

Y2K plans focus on 'operational readiness'

At the request of the President, DOE has tasked the North American Electric Reliability Council to ensure the electric utility industry will be ready for the Year 2000 rollover and that reliable service will continue.

The Western Systems Coordinating Council, Mid-Continent Area Power Pool and the other reliability councils are identifying risks that may impact interconnected system operations and developing contingency plans. In its *Contingency Planning Guide* published in October, NERC requires that by Dec. 31 utility companies complete first drafts of plans detailing how they will respond to specific events. These plans will be exercised and modified if necessary in two industrywide drills scheduled for April 9 and September 8-9, 1999.

According to Western's **Mark Fidrych**, WSCC security center coordinator in Loveland, these plans do not dupli-

cate in-progress work to repair or replace systems; rather, they list actions to be taken if needed. "What is different is that for specific time periods, events may cause widespread loss of generation or load in ways that we, as an industry, had not anticipated," Fidrych said. "Our response may be different due to the widespread nature of the events."

WSCC formed a task force to assemble a regional response to Y2K issues. The group brings together WSCC Y2K representatives, security coordinators, a telecommunications workgroup and system planners. Western's task force representative is **Sam Miller** in the Phoenix office, whose job is to assure the agency has a plan to deal with the critical 2000 rollover period. "If all goes as planned, we will all have power to keep watching TV after the ball drops in Times Square on New Year's Eve," said Fidrych.

Western prepares Y2K contingency plan

What is Western doing to be ready for the year 2000? Many Western employees are replacing, fixing or testing systems and equipment and planning for a multitude of Y2K contingencies to ensure agency operations continue.

All Western regions, CSO and the Colorado River Storage Project Customer Service Center are working on Y2K contingency plans that focus on "operational

preparedness" to reduce potential impact on power systems. Plans will also address risks to communications, information services, staffing and buildings. Steps include:

- Identifying risks.
- Analyzing how the risks combine into likely scenarios.
- Developing mitigation strategies.

"Many functions are interdependent," said **Don Nord**, Western's Y2K project manager. "Regions and offices should tie planning together and incorporate individual system contingency plans."

Risks Western faces include loss of telephone communication, abrupt generation or load changes, loss of computer networks or systems, inability of vendors to provide supplies or services, loss of call-out procedures, changes in leave policy and problems with severe weather.

The operational preparedness portion of regional plans will be drafted by the end of December. Complete region and office plans will be drafted by the end of February. For more information, contact your office's contingency plan coordinator, a Y2K team member or see Western's Y2K web page at www.cso.wapa.gov/y2k and click on "contingency planning."

