



IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Case No. IPC-E-02-12, Order No. 29291

For Immediate Release / July 16, 2003

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Commission seeks comment on automated meters

BOISE – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission is inviting public comment on whether Idaho Power should be required to implement automated meter readers, what features they should include and how they should be paid for.

Automated meter readers (AMR) can be read from a remote location without having to enter a customer's property, significantly reducing operational costs and the potential for error. 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 also allows utilities to save money in areas beyond meter reading, including real-time service outage reporting; tamper and theft-of-power reporting; and a reduction in the wholesale cost of power during peak demand periods through voluntary conservation by customers empowered with real-time pricing and use information.

An earlier order issued by the commission directed the company to begin installing an AMR system this year, with installation completed in 2004. The company, however, disagreed with commission staff's calculation of the cost-effectiveness of AMR.

After completing an updated analysis, the company contends that implementing AMR over a four-year period (2004-07) would cost \$86.5 million. Idaho Power predicted its customers would incur greater costs for the first six years after the meters are installed and would not break even until 2024. However, the company believes AMR will become more cost-effective as technology advances and employee costs increase. The company said it would monitor AMR advances and consider implementation at a later date.

The commission is asking interested parties and the general public for opinions on 1) whether the company should be directed to install automated meters; 2) how advanced metering technology can help the company and its ratepayers make the most of advanced technology; 3) the types of technology that should be employed; 4) the time frame for implementation; and 5) how the company should recover costs associated with AMR.

Persons wishing to submit comments must do so by no later than Aug. 15. Comments can be sent via e-mail by accessing the commission's homepage at www.puc.state.id.us and clicking on "Comments & Questions." Fill in the case

number (IPC-E-02-12) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762. Comments should also be provided to Idaho Power Company at bkline@idahopower.com or mbrilz@idahopower.com.

A complete copy of the commission's order, as well as Idaho Power's AMR report, can be viewed at commission headquarters, 472 W. Washington St. in Boise, or accessed on the commission's Web site at www.puc.state.id.us. Click on "File Room," then on "Electric Cases," and scroll down to Case No. IPC-E-02-12.

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