

## **IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**Case No. IPC-E-05-2, Order No. 29717**

**March 3, 2005**

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### **Idaho Power proposes pilot programs with automated meters**

Boise – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission is seeking comment through March 11 on two voluntary pilot programs proposed by Idaho Power Co. using newly installed automated meter readers in the Emmett area.

Automated meter readers (AMR) can be read from a remote location without having to enter a customer's property and can provide the company and customer with hourly meter readings. Some AMR systems have the ability to inform customers of current electric prices, potentially allowing them to manage their electrical use and reduce their bills. AMR allows customers to receive real-time pricing and use information, thereby helping them to shift their use to non-peak times when power is less expensive.

Under Idaho Power's proposals, customers in the Emmett and Letha areas can volunteer to participate in the Energy Watch Pilot Program or the Time-of-Day Pilot Program. Idaho Power will take up to 150 volunteers for each of the programs on a first-come, first-served basis.

Both programs are designed to help customers achieve reduced electric bills while the company experiences reduced power cost expenses by providing energy to customers during non-peak use periods. Reduced power cost expenses for the company benefits all Idaho Power customers, particularly during peak summer periods when generating or acquiring power is most expensive for the company.

Under the Energy Watch Pilot Program, Idaho Power will allow all volunteer participants to pay the non-summer rate (5.08 cents per kWh) instead of the summer rate (5.72 cents per kWh for use of 300 kWh or more) except during the company's selected Energy Watch periods, when the rate would be 20 cents per kWh. The company would notify volunteer customers either by telephone or by e-mail by 4 p.m. a day before the Energy Watch period. Energy Watch periods can occur on any weekday from June 15 through August 15 for four hours between 5 and 9 p.m. The company proposes that Energy Watch periods will occur on no more than 10 days from June 15 to August 15 for a total of 40 hours.

The Time-of-Day Pilot Program would allow volunteers to shift their use to off-peak periods when the rate is lower. Off-peak times, during which the customer would pay 4.97 cents per kWh, would be from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. on all days and during all hours on Saturday, Sunday and July 4. Mid-peak times, during which customers would pay 5.8 cents per kWh, would be from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday. On-peak periods, during which customers would pay 6.48 cent per kWh, would be from 1 to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday. This program would be in effect for the summer season of June 1 through Aug. 31.

The pilot programs will allow the company to measure customer interest and satisfaction with the programs, as well as implement and test electronic data transfer, billing and metering systems that are necessary to successfully offer programs that rely on hourly meter readings.

If the commission approves the programs, customers would have until May 15 to notify the company of their desire to volunteer.

Idaho Power is phasing in automated meter reader technology and should soon be able to offer programs like these to a wider segment of its customer base.

Those wishing to submit comments must do so by no later than March 11. Comments are accepted via e-mail by accessing the commission's homepage at [www.puc.idaho.gov](http://www.puc.idaho.gov) and clicking on "Comments & Questions." Fill in the case number (IPC-E-05-2) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

A full text of the commission's order, along with other documents related to this case, are available on the commission's Web site at [www.puc.idaho.gov](http://www.puc.idaho.gov). Click on "File Room" and then on "Electric Cases" and scroll down to the above case number.