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For More Information Contact:
Diane Zipper or Natalie McIntire
(503) 223-4544

Report Shows 40% Participation Increase in Utility Green Power Programs in the Northwest

August 1, 2005 - The number of utility customers purchasing "green power" in the Northwest has increased by 40% from 2003 to 2004, according to a new report released today by the Renewable Northwest Project (RNP). Entitled “Powerful Choices V”, the report summarizes the retail green power programs that are allowing customers to voluntarily invest directly in a clean energy future. Throughout the Northwest, in markets both urban and rural, thirty-six Northwest utilities are offering customers a choice of an environmentally preferred power source – wind power, solar power, landfill gas power, or low-impact hydro power.

Customer retail green power purchases help to push the market for the construction of new renewable energy projects forward. Since the last report released in 2003, Northwest green power customers purchased over 550 million kilowatt-hours of green power – the equivalent of the annual output from about 190 one-megawatt wind turbines, or enough energy to power more than 45,000 homes for a year. This is over 22 times the retail green power sold in voluntary programs from the first Powerful Choices report in 2000.

"The increasing number of green power program customers in the Northwest demonstrates a rising demand for environmentally-friendly power sources, and a greater awareness of the benefits of renewables,” said Rachel Shimshak, director of RNP, a regional renewable energy advocacy organization. "Along with utility investments in renewables, customers are using their ‘Powerful Choices’ to help create a clean energy future," she added.

Since the last report, the number of customers buying green power has made significant strides. An additional 24,384 customers have signed up for green power, bringing the northwest total to over 85,000 residential and commercial customers. Increased general awareness of the benefits of buying green power and more sophisticated marketing techniques have contributed to higher sales and customer participation.

The report, in its fifth year, also includes:

- Relevant green power legislation in the Northwest
- Changes in green power programs since the last Powerful Choices report
- Brief recommendations on customer participation in green power programs
- Summary charts of 2004 participation rates and kilowatt-hour sales
• Snapshot summaries of each program
• Contact information
• Additional sources of information

In response to the new developments in retail green power, Ms. Shimshak went on to say: "Increased development of renewable power will help to insulate Northwest customers from future electricity price volatility. In addition, rising concern over the environmental impacts of conventional power generation is prompting a surge of interest in clean, climate-neutral, renewable power."

The Powerful Choices report from this year and previous years can be found on the RNP website at www.RNP.org.

*The Renewable Northwest Project is a regional nonprofit advocacy organization promoting responsible development of wind, solar and geothermal resources in the Pacific Northwest.*

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