

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2010
(number of pages 2)

Grant PUD Selects Preferred Route for New Transmission Line

EPHRATA, WA – Grant PUD staff presented a recommendation to Commissioners today that identifies the most northern route as the preferred alternative for further analysis of a new 230 kV transmission line between Columbia Substation in Douglas County and Rocky Ford Substation southeast of Ephrata. Three routes were being considered as feasible alternatives for the transmission line.

Utility staff performed an analysis on the three proposed routes that considered the following criteria: socioeconomic, farming, biological resources, water resources, cultural resources, cost, future load growth and system reliability, operations and maintenance, and real estate. These categories represent a cross-section of the issues and concerns expressed by the public, agency consultations, federal and state environmental requirements and utility electrical system considerations.

During 2010 and into 2011, Grant PUD will be working on detailed engineering design, environmental studies, permitting and right-of-way acquisitions for the project. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses will be conducted and documentation will be made available to the public for further comment. Preliminary estimated project costs are \$37 million. Construction of the new line is scheduled to begin in 2013.

“It’s our responsibility to anticipate and plan for the power needs of our customer-owners and utilize the full capabilities of our electric system while weighing the options and capital expense,” said General Manager Tim Culbertson.

This new transmission line is critical for Grant PUD to continue to supply reliable electrical service and meet the increasing needs of its customers. Historically, transmission was delivered over

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission lines, but the utility's BPA contracts will soon expire. This new line will provide the needed transmission capacity to deliver Priest Rapids Project power from Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams to Grant County loads, increase transmission system reliability and improve voltage stability performance.

The three alternatives and project information were presented at public open houses in Quincy and Ephrata during June 2009. More than 50 people provided written or verbal comments to Grant PUD about the project.

#

#

Grant County Public Utility District is a Washington state municipal corporation that began electric service in 1942. Owned by the people it serves, Grant PUD generates and sells electricity to Grant County residents and millions of customers throughout Central Washington and the Pacific Northwest. The Priest Rapids Project, comprised of Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dams, produces nearly 2,000 megawatts of clean, renewable and reliable electricity – enough to supply a city the size of Seattle. A leader in science based technology; Grant PUD is committed to finding effective measures for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of salmon, steelhead and other natural and cultural resources.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Rita Bjork

(509) 766-2530 / rbjork@gcpud.org