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CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNOUNCES SMART GRID GRANT

REDMOND, Ore. – Central Electric Cooperative (CEC) announced today that it will receive \$4.65 million in matching funds from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to deploy smart grid technologies.

The DOE's Smart Grid Investment Grant (SGIG) will fund half of a five-year, \$9.3 million project by Central Electric to enhance the reliability and efficiency of CEC's electric system.

"This grant is significant to our 24,600 members. We can accelerate the implementation of advanced metering technology that will improve our electric system and, in the future, provide our members with more information, enabling them to make better energy consumption choices," said Alan Guggenheim, member services director for Central Electric.

The grant, provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, will enable CEC to replace more than 30,000 existing meters with advanced metering technology.

"The federal grant is a testament to Central Electric's leadership in energy innovation and shows that we are committed to the implementation of a smart grid electric infrastructure," said Guggenheim.

During the first three years of the project, CEC plans to upgrade meters, and install communications and other equipment, in the co-op's 5,300 square mile service territory. The last two years of the five-year program will be spent in partnership with DOE, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the system, Guggenheim said.

The automated metering infrastructure (AMI) project is designed to improve billing and accounting efficiency. Automation of meter reading and other field services will also reduce CEC's carbon footprint, in terms of vehicular use. It provides a platform for new products and services, protection for CEC's electric system from physical and cyber attack, and will eventually enable members to monitor their usage to take advantage of lower price-periods, said Guggenheim.

"Why shouldn't our members have access to their electric usage at, or near, real-time, instead of waiting a month for the post office to deliver their electric bill? In the future, with AMI, we will be able to provide that kind of in-home information," said Guggenheim.

"Installing the smart grid will require a high degree of planning and engineering expertise. In making this grant, DOE recognizes Central Electric's expertise. We're planning for a fast and smooth implementation of new technology," said Guggenheim. "We have proven we have the talent in our operations, engineering, meter & relay, and information systems departments – they'll get the job done, right."

The AMI project will include an ongoing communications effort by the co-op. Guggenheim said Central Electric will keep members informed with area meetings, in speeches to civic and professional groups, school presentations, and with direct-mail. Articles will be published in the Ruralite magazine, and via the Internet and the company's website at www.cec.coop. Also, CEC Customer Service Representatives will be trained to answer, or redirect, questions members might have about AMI.

The \$4.6 million DOE grant to CEC was part of a larger \$19.6 million DOE grant for the implementation of a region-wide smart grid system, awarded today to Pacific Northwest Generating Cooperative (PNGC), a Portland-based electric generation and transmission cooperative. PNGC was acting on behalf of 12 of its electric utility cooperative members, including CEC. The total smart grid project value, including both the \$19.6 million DOE grant and the 50-percent matching portion of the participating PNGC cooperatives, is \$39.2 million. The regional project entails installation of more than 97,000 smart meters and associated equipment in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada and Wyoming.