

Westar modernizes electricity production in Kansas

Topeka, Kan., Oct. 13, 2015 - Westar Energy (NYSE:WR) announced plans today to continue its transition to a cleaner, more modern electricity supply. As part of the plan, the company will phase out old electrical generating equipment at three locations by year end.

"This equipment has served Kansas customers well for more than a half century, decades longer than ever imagined," said John Bridson, senior vice president, generation. "However, to invest the tens of millions of dollars to upgrade this equipment to keep it operating safely doesn't make sense. People are using less energy, so we no longer need these old, small generating units to meet peak electrical demand. Plus, the current price to add more renewable energy is a reasonable alternative, so we'll add more renewable energy, as needed.

"Electricity and the air we breathe is cleaner today than it has ever been. During the past five years, we've reduced emissions and doubled the amount of renewable energy on our system," Bridson said. "We knew environmental regulation was on the horizon. Now that it's here - and more stringent than expected - we have to evaluate when to invest and update our equipment to meet new laws and keep our operations efficient. After next year, our emission-free energy will equal more than 40 percent of our retail demand."

Increased regulation comes at real costs. While it is time to retire this equipment, it will mean the loss of about 40 jobs in Lawrence, Tecumseh and Hutchinson. While plants in those locations will continue to operate, they will do so producing less electricity with fewer employees. This will impact those communities, which will lose good paying jobs and property tax revenues that benefit their communities.

While the total number of jobs at Westar will decline, the company expects to place employees affected by these changes in other open positions within the company.

"Our business environment is changing, and we have to ensure that we continue to provide our

customers with reliable, cleaner energy while we keep prices affordable," Bridson said.

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Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is Kansas' largest electric utility. For more than a century, we have provided Kansans the safe, reliable electricity needed to power their businesses and homes. Every day our team of professionals takes on projects to generate and deliver electricity, protect the environment and provide excellent service to our nearly 700,000 customers. Westar has 7,200 MW of electric generation capacity fueled by coal, uranium, natural gas, wind and landfill gas. We are also a leader in electric transmission in Kansas. Our innovative customer service programs include mobile-enabled customer care, a smart meter pilot project and paving the way for electric vehicle adoption. Our employees live, volunteer and work in the communities we serve.

For more information about Westar Energy, visit us on the Internet

at <http://www.WestarEnergy.com>. Westar Energy is on

Facebook: www.Facebook.com/yourwestar and Twitter: www.Twitter.com/WestarEnergy.

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