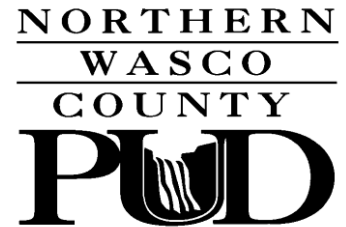


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Power Usage- 1 - 1 - 1

December 10, 2009



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RECORDS BROKEN

THE DALLES, OR – For the second December in a row, Northern Wasco County PUD reports peak power usage records have been broken. On Wednesday, December 10th, power usage topped an all time high of 113 megawatts. That tops last winter’s record set on December 16, 2008 of 103 megawatts.

“2009 has been record setting when it comes to power usage,” reports Paul Titus, Northern Wasco PUD Director of Engineering and Operations. “An all-time summer peak usage record of 93 megawatt was set on July 28, 2009,”

Extreme temperatures test the reliability of an electric utility. “With the exception of some downtown businesses that were out of power due to overheated service conductors caused by bird nests in service conduits this week, so far calls have been minimal,” reports Operations Supervisor Steve Horzynek, “and the system is performing well.”

Especially during extreme weather, the utility’s Engineering and Operations personnel monitor loads within the Northern Wasco County PUD system. “Many times loads can be transferred from one area to another to prevent overloads and damage to equipment,” reports Titus.

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“Individual customers can do a lot to prevent overloading their individual system as well,” explained Energy Specialist Steve Holmes. “We want our customers to be comfortable, but to be mindful of their electricity usage during cold weather. If you aren’t using your computer or other electronic equipment for a period of time, it is best to unplug it because even though the switch is turned off, electronics still consume power. Unplug spare TVs and remember to turn off extra lights when you leave a room.

“Turn electric heat down to the lowest comfort level,” advises Holmes and adding, “if you can, launder and dry clothes and run the dishwasher during off-peak times (mid-day and after 9:30 p.m.). Usually system peaks are reached early in the morning when everyone is getting up and taking showers, cooking breakfast, etc. and early evenings.

It is important to protect sensitive electronic equipment such as computers, TVs, etc. with surge protectors that are rated specifically for that type of equipment. Although these devices cannot prevent damage in all instances, they can be a first line in protecting damage caused by most power fluctuations. Appliances with compressors such as refrigerators and freezers are also susceptible to damage when low voltage occurs. The best line of defense when low voltage is experienced is to unplug appliances until full power has been restored. Be sure to check refrigerators and freezers that may be in a basement or garage after a power outage to make sure they come back on and are running normal. Many times, it is these appliances that are forgotten and if they don’t start operating following an outage, there is danger of food spoilage.

If you experience a power interruption and you have checked your fuse panel, please see if neighbors are also without power and then call the PUD office at 296-2226. Crews are ready to respond 24-hours a day.

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