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**BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Monday, March 11, 2013

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New book reveals drama behind your light switch

Portland, Ore. – On the heels of its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Bonneville Power Administration offers a rare inside look at difficult decisions and turning point over the past 30 years in the power industry in the Pacific Northwest with a new, full-color book of little-known stories and behind-the-scenes intrigue:

- How the fractious region pulled together through conservation to weather the West Coast power crisis that nearly bankrupted BPA and other utilities.
- BPA Administrator Peter T. Johnson’s emotionally charged encounter with angry construction workers who would lose their jobs when he canceled BPA financing of new nuclear plants.
- How one tree and a cascade of glitches in BPA’s system blacked out much of the western United States.

The 300-page book, “Power of the River,” tracks the Northwest’s efforts since 1980 to equitably share low-cost hydroelectric power from the Columbia River while responding to evolving environmental values and building out the regional power grid. Filled with spectacular photographs, it tells the stories vividly through the lens of BPA, the federal power marketing agency that sells and transmits hydroelectric energy from federal dams on the Columbia and its tributaries.

“The book demonstrates how BPA successfully evolved, sometimes in the face of crisis, to become an even more durable and resilient organization,” said Bill Drummond, the administrator for BPA. “I hope through this wealth of stories, we can motivate people to embrace new approaches and thereby find their own place in history.”

Review copies of the book are available upon request. Publication of the book caps BPA’s 75th anniversary year and picks up in 1980, roughly where an earlier book published for BPA’s 50th anniversary left off.

“If you wonder how electricity could be interesting, take a look at this book,” said Michael Milstein of BPA, who oversaw the book’s production. “The Northwest enjoys some of the cleanest, lowest-cost electricity in the country, but that makes it so valuable that plenty of drama and controversy surrounds it.”

Power of the River offers a revealing look at BPA’s trials and triumphs, recognizing, for instance, that the agency nearly did itself in by promising too much inexpensive hydroelectric power to too many in the run up to the power crisis that hit in late 2000. It even recounts how Al Gore’s appearance on David Letterman’s late night talk show helped BPA cut red tape and pass on savings to Northwest electric ratepayers.

Beyond the suspense, the book also recounts the numerous inventions and innovations BPA engineers brought to efficient power line design that are now used around the country and named after Northwest rivers and mountains such as Toutle and Deschutes.

The book is available in a PDF format on BPA’s website at:

<http://www.bpa.gov/news/pubs/Pages/Power-of-the-River-BPA-History-Book.aspx>.

BPA is a nonprofit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. BPA and its partners have also saved enough electricity through energy efficiency projects to power four large American cities. For more information, contact us at 503-230-5131 or visit www.bpa.gov.

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