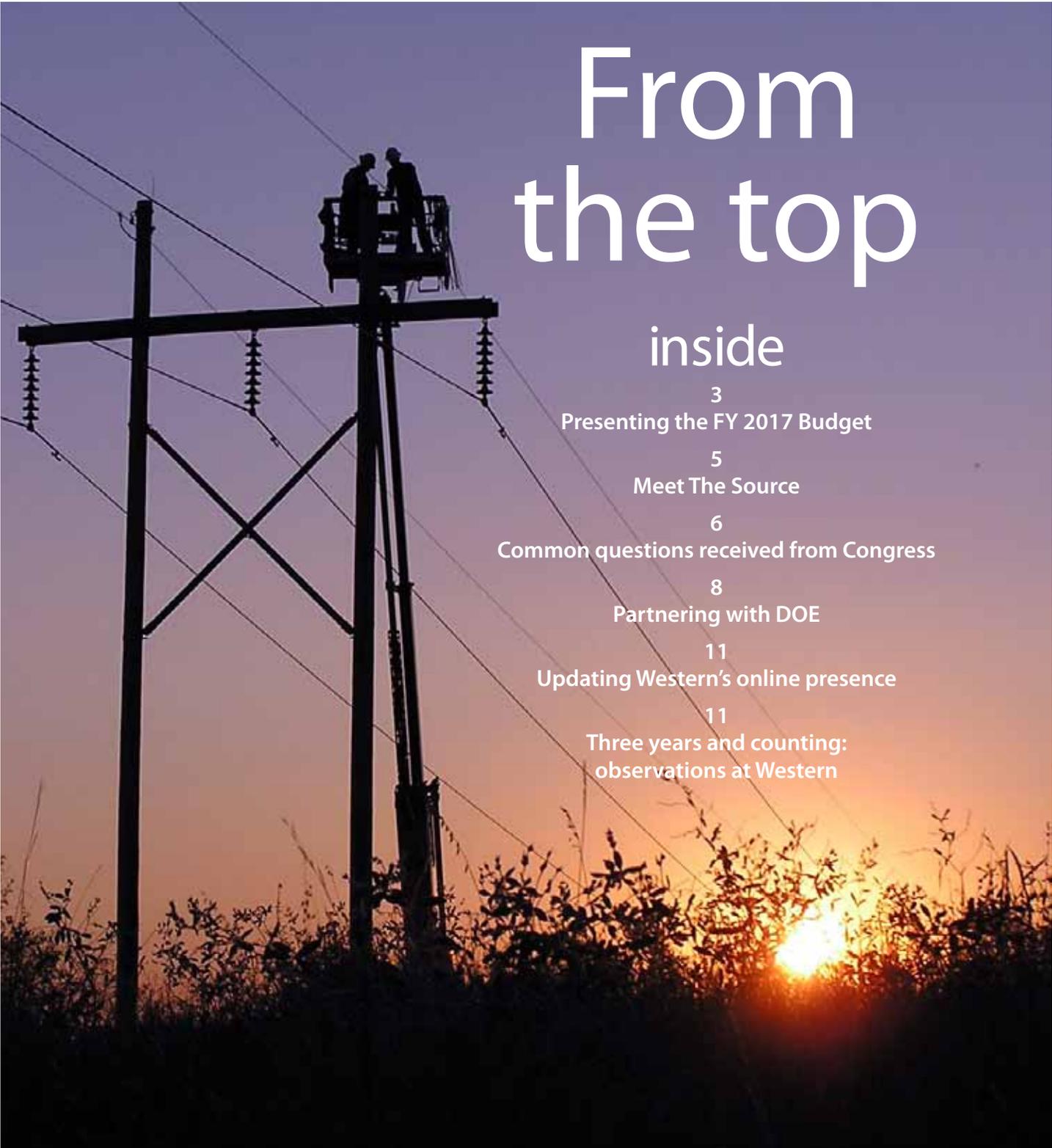


CUSTOMER

SPRING 2016

# Circuit

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION



## From the top

inside

3

Presenting the FY 2017 Budget

5

Meet The Source

6

Common questions received from Congress

8

Partnering with DOE

11

Updating Western's online presence

11

Three years and counting:  
observations at Western

## LETTER FROM THE WASHINGTON LIAISON OFFICE



**A**s a federal organization, part of our responsibility is to stay in touch with Washington, D.C., where Congress and the federal government meet. Western maintains connections with D.C. through its Washington Liaison Office. Here in the WLO, it is our role to serve as Western's D.C. presence.

Ours is a small shop consisting of Legislative Liaison Kathy Tyer, Management Analyst Shellie Scott, and me. Working closely with Western's Administrator and CEO, we serve as a liaison to the Department of Energy relaying policy changes to all of Western. We are also Western's liaison to other DC-located federal agencies and congressional offices and staff. We work alongside the DC offices of the three other power marketing administrations to monitor policy and legislation as it affects the PMAs. Liaising with Washington, D.C., in this way is important because it helps keep Western informed of the roles, regulations and federal expectations from the top.

In this issue of the *Customer Circuit* we are highlighting the WLO to help tell the story of just how these roles work in the broader spectrum of a distributed organization like Western. For example, although Western is largely customer funded, we must still testify and gain congressional authorization for the budget we will spend each fiscal year. We must report to DOE, and occasionally to Congress, on our achievements and specific initiatives. As an organization under DOE, we must support broader Departmental initiatives, some of the efficacies of which are summed up in the Quadrennial Energy Report. Other times, ideas that start in D.C. wind up being implemented on the ground, in the field, through our program and regional offices. This has certainly been the case for our Renewable Energy Resource Program.

Through these examples and others, *Customer Circuit: From the Top* brings to you more information regarding how Western works and why, reflecting our ongoing commitment to transparency. I hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to working with you in the future.



Michael D. McElhany  
Senior VP & Assistant Administrator for Corporate Liaison  
Western Area Power Administration  
Washington Liaison Office



## Presenting the FY 2017 budget

**W**estern Administrator and CEO, Mark A. Gabriel, testified before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans on March 22. His remarks highlighted Western's continuing commitment to its federal mission through business, technology and organizational excellence, mutually beneficial partnerships and evolution of services. The testimony outlined support for Western's spending priorities, best practices and the Fiscal Year 2017 appropriation request.

Customers and employees may recognize Western's methods of supporting its mission as three of the four critical pathways in Roadmap 2024. "It is important we continue to be transparent and demonstrate how closely we are following the strategies we developed collaboratively with our customers," Gabriel said. "Roadmap 2024 is our guide for navigating the swift changes in the industry around us while at the same time remaining true to our promise of fulfilling our

federal mission. My testimony provided an opportunity to tell the story of our ongoing cooperative efforts with our customers."

During testimony, Gabriel demonstrated how Western continues to deliver on its federal mission by serving nearly 700 customers across 15 states. Those customers include rural electric cooperatives, municipal entities, 21 U.S. military bases, 92 Native American tribes and a host of irrigation districts and public power entities. "Our customers, in turn, provide Western's hydropower to more than 40 million Americans every year," Gabriel said.

Gabriel also explained Western's commitment to being transparent and inclusive in its business operations. "We continue to engage our customers in operational choices and capital planning efforts holding more than 400 meetings this past year. We also completed more

*continued on Page 4*



**On March 22, 2016, Western Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel presented annual budget testimony to the Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee.**

than \$230 million in capital projects during FY 2015. In FY 2016, nearly \$160 million in capital work is anticipated," he told the subcommittee.

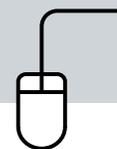
Then, Gabriel presented the budget. In its budget request tendered to Congress on Feb. 9, Western asked for authorization to spend a total of \$1.2 billion during FY 2017. Only 6 percent of the \$1.2 billion comes from appropriated dollars; the remainder comes from offsetting collections and alternative financing. The FY 2017 net appropriation requirement for Western is \$72.8 million.

Western's sources of funding ensure its ability to meet both contractual power sale commitments to customers and the securing of the revenue stream necessary to meet federal repayment obligations. These two actions together make it possible for Western to repay appropriated funds invested for power related purposes. As a result, for the past five years, Western has returned more than \$1.4 billion to the U.S. Treasury.

"All appropriations being requested for FY 2017 will be repaid to Treasury with interest," Gabriel said.

In conclusion, Gabriel addressed the challenges he foresees for the agency. "Western needs to be ready for the future so the nation and our customers can continue receiving the benefits of our Federal mission," he said. "As a power marketing administration, we simply cannot afford to cut back on needed or required investments or to artificially keep costs low. We are dedicated to fulfilling our promise to customers: to continue delivering reliable, low-cost federal hydroelectric power and related services at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound business principles." ■

To view both the submitted testimony and Gabriel's oral remarks in their entirety, visit The Source on Western's web pages: [wapa.gov/About/the-source/Pages/the-source.aspx](http://wapa.gov/About/the-source/Pages/the-source.aspx)



### Appropriation Summary by Program

(dollars in thousands)

Fund	Appropriation	Offsetting Collections <sup>1</sup>	Alternative Financing	Total
<b>Western CROM<sup>2</sup></b>				
PPW	0	367,009	214,625	<b>581,634</b>
O&M and PD	77,023	219,828	6,343	<b>303,194</b>
C&R	18,558	0	43,884	<b>62,442</b>
<b>Subtotal, Western CROM</b>	<b>95,581</b>	<b>586,837</b>	<b>264,852</b>	<b>947,270</b>
<b>Falcon/Amistad</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>4,393</b>
<b>Colorado River Basins Power Marketing Fund<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>-23,000</b>	<b>236,530</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>213,530</b>
<b>Transmission Infrastructure Program</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,761</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>7,261</b>
<b>Total, Western Mission</b>	<b>72,813</b>	<b>830,966</b>	<b>268,675</b>	<b>1,172,454</b>
Source as percent of total	6.2%	70.9%	22.9%	

<sup>1</sup> Offsetting collections includes the Colorado River Dam Fund.

<sup>2</sup> CROM – Western's Construction, Rehabilitation, Operation and Maintenance account

PPW – Purchase Power and Wheeling

O&M – Operations and Maintenance

PD – Program Direction

C&R – Construction and Rehabilitation

<sup>3</sup> The Colorado River Basin Power Marketing Fund reflects obligational authority requested. Net budget authority after off-setting collections is -\$23 million.

## Meet “The Source”

In late January, Senators Flake (R-AZ) and McCain (R-AZ) introduced an amendment to the Senate Energy Bill requiring Western to establish a pilot project of its budgetary costs and rates including a searchable database. Fortunately, Western already had something similar in development and on March 17 launched its new website: The Source.

“We are continuing to evolve our services to best meet customer needs,” said Western Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel. “We recognize people’s desire to have information at their fingertips. With that in mind, we created this site for stakeholders and the public to quickly find the information they need. When our customers have requests, we are well positioned to deliver.”

Although nearly all the information is already available throughout Western’s primary website, The Source provides a one-stop shop for Western’s annual reports, budget allocation, presentations and speeches, regional rates and a searchable index of Western’s power systems called “By the Numbers.”

“At Western, our core values affirm our commitment to honest actions and foster open communication and feedback,” said Gabriel. The site reflects Western’s TRUE Communication Philosophy: We are Transparent, Relevant, Understandable and Expedient. Gabriel added, “We are posting information as quickly as possible. The Source will evolve as users further define what they need.”

The Source precedes Western’s website redesign project, currently in the discovery phase. Both initiatives share the same driver: to enhance and expand transparency and to improve our website functionality. Chief Public Affairs Officer Teresa Waugh said, “Our goal is to present relevant and timely information in the clearest, most efficient way possible.”

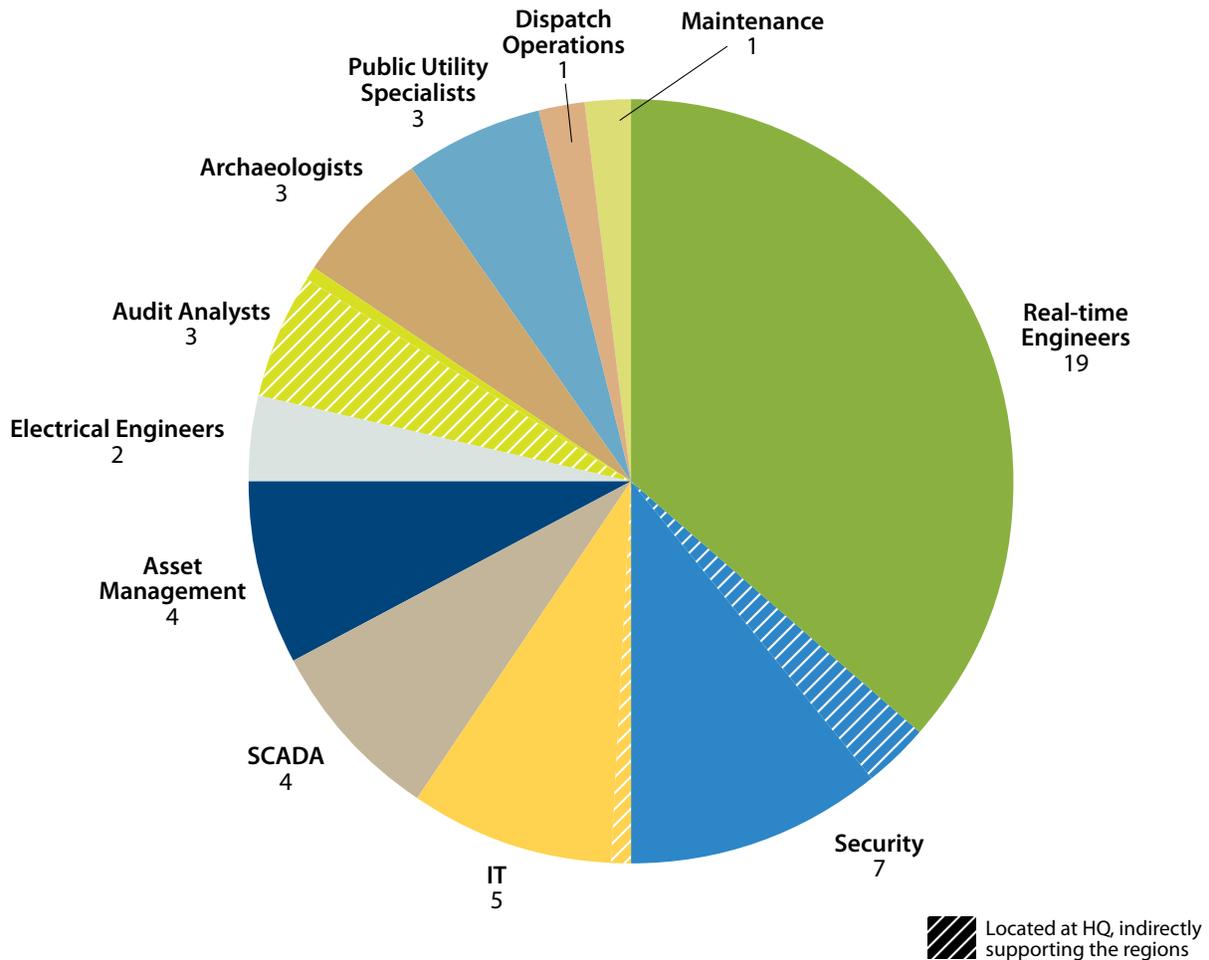
To learn more about The Source and Western, visit the website or contact Western’s Office of Public Affairs at 720-962-7411. ■

Read more about Western’s website redesign project on page 11.



The screenshot shows the 'The Source' website interface. At the top is a green navigation bar with links: About, Power Marketing, Transmission, Regions, Newsroom, Training, Energy Services, and Renewables. Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: You are here: Western | About | The Source. A message reads: 'Help us re-design this page. Click here to assist.' The main content area is titled 'The Source' and contains the following text: 'Western is pleased to provide The Source, a new website dedicated to displaying operational data and financial information in one convenient location. Western believes in honest actions and fostering open communication and feedback. Through The Source website, we have made accessing Western information quick and easy to keep the public informed about our operational data and financial data. At Western, we have a TRUE Communication Philosophy. We are Transparent, Relevant, Understandable and Expedient.' Below this are several sections with blue headers: 'Annual Reports' (Find annual reports for the current and past few years.), 'Budget allocation' (Find Western and regional fact sheets and 10-year planning information. Content will be updated yearly.), 'By the numbers' (A searchable index is being created to increase transparency about Western’s power systems. Content will be updated yearly.), 'Presentations, speeches' (Keep up with what our CEO and Administrator Mark Gabriel and Western’s Senior Executive team discuss with customers.), and 'Rates by region' (One stop to all regional Rates information.). At the bottom, a note states: 'If you cannot find the information you were expecting to find on The Source, contact our Public Affairs office at 720-962-7050.'

## FY 2017 Full-time equivalents Westernwide



## Common questions received from Congress

Western's presence in Washington D.C. enables us to maintain a dialogue not only with our customers who visit there, but also with Congressional offices and staff. The ongoing conversation helps Western stay organizationally aware of the needs and concerns of our broader customer base. Dialogue often helps pinpoint the questions requiring the most immediate attention. For the past year, two of those most prominent questions have been: 1) why is Western adding FTEs in Fiscal Year 2017 and where are they adding those positions; and 2) how is Western funded?

### FY 2017 FTEs

Changes in today's energy environment, reliability compliance, emerging cyber and physical security threats and a more complex and interdependent system, are creating additional work for Western's

employees. As a result, the FY 2017 budget request reflects an increase of 52 full time equivalents, or 'FTEs.'

It is worth noting that this budget request is the first for additional staff in a couple of years. The FY 2016 budget request held FTE flat at FY 2015 levels. The additional positions in 2017 represent a 3.5 percent increase over the FY 2016 level, increasing the total count of Western's federal employees from 1,469 to 1,521 to meet critical mission related activities. Despite the FY 2017 FTE level, the total Program Direction fund for salaries, benefits, travel, support services, and other related expenses decreased by \$9.9M.

The majority of the new positions will be located in the regional offices and the field, supporting compliance and security work. The bulk of the new FTEs will be at the real time desks in the regions. ■



# FACT SHEET: Real-Time Engineering

## Issue background

Following the 2011 Southwest outage, industry reports indicated that further use of Advanced Network Applications to run Real-Time Contingency Analysis of the power system would improve system reliability and help prevent similar events in the future. A North American Electric Reliability Corporation Reliability Standard development team was formed and recently completed revised Standard TOP-001-3. In addition to the intent of the standard, there are economic advantages that can also be realized, e.g., reduction of real-time curtailments for both generation and transmission services. Read more to learn about Western's approach to accomplish this new requirement.

## Real-Time Engineering desks

Reliability Standard TOP-001-3 is a mandatory reliability standard for all Transmission Operators

- Approved by FERC Nov. 19, 2015
- Subject to enforcement April 1, 2017
- **Intent:** To prevent instability, uncontrolled separation or cascading outages that adversely impact reliability.
- **What's new:** Requirement to run a real-time assessment at least once every 30 minutes
- **Historical requirements remain:** Perform current day, day ahead and seasonal studies to verify that the anticipated system configuration does not indicate the risk for exceeding System Operating Limits.

## Workload implications

Western's plan to meet the requirements of the Standard is to implement the following (this may not be the only manner to accomplish meeting the requirements):

- Develop and maintain Advanced Network Applications, which involves complex system modeling and processing huge amounts of real-time data.
- Run and monitor the Real-Time Contingency Analysis, which requires engineering or extremely advanced system knowledge to evaluate the validity of the solutions and recommend mitigation. Personnel performing this function require NERC certification because they will direct real-time system operations.

## Meeting the Standard

The most effective way to accomplish real-time assessments uses an advanced network modeling application that incorporates real-time data and system status—from SCADA—to study potential system operations (protective relay operations, planned outages, etc.) and evaluates whether these operations could cause violation of system operating limits or system instability.

## Necessary staffing

### RM/DSW/CRSP

#### 9 new positions

- One Real-Time Engineering desk to cover the WACM and WALC balancing authorities, five qualified paths and 8,000+ miles of transmission
- Supervisor
- Three engineers (Loveland)
- Three engineers (Phoenix)
- Two SCADA network engineers (one in Loveland, one in Phoenix)

### UGP

#### 6 new positions

- One Real-Time Engineering desk to cover the WAUE and WAUW balancing authorities, customers within their service areas and 8,000+ miles of transmission

### SN

#### 2 new positions

- One operations engineer to support the RTCA and real-time assessment
- One SCADA network engineer to support the RTCA

## What will it cost?

The cost of the new full-time equivalents are about \$200,000/position. Throughout Western, the costs are estimated to be:

- RM/DSW/CRSP — \$1.8 million
- UGP — \$1.2 million
- SN — \$800,000

## Why are there differences among Western's regions?

RM, DSW, CRSP and UGP have many miles of transmission across large geographic areas, including significant amounts of sub-transmission voltage loads that may not be modeled in the Reliability Coordinator tools. These factors combine to justify 24/7 Real-Time Engineering desks to ensure accurate RTCA results, system reliability and redundancy with the peak RC RTCA.

SN has significantly less transmission miles and is located between two huge BA/TOP areas (Bonneville Power Administration and California Independent System Operator). SN is also a Sub-Balancing Authority within the Balancing Authority of Northern California. The BANC Operator is also a TOP, which will be running an RTCA as well. All of these entities, as well as the RC, will have visibility into SN's system. These factors allow SN to cover the requirements with fewer personnel.

Note: SN is incurring some risk by not having a Real-Time Engineering desk, but is mitigating that risk by working with the BANC Operator to share responsibilities.



**A**t Western, the highest goal is to safely and securely market and deliver clean, renewable, reliable, cost-based federal hydroelectric power and transmission services while at the same time reducing risk to American taxpayers by using economically sound and environmentally responsible business practices. In accomplishing this goal, we not only continue fulfilling our promise to customers

that we deliver on our federal mission, but we also demonstrate our role as one of four power marketing administrations under the Department of Energy. At DOE, the mission is to ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.

## QER promotes energy goals

**T**he Quadrennial Energy Review is introduced on DOE's website as a process involving robust engagement of federal agencies and outside stakeholders. It further enables the federal government to translate policy goals into a set of analytically based, integrated actions for proposed investments over a four-year planning horizon.

In the 2014 Presidential Memorandum establishing the QER, President Obama directed the QER Task Force to "gather ideas and advice from state and local governments, tribes, large and small businesses, universities, national laboratories, nongovernmental and labor organizations, consumers, and other stakeholders and interested parties ..." As the Secretariat for the QER Task Force, DOE coordinates stakeholder outreach through public meetings, stakeholder briefings, tech-

nical workshops, one-on-one meetings and an online comments portal.

In April, Western's Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel joined other presenters in Salt Lake City, Utah, at a public meeting to solicit input and foster public dialogue about *QER 1.2: An Integrated Study of the U.S. Electricity System*. This second installment of the QER will develop a set of findings and policy recommendations to help guide the modernization of the nation's electric grid and ensure its continued reliability, safety, security, affordability and environmental performance through the year 2040. As one of the nation's top 10 largest transmission providers with 17,000-plus circuit miles of transmission line, Western is honored to be a part of this year's QER outreach and development. Gabriel's remarks are available on [wapa.gov](http://wapa.gov) under The Source. ■

## Western's Renewable Resource Program partners with DOE

**W**estern's Renewable Resource Program was established in January 1997 as a result of customer encouragement to establish a program promoting the voluntary use of renewable energy across our 15-state service territory. The program relies on partnerships and collaborations to accomplish goals and produce results.

Through these partnerships, Western has received more than \$5 million in non-reimbursable funding to facilitate renewable energy use by our preference customers and others. This funding has contributed to the 81,000+ megawatts of renewable energy capacity now installed in the states where Western markets federal hydropower and represents about 41 percent of all renewable energy generation in the U.S.

## Early projects

Western's collaborations with DOE and our preference customers have supported a number of significant milestone activities. Since 2001, highlights have included creating the Public Power Renewable Energy Action Team, the Public Interest Energy Research Program, or PIER Hetch Hetchy Project, the Utility Geothermal Working Group, and the 2003 Nebraska Public Power District Deliberative Poll.

Predating the California renewable portfolio standard, the PPREAT comprised 22 California preference customers working together to develop utility-scale and distributed-generation renewable energy projects. PPREAT, in partnership with the Center for Resource Solutions, secured a multi-million dollar grant from the California Energy Commission Public Interest Energy Research Program, subsequently known as the PIER Hetch Hetchy Project.

The ultimate goal of PIER Hetch Hetchy was to discover the real costs and benefits of distributed generation and to identify state and interstate utility-scale renewable energy development and storage opportunities. Research activities covered biomass, distributed generation and transmission, among other studies.

Another milestone activity was the formation of the Utility Geothermal Working Group to accelerate integration of geothermal technologies into mainstream applications of direct use, power generation and geexchange heat pumps. The UGWG accomplished its objectives through the coordinated efforts and actions of its members in collaboration with industry stakeholders, federal agencies, trade associations and research organizations, eventually inspiring several Western customers to sign purchase power agreements for baseload geothermal energy.

The 2003 Nebraska Public Power District Deliberative Poll™ was based on a Public Utility Commission of Texas project in which eight electric utilities polled their customers to discover what energy options they preferred to meet future electricity requirements.

Western searched for a year to find a preference customer interested in Deliberative Polling, until NPPD agreed to try the polling method with its customers. The utility knew it had a good wind resource but wanted customer input on the level of investment to put toward wind and other energy options. NPPD identified 109 Nebraskans who reasonably matched its demographic baseline and invited them to a town meeting to take a Deliberative Poll customized for the utility's needs. Key results included:

- NPPD residential customers overwhelmingly support the development of the wind projects described in the materials and at the meeting.
- 96 percent think the 200-MW wind addition should go forward.
- Renewable energy incentives do not make a difference in customer support for the 200-MW wind addition.

The complete NPPD Deliberative Poll™ questions and summary report [www.neo.ne.gov/reports/d\\_p\\_final\\_rept.htm](http://www.neo.ne.gov/reports/d_p_final_rept.htm) are available to download.



## Assisting federal agencies, tribes

Western currently partners with the DOE Federal Energy Management Program and DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs to advance the use of renewable energy by federal agencies and Native Americans on tribal lands.

*continued on Page 10*

**S**ince the program's inception, Western has established strategic relationships with several Department of Energy technology offices including the:

- Geothermal Technologies Office, [www.energy.gov/eere/geothermal/geothermal-energy-us-department-energy](http://www.energy.gov/eere/geothermal/geothermal-energy-us-department-energy)
- Wind Program, [www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-program](http://www.energy.gov/eere/wind/wind-program)
- Solar Program, [www.energy.gov/eere/sunshot/sunshot-initiative](http://www.energy.gov/eere/sunshot/sunshot-initiative)
- Geothermal Program, [www.energy.gov/eere/geothermal/geothermal-energy-us-department-energy](http://www.energy.gov/eere/geothermal/geothermal-energy-us-department-energy)
- Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, [www.energy.gov/indianenergy/office-indian-energy-policy-and-programs](http://www.energy.gov/indianenergy/office-indian-energy-policy-and-programs)
- Federal Energy Management Program, [www.energy.gov/eere/femp/federal-energy-management-program-technical-assistance](http://www.energy.gov/eere/femp/federal-energy-management-program-technical-assistance)

Together, Western and FEMP created Western's Renewable Resources for Federal Agencies Program to provide technical support to federal agencies within Western's 15-state service area to meet their renewable energy goals. The program offers agencies multiple options for acquiring renewable resources. Program successes since 2003 include:

- Facilitating the acquisition of more than 4,412 gigawatt-hours of renewable energy credits through more than 50 separate power marketing contractual arrangements with more than 40 federal agency sites
- Conducting six renewable prefeasibility transmission studies
- Assisting seven federal agencies with on-site renewable energy development, including a recent 2-MW solar project at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Northern California
- Assisting the Department of the Navy through our Desert Southwest office with purchasing 150-MW of utility-scale solar from the Sempra-owned and -operated Mesquite solar project near Phoenix, Arizona the largest single off-take of renewable energy by the Department of Defense to date

In partnership with the DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs, Western continues to lead the development of an annual renewable webinar series for American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal

Governments, many are Western preference customers. Now in its fifth year, the monthly series includes 11 tribal-specific energy webinars designed to support tribal energy self-determination. The series reaches more than 1,800 tribal representatives and interested stakeholders annually.

DOE and Western are also conducting tribal prefeasibility transmission and market option analysis studies to support potential renewable energy projects on tribal lands to help tribes determine the feasibility, appropriate size and interconnection of proposed renewable projects. Studies can also assist tribes with identifying potential off-takers and financing of proposed renewable projects. Tribal market options analysis studies help tribes evaluate options beyond their current energy supply arrangements. To date, about 20 studies have been completed, revealing new and innovative ways to secure future energy supplies.

Western's Fiscal Year 2014 annual report shows that our customers continue to lead by example, investing \$540 million in support of about 10,569 MW of renewable generation capacity. These investments represent sustained customer interest in developing and implementing clean energy and distributed generation. Western's Renewable Resource Program has had the opportunity to work with and support many of our customers' renewable energy-related efforts and we look forward to doing so in the future. ■



Senior Vice President and Desert Southwest Regional Manager Ron Moulton, Energy Management and Marketing Specialist Stacy Russ, EMMO Manager John Paulsen, Power Marketing Advisor Penny Casey and Attorney-Advisor John Kral pose after signing a commemorative solar panel, Aug. 20, 2015 at Naval Air Station North Island in Coronado, California. They worked closely on the power purchase agreement with the Department of the Navy and Sempra U.S. Gas & Power.)



## Updating Western's online presence

**A**ccording to website analytics, the top reason visitors come to wapa.gov is to learn about career opportunities and read more about what Western does. Knowing information like this helps us determine what interests the public and ensure we have the technology and ability to quickly adapt to their needs. Recognizing that first impressions are lasting, it becomes clear that our website is important and reflects on our organization. Chief Public Affairs Officer Teresa Waugh said, "In a day where people want instant results, it is important for visitors to be able to easily find the information they need."

Western will give a facelift to its external website over the next year through a three-phased approach. The redesign will change the look and feel of our current website, but more importantly it will change how information is organized and displayed. "We want to make it simple for our visitors to more quickly and easily learn about Western's business and services while providing a fresh design," said Acting Web Content Manager Amber Rodriguez.

This is an opportunity to ensure content is up to date and relevant. Public Affairs in partnership with Information Technology determined the website redesign will be accomplished in three phases. Phase 1 will include rebranding the current site and will be completed June 1. Phase 2 includes identifying requirements and verifying a content management system. Phase 3 includes implementing a new information structure. Rocky Mountain Information Technology Specialist Matthew Bailey, who is on detail to Public Affairs and is leading the redesign project said, "We are eager to understand what the current site lacks and what our content editors need to make editing pages easier for them. When editing is easy, content usually stays more up to date."

Public Affairs is reaching out to Western customers and the public for feedback on how we can improve the new site. We need your assistance with improving our current website. Please take a few minutes to complete the WAPA.gov Viewer Questionnaire. ■

## Three years and counting Observations at Western

**W**hen I came to Western roughly 1,000 days ago, natural gas prices were \$4.37 million British Thermal Units, gasoline was \$3.65 a gallon, oil was trading at \$95 a barrel, we were not a member of an organized market and the requirements for the Clean Power Plan were not yet known, much less stayed by the Supreme Court. Today, natural gas is \$1.80 an MMBTU, gasoline is just below \$2, oil is trading at \$35, Western is a full-fledged member of the Southwest Power Pool and although we still do not know the final outcome of the Clean Power Plan, we see that it is impacting demand for coal-based power.

I have learned a lot in my three years at Western. As I marked my third anniversary on April 4, I wanted to share with you a few observations on the things I have discovered:

- **PMA passion:** Western's people and customers have a passion for our power marketing administration, its history and what it means to their way of life. This passion has both a positive side and one that poses challenges as we move to deal with the uncertainties of the future.
- **Dedication:** We have the most dedicated and professional employees I have ever seen in my 25 years in the energy business. Our people, their dedication and focus make Western a great place to work and uniquely positioned to build on the past in powering the energy frontier.
- **Customer interaction:** Our customers bring tremendous value to the Western PMA equation; they are fiercely protective of the organization we have built and maintained for more than 38 years, proud to be associated with us and passionate in their view of our value.

*continued on Page 12*

- **Complex financing:** Western has an extremely complex financial structure; one that creates challenges in management, drives some of our cost and has some built-in inefficiencies. At times, we are handcuffed in making this all work—but work it does—and we should be proud of the fact that we have returned more than \$1.4 billion to the U.S. Treasury over the past five years.
- **Two-year budget cycle:** Working with budgets developed more than two years out from execution is, in its own right, a challenge in that our crystal ball, especially in times of change, needs to reach beyond normal business practices. This requires us to refine our planning processes, make sure we understand what is coming in the future (to the best extent possible) and be prepared to make mid-course corrections. This is particularly hard for a capital-intensive and government-operated business—but we do it successfully.
- **Balanced expertise:** By nature we straddle two different worlds. On one hand, we are a large transmission and power marketing utility with all of the trappings of any electric utility from safety, rates and regulation; on the other, we must comply with government rules not necessarily established to provide sufficient flexibility for daily operating challenges. Our ability to get things done, at scale, across a huge footprint is a testament to the dedication and creativity of our staff.

- **Quality performance:** Not a day goes by that I am not wowed by the quality of our staff and our ability to get the job done. Our safety record, reliability, high marks from outside organizations and the below-market power we bring to millions of Americans is unmatched in the industry.

Of course, as in any business, we have our challenges and opportunities for improvement. Ours is a shared success of which we should be proud. A learning organization will always find ways to be better and seek improved operating processes.

These past three years have been the most interesting, most fulfilling and most rewarding of my career. I want each of you to know how much I appreciate the support you have shown me. I wake up excited to go to work every single day knowing we are solidly on the path of our Roadmap 2024 and thankful for the people of Western, our customers and the families who support us.

Thank you,



Mark A. Gabriel  
Administrator and CEO

## CUSTOMER **Circuit**

SPRING 2016

WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION  
P.O. Box 281213  
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213  
720-962-7411  
[www.wapa.gov](http://www.wapa.gov)  
email: [mediarelations@wapa.gov](mailto:mediarelations@wapa.gov)

**Editor:** KARA LAMB  
**Graphic Designer:** GRANT KUHN  
**Contributors:**  
RANDY MANION  
KEVON STORIE  
AMBER RODRIGUEZ

