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IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

September 4, 2008

AVU-E-08-01/
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Jean Jewell, Commission Secretary
Idaho Public Utilities Commission
W. 472 Washington Street
Boise, ID 83720

Re: Response to Power Outage Comments for the Towns of Culdesac, Lapwai and Stites

Dear Ms. Jewell:

In response to Commissioner Smith's recent question concerning the electric reliability for the towns of Culdesac, Lapwai and Stites, Idaho, the Company has prepared the following:

As background, SWT2403 is the main Avista feeder from the Sweetwater 115/24kv substation. It runs to both Culdesac and Lapwai at the 24kv voltage level and is transformed at each town to 13kv via step down transformers. Kooskia 13kV (1299) is the feeder that provides distribution service to the towns of Kooskia and Stites.

The causes of outages that occurred from December 2006 to August 2008 are as follows:

Four weather related outages caused by lightning (three outages) and snow/ice loading (one outage) affected the customers located in Culdesac;

Three public related outages caused by cars hitting poles affected the customers located in Culdesac;

An outage on the 115 kV transmission line affected all of the customers in Culdesac and Lapwai; and

Two tree related outages caused by weather blowing trees into distribution lines affected part of the customers in Culdesac.

The outage durations that occurred on the Transmission and Distribution systems serving customers on the Sweetwater feeder ranged from 17 minutes to twelve hours and 41 minutes. Of those durations, 12 were sustained outages of greater than 5 minutes and 7 recorded momentary outages of less than 10 seconds had also occurred.

Other outages occurred when the Sweetwater sub was rebuilt in 2006-07. Avista had several planned outages to integrate the new feeder and construct the new 115kv line to the sub. The new substation will increase the area reliability.

In addition, it appears that the number of outages due to mechanical failure of 24kv Pin insulators is rising on the SWT2403 feeder. The towns of Culdesac and Lapwai are affected each time an insulator fails. Recent insulator failures caused pole fires and subsequent customer outages. The nature of the failures is such that when one piece is repaired, it appears to stress the next insulator 'down-the-line', thus we are seeing a domino effect of insulator failures within a relatively short time frame. Avista is aware of this problem and has prepared a plan to address it. We have taken the 8 miles of 24kv insulators and broken it into 4 sections. Our plan is to take a series of 4 hour outages, utilize 4 crews and replace each insulator. In this way the work can be done safer and faster.

Culdesac is fed from a mid-line recloser at the 24kV to 13.2kV step-down transformer. The recloser has been recently replaced and should also increase reliability to the town of Culdesac.

The outage duration that occurred on the Transmission and Distribution systems serving customers on the Kooskia feeder ranged from 21 minutes to three hours and 28 minutes. Of those outages 11 were greater than 5 minutes and 7 recorded momentary outages of less than 10 seconds also occurred.

With respect to the two customers who commented on outages at the public hearing on August 27, 2008 in Lewiston, our records show that the Mock residence located in Culdesac, Idaho experienced four outages during the last 12 months. The Berry residence located in Stites, Idaho experienced two outages in the last 12 months.

If you have any further questions regarding this issue, please contact Linda Gervais at (509) 495-4975.

Sincerely,



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cc: Commissioner Redford
Commissioner Smith
Commissioner Kempton
Marilyn Parker – Consumer Affairs