

Columbia Generating Station Sets Longest Run Record; Energy Northwest Begins Refueling and Maintenance Outage

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RICHLAND, Wash.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Early this morning, Columbia Generating Station set a new record for its longest continuous operational run – 683 days – when operators shut down the reactor to begin the station’s biennial refueling and maintenance outage. Columbia achieved what’s known as a “breaker to breaker” run for the first time in its 30-year history, meaning the plant has been operating non-stop since reconnecting to the grid on June 25, 2013, following its previous refueling outage.

During the 683-day run, Columbia produced nearly 18 million megawatt-hours of electricity and operated at a more than 98 percent capacity factor.

“This record run is about keeping our commitment to the region to produce clean, reliable and cost-effective power for the long-term,” said Mark Reddemann, Energy Northwest CEO. “I’m proud of our team and their many accomplishments over the last two years.”

Columbia was online every single day during 2014 and in November broke its previous record – 505 days set in April 2011 – for consecutive days online. Columbia also produced more clean, nuclear energy for the Northwest power grid during fiscal 2014 than any other fiscal year in its 30-year history. The nuclear facility sent nearly 9.8 million megawatt-hours of electricity to the grid, culminating three consecutive years of record-setting generation. In November, Columbia also marked five years without an unplanned shut-down.

Columbia today began a 42-day refueling and maintenance outage that will include several major projects and the loading of 248 new, higher-efficiency, nuclear fuel assemblies into the reactor core. An additional 1,500 skilled outage workers were hired locally and from across the country to support maintenance projects throughout the plant.

“Our 2013 outage was the most successful we’ve had at Columbia for two reasons. We did the work safely and we did the work right the first time. That’s why the plant has been performing so well,” said Brad Sawatzke, Energy Northwest chief operating officer.

Columbia Generating Station is the third largest generator of electricity in Washington state. Therefore, EN and Bonneville Power Administration time the outage to coincide with spring time snow melt and runoff that maximizes power output from the region’s hydroelectric system and minimizes the impact of taking the nuclear station offline.

Columbia generates 1,170 megawatts of electricity, which is sold at-cost to BPA. Ninety-two Northwest utilities receive a percentage of its output.

About Energy Northwest

Energy Northwest develops, owns and operates a diverse mix of electricity generating resources, including hydro, solar and wind projects – and the Northwest’s only nuclear energy facility. These projects provide enough reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy to power more than a million homes each year, and that carbon-free electricity is provided at the cost of generation. As a Washington state, joint operating agency, Energy Northwest comprises 27 public power member utilities from across the state serving more than 1.5 million ratepayers. The agency continually explores new generation projects to meet its members’ needs. Energy Northwest – www.energy-northwest.com.

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