

## Western bound together by common thread of excellence



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**W**hat a year 2000 was! Looking back, I am amazed at how much we accomplished—and on how many different fronts! As I reviewed the year, a common theme emerged. Whether it was returning power lines to service, charting the uncertain course of regional transmission organizations or caring for the environment, the common thread that bound Western together was *excellence on the job*.

In California, this meant helping the California Independent System Operator keep the lights on during the state's prolonged energy crisis. Sierra Nevada staff coordinated with the Bureau of Reclamation to maximize generation and worked with customers to curtail or reschedule energy use. Western staff in the Desert Southwest, Colorado River Storage Project Management Center and Montrose Merchant Office successfully diverted energy to California at critical times. The ISO, Energy Secretary and media recognized Western employees for the key reliability roles they played.

The operations staff dealt very well with increased demands placed on the system by merchant plant owners and power marketers. It is clear they will need more computer power to deal with electronic transaction tagging and other requirements imposed by the North American Electric Reliability Council and Western Systems Coordinating Council.

Similarly, maintenance crews across Western adjusted or accelerated maintenance schedules, repaired and upgraded transmission lines, removed encroachments to our rights-of-way and began implementing reliability-centered maintenance to increase our efficiency. Their hard work and dedication showed, as the transmission system remained reliable yearlong.

Our power marketing staff played significant roles in RTO development throughout the West, in many cases receiving praise from utility executives for their expertise. We also reported on our efforts to join RTOs in response to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Order

No. 2000.

As the industry continued to evolve, Western staff took on new or changed roles with great success. The Electric Power Training Center completed its remodeling and updated its courses to reflect new industry needs. Center staff are well on their way to recovering all their costs through tuition payments.

As the demand for more merchant powerplants and associated support facilities rose, our Engineering and Design staff met the needs and deadlines of independent power producers in Arizona and California. The design of the Griffith Substation, and their professionalism in working with the merchant developer, enhanced this group's already fine reputation in the merchant powerplant community.

We also demonstrated excellence in working smarter and containing costs. The Warehouse Benchmarking Team did a great job in reducing stock and increasing warehouse turnover, helping us keep costs under control.

We made substantial improvements in system stability, quality and reliability of data in our financial management system. The fiscal year 1999 audit is complete, and the FY 2000 will be complete this spring.

Our Upper Great Plains power marketing staff demonstrated excellence by executing power allocation and bill-crediting contracts with 25 Native American tribes, while CRSP power marketing staff made a fine start in the process of allocating power to tribes in the Intermountain West.

This year, the Environmental Protection Agency recognized the many contributions of our environmental program by accepting Western into its National Environmental Achievement Track for being a pacesetter in environmental leadership. Closer to home, Western's work with Regional Science Bowls and support of local schools such as Denver's Skinner Middle School demonstrated our commitment to community.

Regrettably, several employees and retirees died this year. Other employees,

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including that rare character, Bob Chopko, chose to begin the millennium with the new status of retiree. These are some of the people who helped make Western what it is today.

While the American Public Power Association recognized our safety record, several employees were severely injured in accidents. These accidents should cause all of us to redouble our efforts to work safely.

Despite these losses, and near-losses, Western is already building for the future. We hired two new senior managers—**Eun Moredock** as Chief Information Officer

and **Harry Pease** as Chief Financial Officer. Both have provided strong program direction and clear leadership. Our Management Succession Program is off and running and our new Project Management Policy is being met with positive responses.

The common thread of excellence on the job—passed on by those no longer with Western, continued by those who keep the system running and taken forward by the leaders of tomorrow—defines who and what we are as an agency. Keep up the great work in this new millennium! 🏠