NORPAC, BPA, and Cowlitz PUD Partner on Largest Ever Northwest Energy Efficiency Project

Weyerhaeuser — Executives from Weyerhaeuser [1], Nippon Paper Industries [2], Cowlitz County Public Utility District [3], and the Bonneville Power Administration [4] (BPA) will gather today at the North Pacific Paper Corporation [5] (NORPAC) facility to celebrate the largest industrial energy efficiency project in BPA history and one of the largest energy efficiency projects in the United States to date.

When complete, the project is expected to save 100,000,000 kilowatt-hours per year. The energy savings from the completed project will save enough energy to serve approximately 8,000 Northwest homes. The first phase of the project was completed in June 2011 and the second and final phase is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2013.

The project, referred to as a “Chip Pre-Treatment Interstage Screen Project,” adds two new components to the NORPAC facility. The first change to the mill is the addition of the chip pre-treatment equipment. This equipment treats wood chips with steam and chemicals prior to refining the chips into pulp, resulting in reduced pulp bleaching and brightening costs. The second feature of the project is the inter-stage screening. Prior to the new screening process, wood chips were ground through two stages of refining. These refining machines are driven by numerous electric motors that require thousands of connected horsepower, which makes the refining process very energy intensive. The inter-stage screening process now allows paper-ready fibers (wood fibers that do not require additional refining) to bypass the second stage of refining, which results in significant electrical energy savings.

“Energy efficiency is the first-choice, least-cost alternative for meeting increasing demand for electricity in the Pacific Northwest,” says BPA Administrator Steve Wright. “This project serves to meet our twin goals of promoting a healthy economy and a healthy environment in the Northwest.”

NORPAC purchases power for its industrial operation through Cowlitz County PUD. Working through Cowlitz, BPA will fund installation of screening equipment between refiners at the paper mill. The new processes will reduce electricity and chemicals used in the refining process, reducing the environmental impact.

BPA will fund about $21 million and Cowlitz County PUD will contribute up to an additional $3.9 million towards the project. The money contributed by both BPA and Cowlitz comes from their respective conservation funds, which provide financial incentives to their customers for the development and installation of electrical energy savings projects. NORPAC is funding the remaining $35 million of the $60 million project.

"This project is a win-win," said Dan Fulton, president and chief executive officer for Weyerhaeuser. "NORPAC's energy-efficiency project will allow this mill to remain competitive in an increasingly challenging global economic market by significantly reducing the mill's energy costs and decreasing its environmental impact through reduction of energy consumption and chemical use onsite. We are thankful BPA and Cowlitz PUD have partnered successfully with us to make this remarkable energy-efficiency project a reality."

In addition to significant energy and chemical use savings, the project created a surprise benefit. It allows NORPAC to produce a 92 bright ground wood sheet [6], a new product. This allows NORPAC to continue to diversify and expand the mill's portfolio of products. The mill's marketing effort for the new product, Norbrite 92, started in June of this year.

"Local workers came up with a creative and innovative idea, researched it, engineered it and got it approved — and local workers helped build it," said Cowlitz General Manager Brian Skeahan. "All of this demonstrates that the people of Cowlitz County make this a good place to do business. This project helps secure NORPAC's place as a cornerstone of our local economy."

About North Pacific Paper Corporation (NORPAC)

NORPAC [6] is a joint venture between Weyerhaeuser Company and Nippon Paper Industries. The facility began operations in 1979 in Longview, Washington. NORPAC produces newsprint and high brightness publication papers. The facility operates three machines that manufacture more than 750,000 tons annually and is the largest newsprint and uncoated groundwood printing papers facility in North America.

About Weyerhaeuser

Weyerhaeuser Company, one of the world's largest forest products companies, began operations in 1900. We grow and harvest trees, build homes and make a range of forest products essential to everyday lives. We manage our timberland on a sustainable basis in compliance with internationally recognized forestry standards. At the end of 2011, we employed approximately 12,800 employees in 11 countries. We have customers worldwide and generated $6.2 billion in sales from continuing operations in 2011. Our stock trades on the New York Stock exchange under the symbol WY. Learn more at www.weyerhaeuser.com [1].

About Bonneville Power Administration

BPA, celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2012, 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 our website at www.bpa.gov [7].

About Cowlitz County Public Utility District

Cowlitz PUD [3] serves 48,500 electric customers in Cowlitz County, WA and is the second largest PUD in the state in terms of annual power sales. In addition from purchasing power from BPA, Cowlitz owns the 70-megawatt Swift No. 2 Hydroelectric Project on the North Fork of the Lewis River (WA) and has partnered with other Washington and Oregon utilities to develop the 98.9-megawatt Harvest Wind and 205-megawatt White Creek Wind projects in the Columbia River gorge.

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Links:
[1] http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/
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