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Completion of major BPA transmission project celebrated U.S. Energy Department official to participate

SEATTLE, Wash. – Under Secretary of Energy Robert G. Card will join Mayor Greg Nickels and Bonneville Power Administrator Steve Wright on Monday, Feb. 23, to mark the completion of the Kangley-Echo Lake 500-kilovolt transmission line -- a key link in the Northwest's electric transmission grid.

Card, who is responsible for U.S. Department of Energy operations in Energy, Science and Environment, will participate in a brief ceremony in the Bertha Landes Reception Room of Seattle City Hall. He will be available for questions from the media on national energy policy issues.

The line went into operation Dec. 31, in time to avoid potential blackouts in the Seattle area during the January cold snap. Helicopters and state-of-the-art construction methods were used to protect the environment of the Cedar River Watershed, the source of Seattle's drinking water.

"Our partnership with BPA protected our high quality drinking water and a treasured asset, the Cedar River Watershed," said Nickels. "The watershed was also expanded to benefit fish and wildlife and to protect this legacy for generations to come."

Wright said the line was built to relieve pressure on transmission lines caused by urban and industrial growth in the northern Puget Sound area.

"Without this line, the heavy use of electricity in January could have caused blackouts in the Seattle area," Wright said. "We could not have energized it in time without the excellent cooperation of the city in resolving environmental issues surrounding construction and operation of the line."

The line cost \$40 million to build. Among other agreements negotiated by BPA and the city, BPA agreed to expand the more than 90,000-acre Cedar River environmental preserve by 600 acres to compensate for the widening of the nine-mile right-of-way.

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