



News Release

PSE Ranks as National Solar Leader

Solar Power Association Places Utility in Nation's Top 10

BELLEVUE, Wash.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--July 24, 2008--Despite the Northwest's reputation for cloudy skies, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is receiving high marks for its work in developing solar energy resources. According to rankings released by the Solar Electric Power Association (SEPA) today, PSE merits a "Top 10 Solar Ranking" among all utilities across the country.

"Solar energy is proving its potential in Washington, even with weather that some may not see as ideal for harnessing the power of the sun," said Kimberly Harris, executive vice president and chief resource officer for PSE. "We're proud that the work being done by PSE and its customers is showing that the future for solar energy is bright for the Puget Sound area and the state."

According to SEPA, PSE ranks in the top 10 among the nation's utilities in two categories: solar electric capacity on the utility side of the meter (ranking eighth); and, solar electric capacity per customer on the utility side of the meter (ranking ninth). These rankings measure the amount of utility-owned solar generation, and were achieved due to the utility's 500 kilowatt (kW) solar array at the Wild Horse Wind and Solar Facility near Ellensburg in Kittitas County.

The Wild Horse solar array uses photovoltaic (PV) panels to convert sunlight directly to electricity. The array, which entered service in October 2007, currently comprises 2,400 solar panels, and will gain an additional 300 panels later in 2008. Rated at 500 kW, the array produces the energy equivalent to that needed by 300 homes.

"PSE developed the Wild Horse solar facility to gain real-world experience with solar power and how it can be integrated with wind power," said Harris. "Now, after nearly a year in operation, solar is proving its capability in a wide range of weather, from sunny skies to winter storms."

Sited at 3,800 feet of elevation atop Whiskey Dick Mountain, the array has withstood winds of more than 100 mph and temperatures ranging from well below freezing to more than 100 degrees and continued to perform up to expectations. Even during overcast skies, the PV panels have produced up to 70 percent of their rated power output.

In addition to generating electric power, the Wild Horse solar array has also brought attention to the technologies and possibilities of alternative energy, with some 8,000 people now having visited the Renewable Energy Center (REC) at Wild Horse. The REC, which opened in April 2008, offers a first-hand look at solar and wind power, giving visitors a chance to see how clean, renewable energy is produced. At the center, interactive computer displays show how much energy the solar panels are producing at any given moment, and their total energy output over time. The REC is open to the public daily from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from April through November, excluding during severe weather.

PSE customers have also demonstrated the value of solar energy, with nearly 300 customers currently having solar PV systems at their home or business connected to the utility's distribution system. Through the utility's net-metering program, customers are able to receive credits for any excess energy they generate, with the excess energy flowing into the utility's grid. When the customer is using more electricity than their system is producing, they are then able to draw on those credits to offset the cost of any electricity provided by PSE.

In addition to the net-metering program, PSE also administers cash payments to customers through the state of Washington's Renewable Energy Advantage Program (REAP) that offers payments on a sliding scale based on how much energy is produced by the customer's PV system and how much of their system includes made-in-Washington components.

PSE has also worked with area schools to bring solar to the classroom. A dozen Western Washington schools have received grants from PSE for solar array installations and classroom monitoring software, with further grants expected in 2009.

In addition, PSE is the only Washington state utility using solar technology to protect its natural gas system and one of the largest users in the U.S. PSE installed its first system in 1984 and now has approximately a quarter of the utility's 300 cathodic protection systems operating on solar power.

About Puget Sound Energy

Washington state's oldest and largest energy utility, with a 6,000-square-mile service area stretching across 11 counties, Puget Sound Energy (PSE) serves more than 1 million electric customers and 735,000 natural gas customers. PSE, a subsidiary of Puget Energy (NYSE:PSD), meets the energy needs of its growing customer base primarily in Western Washington through incremental, cost-effective energy conservation, procurement of sustainable energy resources, and far-sighted investment in the energy-delivery infrastructure. PSE employees are dedicated to providing great customer service to deliver energy that is safe, reliable, reasonably priced, and environmentally responsible. For more information, visit www.PSE.com.

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