



Regional News

Energy news from the West

Wave Energy Buoy to Be Tested Off Oregon Coast

A Portland-based electrical cooperative and a New Jersey company have agreed to float a wave-energy buoy off the Oregon Coast, the first step in what may lead to large-scale power production.

PNGC Power will pay Ocean Power Technologies \$500,000 to build and float the buoy more than two miles off the coast near the town of Reedsport.

The buoy is about the size of a semitrailer.

By the end of 2008, the partners plan to float 14 buoys and generate 2 megawatts of electricity, enough to power about 500 homes annually.

With federal approval for a 50-megawatt plant, the project could become the first utility-scale wave energy facility in the nation.

The test will help determine the capacity and predictability of wave power. ■

Wind Turbine Fatality Opens Investigation

Investigators say excessive wind turbine blade speed may be the cause of the August collapse of one of the hundreds of wind power turbines that have been installed in Oregon.

The accident killed a maintenance worker and injured another.

Wind turbine manufacturer Siemens resumed all inspection and maintenance work on its turbines after suspending the work worldwide as a precaution.

The Oregonian reported Chadd Mitchell, a Siemens employee from Goldendale, Washington,



fell to his death when the turbine snapped in half on the Klondike III wind farm east of the town of Wasco.

Last year, a gust bent

and twisted a similar tower at the Condon Wind Project. In January, a turbine collapsed in Japan and in May 2005, a turbine in Oklahoma broke in half and fell over in light winds.

Investigators said turbine blades turning at excessive speed may have caused the Oregon accident. A Siemens spokeswoman said there did not appear to be a structural design flaw.

The company later issued more safety protocols to workers in its wind division. ■

BPA Lists Proposed Transmission Projects

Several transmission and related projects are planned next year in the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) system.

In Northern Idaho, BPA will replace 340 poles on a section line to improve reliability. The 25-mile long project runs from the Albeni Falls Dam to one mile north of BPA's

Sandpoint Substation. Construction is expected to start in 2008 or 2009.

Also in Idaho, BPA is proposing to build and operate the new Hooper Springs Substation near Soda Springs.

In Oregon, UPC Oregon Wind LLC has asked BPA to interconnect up to 50 megawatts of elec-

tricity generated from its proposed Cascade Wind Project. If the project is approved, BPA would build a switchyard and tap beneath its Hood River-The Dalles line.

In Washington, BPA plans to upgrade the Columbia-Ellensburg transmission line to address line overloads. ■

University Announces Microbial Fuel Cell Breakthrough

Biological engineers at Oregon State University (OSU) have designed a microbial fuel cell that is capable of generating about 10 times more electricity than previously possible from an air cathode cell of the same size.

The new design could lead to portable systems for power generation that are capable of providing

reusable water for developing nations and remote areas. It could also significantly reduce the amount of electricity used at large wastewater treatment facilities, OSU said.

The breakthrough could allow microbial fuel cells to be used more widely as sources of sustainable power, said Hong Liu of the OSU Depart-

ment of Biological and Ecological Engineering.

Microbial fuel cells, also known as biological fuel cells, use bacteria to convert biodegradable materials such as wastewater pollutants into electricity. As the bacteria consumes the pollutants, they shed electrons, which flow through a circuit and generate power. ■