

ACCESS

T B L M A R K E T I N G B I - M O N T H L Y

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Computer software to give TBL customers on-line scheduling capability



Customers will be able to electronically schedule transmission capacity over Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines by mid-2000, a process that will be easier and more accurate because of new software purchased by the Transmission Business Line.

TBL recently commissioned software that will enable the agency to expand its electronic services beyond just the transmission capacity reservations now available on BPA's Open Access Same Time Information System. The new service will expand to include transmission scheduling transactions.

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Gayle Corr drills the foundation for the 500 kilovolt towers that will help upgrade transmission in the Puget Sound area. Since the 1992 National Energy Policy Act that began deregulation, use of BPA's transmission system has increased by 31 percent. Demand for electricity in Puget Sound has increased 2 percent per year. The upgrades will improve capacity and reliability in the area and between Canada and the U.S. to fulfill U.S. treaty obligations.



Computer software —

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TBL has contracted with SoftSmiths to provide the basic electricity transaction management system — or ETMS — and to engineer a number of modifications that will expand TBL's capabilities and make it easier for customers to complete all their reservation and scheduling transactions on the Internet. SoftSmiths is a Texas-based, privately held corporation providing business-critical software systems and consulting services to the energy industry.

"Through this contract, we're procuring an ETMS that is a high-volume transaction management system with National Energy Regulatory Commission required E-TAG capability and customized features," said Bob Ellingwood, project manager for transmission scheduling systems. Testing on the system will begin Dec. 1, 1999. By June 2000, upon completion of the integration and testing of the system, TBL will have implemented electronic scheduling capability for the day ahead and next hour market.

As the project progresses, Ellingwood said TBL will meet with customers to help prepare them for the changes to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

"ETMS began as a tagging product. SoftSmiths took the tagging requirements and expanded it to a total solutions electricity management system, which is what SoftSmiths offers today," Ellingwood said. "The first phase of the product including E-Tag, custom development and software maintenance, will cost under \$2 million."

He added that SoftSmiths has already successfully marketed the product to Allegheny Power of the Mid-Atlantic Area Council.

Once the product is up and running, customers will continue to reserve capacity on OASIS, just as

they do today. However, with ETMS, customers will no longer be required to finish the scheduling process by phone or facsimile.

Ellingwood explained that in today's environment, customers make reservations on OASIS or already have reserved capacity through a long-term contract. Then the schedule is submitted by phone or fax, it's approved and the schedule is developed on the realtime operations dispatch and scheduling system, or RODS.

"The new environment will be transaction-based and the critical path will be the tag," he said. Tag information is provided by the marketer responsible for delivering energy to a load. It identifies the full transaction including all the participants, the generators, the marketers, the transmission providers, the control areas and the load entity," Ellingwood said. "It also provides an energy profile over a period of time, such as the hourly, weekly, monthly duration over any given path."

"By spring of 2000, under NERC policy, all transactions must be tagged," Ellingwood said. "We anticipate that along with the new policy direction the tag will become the schedule."

Lorie Hoffman, manager of Transmission Supply at TBL, said some eastern U.S. transmission providers already deem the tag to be the final schedule.

"NERC is expected to invoke a no tag-no deal aspect for tagging shortly after E-tag is fully operational. Some transmission providers in the East have already invoked that policy," Hoffman said. "Here at TBL, we intend to implement a similar policy when ETMS is fully in place."

Hoffman also said the new ETMS will replace the current RODS scheduling software. Because RODS is also used in other functions having to do with BPA's Power Business Line, this

action will go further towards fully separating TBL from PBL, she said.

"Besides, RODS will be completely inadequate to provide transmission scheduling in the future," Hoffman said. "In fact, we are currently modifying RODS so that we can make it through this interim period to full start-up of ETMS."

She said TBL staff will discuss interim modifications to RODS on a Sept. 15 interactive conference call with customers (see page 6).

Ellingwood said TBL has asked SoftSmiths to provide a number of customized features with the ETMS package. Some of the features customers will notice immediately. Others will make TBL operations more efficient over the long run.

"ETMS along with its customized features will move TBL away from the current RODS ordering accounts system, something which is unique to BPA," Ellingwood said.

Some of the more significant changes that TBL customers will see are:

- The elimination of the RODS rotary account usage;
- Simultaneous automatic notification of curtailment information to all affected parties;
- Automatic validation of transaction requests (tags) prior to approval;
- Capability to exchange schedule data on a common protocol for control area checkout;
- No more need for special arrangement accounts.

Hoffman said that with ETMS, TBL will be in a much better position to meet its customers' expectations.

"We also believe that, with the ETMS and its modifications, we will have in place an electronic system that would meet most if not all of the requirements of transmission scheduling within a regional transmission organization," Hoffman said. ■

Lahmann joins TBL fiber optics team

New account executive Bob Lahmann began his work marketing fiber optics

Aug. 1. Fiber optics is one of TBL's fastest growing business lines. Until recently, TBL controlled



much of its grid with an outdated analogue microwave system, but is replacing that system with both digital microwave and fiber optics to provide a modern and redundant system of controls. A bundle of fiber optics is greater than BPA's current needs, so TBL AE's like Lahmann and Kevin Ward market the excess "dark" fiber to customers. Lahmann will initially focus on marketing fiber for public benefit purposes.

Lahmann is not new to BPA. With a bachelor's in electrical engineering and a law degree, he fit easily into BPA's procurement department in 1984. He became manager of the department in 1986. He took an account executive position in BPA's Power Business Line in 1997.

"Fiber is where it's at in the communications business," Lahmann said. "It's exciting and I haven't been disappointed with the challenges. I especially like working the public benefits part of our fiber efforts."

Lahmann can be reached at his Vancouver, Wa. office at (360) 418-2092, by page at (360) 806-7732, or e-mail at rclahmann@bpa.gov. ■

Hoecker moves RTO forward

Jim Hoecker came to town looking for a frank discussion - and he got it. The chair of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission met Aug. 6 in Portland with 23 industry executives. About 80 more were in the audience. His goal: To further efforts to form a regional transmission organization for the Northwest.

Hoecker said the Northwest has advantages in that it already has a large unified system with BPA and a history of regional cooperation. He challenged the Northwest to "tell us how this region's transmission ought to operate and be governed in the future." He said the Northwest is well ahead of other regions in knowing how to restructure bulk power markets and foster competition. An RTO doesn't have to answer all questions, such as pricing, structure and geographic scope, with certainty from the start, he said. It can evolve.

FERC in May issued a proposal to form RTOs. Comments were due Aug. 23. IOUs that own transmission must file a proposal for an RTO by Oct. 15, 2000 and begin operations by Dec. 15, 2001. BPA will file voluntarily.

Robertson retirement drives TBL staff changes

A retirement near the top of BPA's leadership will drive temporary changes in TBL's management team. Deputy Administrator Jack Robertson's retirement will put Chuck Meyer, TBL's vice president of marketing and sales, into the deputy's seat for a six-month assignment, causing further personnel changes within TBL.

After Robertson retires Oct. 1, BPA Administrator Judi Johansen will move Steve Hickok, chief operating officer, into the number two position and appoint Chuck Meyer to a temporary position to replace Robertson.

Meyer will return to TBL after the assignment.

To accommodate the changes at

A follow-up session on August 31 examined issues associated with BPA participation in an RTO. Senior TBL Vice-President Mark Maher confirmed that BPA will be part of the RTO. "We will not be the RTO or be the lead in forming the RTO, but it only makes sense for BPA to be in it because of our people and facilities."

Several parties shared comments they filed. Most supported creating RTOs. They wanted to eliminate multiple charges for transmission - called "pancaking" - and create open access. But they disagreed on size, number of participants, breadth of authority and how quickly the RTO should be put in place.

Seattle consultant Bud Krogh chaired the sessions. Funded by a dozen Northwest utilities, he will continue to coordinate as issues and solutions develop. A next step is to review issues and design a process for developing a proposal for a Northwest RTO.

Customers can request a copy of the materials BPA presented at the August 31 forum from their Transmission account executive. ■

TBL, Mark Maher, senior vice president of TBL, said he will move Brian Silverstein, head of TBL business strategy and assessment, to fill Meyer's position as acting vice president. Jane Selby will fill in for Silverstein, but she will also retain her duties as manager of Transmission Contracts.

"The staff may change, but TBL's direction will not," Maher said. That's the reason behind these selections, he said.

Robertson plan to take the millennium year to travel around the world.

Silverstein can be reached at (360) 418-8678 or e-mail blsilverstein@bpa.gov. Selby at (360) 418-8281 or e-mail jgselby@bpa.gov. ■

Video promotes safety around power lines for workers

A mechanic working on a front end loader raised the forks into a 115 kilovolt transmission line in Spring 1999. When the sparks were gone and the smoke drifted away, workers found the mechanic dead and another worker injured.

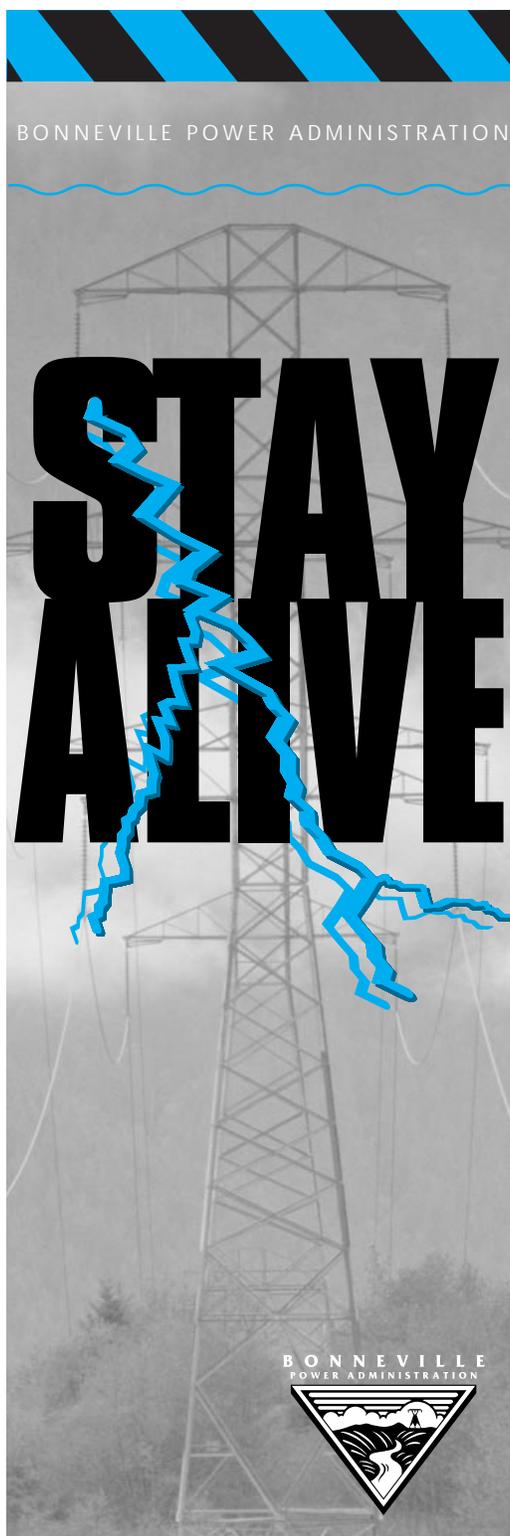
The mechanic was just the latest fatality attributed to the hazards of power lines. Each year, workers who are not utility employees are killed or disabled while working under or near transmission lines. They are loggers, construction workers, farmers and irrigators. Electricity is not discriminating when given the chance to find the shortest path to ground.

Concerned about the level of safety awareness among outdoor workers, the Transmission Business Line produced "Stay Alive," a video and brochure that encourages workers to "look up" and to be aware of transmission lines before beginning work.

"The two common threads in an accidental electrocution is that the worker didn't know the line was there or he didn't understand the hazards of coming into contact with high voltage," said Fred Johnson, vice president of transmission field services. "I asked that 'Stay Alive' be produced in the most realistic and graphic way possible, believing that the best way to communicate our safety message is to show workers what really happens if they work too close to power lines."

The video shows workers getting hurt who weren't aware of their close proximity to a power line or simply weren't aware of the danger.

"All this could be avoided if only people were more aware of their surroundings," Johnson said. There has been a lot of effort promoting electrical safety in the home or with kids in schools to show the hazards of electricity, but there hasn't been much for the working community. It's a niche



that needed some attention, he said.

"Transmission lines do wonderful things, powering our industry and lighting our homes," Johnson said. "But we don't always see information

about the hazards of electricity. We feel this is part of our public responsibility to produce for the working community."

Johnson said the video was produced by a talented team within the TBL group, including Renee Ferrera, a supervisory realty specialist, and Sharon Blair, TBL's communications manager.

"Stay Alive" reminds viewers that transmission lines carry as much as 40 times more voltage than power lines to homes. And, during hot weather or when carrying huge volumes of power, the lines can sag as much as 15 feet, causing a greater hazard and giving cause for workers to be even more alert and to look up. Other common-sense safety reminders include:

- Nothing under a power line should extend higher than 14 feet.
- Explosives near power lines could discharge accidentally. Anyone planning to blast near power lines should notify local utility officials first.
- Trees conduct electricity, too. Call the local utility before logging.
- Metal objects, such as irrigation pipe or fencing, should be stored at least 50 feet from steel transmission towers and 25 feet from wooden poles.
- Vehicles or other equipment should not be refueled on transmission corridors. Under the right conditions, sparks from the power lines could ignite gasoline.
- People should stay away from transmission towers during lightning storms.

The "Stay Alive" video is available now and TBL encourages anyone who works around power lines to call 1-800-836-6619 for a free copy, or ask any TBL account executive.

"Watch it and make sure your employees watch it," Johnson said. ■

Nucor cancels plans for new facility

The planning and environmental work for a large transmission project that would boost capacity on the Southwest Oregon coast was suspended when Nucor Steel scrapped its plans to build a new \$380 million facility in Coos Bay, Ore.

However, BPA will continue to evaluate the transmission needs for that area and add facilities as needed to ensure reliable transmission service to Southwest coast consumers and other new industries.

In addition, Nucor's decision will not in any way jeopardize TBL's September completion of its North coast fiber optic cable from Eugene to Florence and down the coast to near Coos Bay. The high speed fiber optic cable will provide as much as 2,000 times more communications services to Oregon coastal communities, such as Florence, Reedsport and Coos Bay, than is now available and it could bring jobs into that region, as well.

BPA was only two months from releasing a draft environmental impact statement on building a new 500 kilovolt line to serve the proposed steel mill. BPA says it will wrap up the activities associated with the EIS and deliver a bill for the work to Nucor.

"This is a great loss for local community development," said Tony Rodrigues, TBL account executive. "The steel production plant would have provided over 250 family wage jobs for Coos County and the addition of the transmission line would have boosted the county's electrical capacity and been a contributing factor to further economic development in the area."

Negotiations between Nucor of North Carolina and Weyerhaeuser of Tacoma, Wash., broke off when the two parties could not agree on who would be responsible for future environmental impacts. The two companies had already agreed to a price for

the 575-acre parcel of land, but neither could agree to the potential environmental liability attached to a pond next to the land.

The project had gone through 18 months of up and down negotiations. When Nucor needed to boost transmission capacity to the area, BPA stepped up to the plate with plans on where and how to build a new \$80 million 500 KV line to serve the new plant. The line would have to be able to serve the 130 average megawatt design load of the facility, but large enough to handle the facility's 225 MW peak.

BPA will continue to evaluate the transmission needs for that area and add facilities as needed to ensure reliable transmission service to Southwest coast consumers and other new industries.

The line would also have helped customers from Newport to Brookings, Ore., giving the South coast better system support and additional capacity for growth. Rodrigues said BPA was able to demonstrate that Nucor's need for additional transmission capacity could be met. The only remaining issue was the land for Nucor's plant, he said.

"We had already done quite a bit of work associated with the draft environmental impact statement, as well as some preliminary engineering design to support the environmental process," said Lou Driessen, project manager. "For now, we'll archive all this information until such a time as it may be needed again."

He said field studies of endangered species, such as the marbled murrelet and spotted owl, had been completed,

along with a survey for control points that would allow engineers to make accurate drawings for tower sites and roads in environmentally sensitive areas.

The Oregon Economic Development Department, local governments and PacifiCorp contributed approximately \$1 million to the project's preliminary studies and other work. In January, Bonneville and Nucor reached an agreement regarding responsibility for up to an additional \$1 million for the project's EIS.

Because of the need for family-wage jobs in Coos County, BPA is disappointed with the outcome of this project, but hopes the parties will try to get back together, Rodrigues concluded.

"If Nucor comes back with appropriate agreements and contracts in place, BPA will pick up where we left off," he said. ■

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Send your letters and comments to your account executive or to "Access: Letters to the Editor," Bonneville Power Administration, Transmission Business Line – T-Ditt2, P.O. Box 491, Vancouver WA 98666; e-mail: skblair@bpa.gov

Conference call to discuss new scheduling system

The latest in a series of interactive conference calls will focus on the Transmission Business Line's new scheduling software that will go into use the first of the year and how TBL will improve its current RODS system to help schedulers through the remainder of this year.

The call is scheduled for Sept. 15, 1999, from 1 to 2 p.m. PDT.

"Customers have asked for more scheduling information and one way to get the information is to dial into TBL's periodic scheduling conference calls," said TBL marketing's Linda Hunziker. "The calls are specifically for power marketing and transmission schedulers, but anyone can dial in to participate. Questions and comments are encouraged."

Callers will discuss:

- What the new scheduling software does and when it will be up and running.
- What TBL is doing in the interim to enhance the realtime operating dispatch scheduling system to allow it to build more accounts and be more efficient.
- Any other customer scheduling issues.

For those wanting to take part, dial 1 (360) 418-8200. Use passcode 2583.

The next call is scheduled for Nov. 17, 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. PST. Future calls are posted on OASIS under the "meeting notices" button. ■

Rate case info available by subscription

Everyone who receives TBL's ACCESS newsletter will receive in the mail a postcard to register for information (meeting notices, workshops, associated handouts) related to the upcoming Transmission rate case. You will have the choice to receive information electronically via e-mail or a hard copy through the mail.

A transmission rate case information registration card will be in your mail by mid-September. ■

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