

## **Southwestern Power Administration Hosts Successful Classes at New Power Operations Training Center**

05/18/05 -- Southwestern Power Administration, a power marketing agency of the United States Department of Energy, held two successful training events for power system operators at its new Power Operations Training Center within a week after the facility opened.

The training facility was completed just in time to hold its first North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC) System Operator Certification course on April 27-28, 2005. The course, hosted in cooperation with Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and System Operations Success International (SOS), covered content that prepared 21 power system operators from throughout the country to take the NERC System Operator Certification Exam.

The following week, 51 power system operators from throughout the Midwest attended SPP's three-day Spring Power System Operator Conference, May 2-4, 2005. Sessions covered various topics, including marketing strategies, power system switching, communication skills improvement, regional equipment outage planning, and regional black start planning. Attendees received 14 hours of NERC continuing education hours, which are an annual requirement for NERC Certified System Operators to retain their accreditation.

Power Operations Training Coordinator Mike Wech reports that both the NERC training and the SPP conference were very well-received, especially the latter for which all available seating sold out within the first week of its advertisement.

"Following the training sessions, we received excellent comments from the attendees. This validated my hopes that we are doing things the 'right way' and providing a service our customers want and need," says Wech. He added that additional educational opportunities are already "on the horizon," and that another SPP conference is going to be scheduled for fall 2005.