safety and Health Administration reportable accidents of any kind – three; and the agency’s longest time without an OSHA reportable accident – 219 days, reached Jan. 19 and still increasing.

Additionally, twice during 2012 teams from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission tested the ability of Columbia employees to keep the public safe. Workers properly applied procedures to safely manage simulated plant conditions during a complex emergency exercise, and Columbia’s well-armed and trained nuclear security force successfully protected the facility during a rigorous force-on-force exercise.

Wind Power Exceeds 2 Million Mark

Energy Northwest also set a record at its Nine Canyon Wind Project. The 63-turbine project on the hills south of Kennewick, Wash., surpassed 2 million megawatt hours of lifetime generation during 2012. Beginning with its development in 2002, Nine Canyon was the largest public power wind project in the United States.

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 27 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.

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