



News Release

Customer Information System sets new standards

Bellevue, Wash. (April 17, 2000) -- When you think of high tech opening up a future of choices, seldom do energy utilities come to mind. Puget Sound Energy, however, has linked technologies that not only provide faster service and new conveniences, but will revolutionize the relationship of energy companies with their customers by matching and billing customers' real time energy use with real time energy market pricing.

This month's PSE electric bills are the product of an advanced customer information system (CIS) called ConsumerLinX .

"ConsumerLinX is the first utility customer information system designed with the 21st century in mind," commented Craig Boice, president of the Boice Dunham Group, a New York City-based energy industry consultancy. "In the new energy industry of real-time pricing, PSE should be well-positioned to deliver real-time value."

"Our customers are getting a glimpse of the future," said Penny Gullekson, vice president of customer services for Puget Sound Energy. "The ConsumerLinX billing and customer care system, tied in with our extensive wireless automated meter reading network and PSE's suite of updated systems, gives our customers the possibility of broader choices. It's like virtual deregulation."

A key feature of ConsumerLinX, developed by ConneXt, a Seattle-based developer of billing and customer care systems for energy utilities, is its flexible foundation that can adapt to consumer needs as well as to changes occurring in the industry and with utilities. Puget Sound Energy set its sights on a highly-adaptable platform four years ago when it began to deploy a new generation of technologies tied to metering, billing and real-time two-way data communication between customers and the utility. The Puget Sound Energy platform will enable real-time pricing for energy, and real-time communications with customers about usage and billing.

The future choices that will be available to consumers using Puget Sound Energy's system include: access to their accounts via Internet, e-mail, fax or telephone to monitor usage; shifting energy demand in response to prices that fluctuate throughout the day; choosing the time of month to pay their bill and opting to pay their bill through electronic bank transfer, among other services.

Besides obtaining and analyzing energy data, the flexibility built into ConsumerLinX also allows billing capabilities for new products and services.

Launched on April 10, ConsumerLinX made a smooth transition that set industry records for conversion to a system-wide technology. In fact, during the month of April at the company's state-of-the-art customer care center in Bothell, Wash., customer service levels for calls answered live within 30 seconds were 88 percent, an improvement of 12 percent, compared with the first quarter's results with the old system. The ConsumerLinX system now serves PSE's 907,000 electricity accounts. The company's 570,000 natural gas accounts will convert to the system later this year.

Puget Sound Energy is one of the energy industry's national pacesetters in operating a wireless automated meter reading network. Already more than 700,000 natural gas and electric meters in the Puget Sound area relay up-to-the minute information about energy consumption. By the end of 2001, Puget Sound Energy will provide network meter reading services to more than 1.3 million meters, or 95 percent of all customers in western Washington.

To learn more about Puget Sound Energy (NYSE:PSD) and ConneXt, a PSE subsidiary, see www.pugetsoundenergy.com and www.connext.com.

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