

BPA NEWS

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BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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BPA expecting big turkey bulge in electricity use on Thanksgiving

Portland, Ore. – Bonneville Power Administration operators are prepared for the energy anomaly that they see every Thanksgiving Day. They have planned for an unusual bulge, or peak, in the morning as millions of people across the Pacific Northwest gather to cook meals, which rely heavily on the use of ovens and other appliances. After the big meal, system operators will be on hand to ramp power down during the tryptophan drop off.

“Most of the year, electricity usage follows typical seasonal patterns but severe weather and special events can always present different, even dramatically different, realities,” said Elliot Mainzer, BPA’s administrator and chief executive officer.

On a typical November weekday, BPA’s regional load sees two peaks – one in the morning and one in the evening. But on Thanksgiving we see a different pattern emerge. Unlike a typical morning where the most electricity usage peaks around 7 or 8 a.m., Thanksgiving ramps up at 9 a.m. as people cook their turkeys and pies. Power consumption on Thanksgiving then tends to stay up higher throughout the morning compared to a normal day when loads drop off in the middle of the day. When Thanksgiving loads start to wane, they stay low for the rest of the day, as cooking is done and the tryptophan sets in, rather than increasing again to an evening peak as they would on normal weekdays.

BPA and other utilities around the Northwest keep watch on the electricity consumption of the region’s consumers day and night, 365 days a year. They ensure that there is enough output from power plants, which BPA provides mainly from renewable hydropower, and transmission available to keep the lights on. BPA’s power and transmission system experts carefully watch weather and

special events that can impact electricity usage and line crews are available around the clock in case any of the over 15,000 circuit miles of high-voltage transmission lines go down.

“This is a time of year we are even more thankful for the many men and women across the Northwest, at utilities big and small, who work diligently to keep power flowing so the rest of us can enjoy our holiday traditions,” said Mainzer.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Oregon, is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale electricity from 31 federal dams and one nuclear plant to 142 electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA delivers power via more than 15,000 circuit miles of lines and 261 substations to 475 transmission customers. In all, BPA markets about a third of the electricity consumed in the Northwest and operates three-quarters of the region’s high-voltage transmission grid. BPA also funds one of the largest fish and wildlife programs in the world, and, with its partners, pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain affordable, reliable and carbon-free electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

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