

For Immediate Release

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Central Lincoln Board Signs Contract for Nearly \$10 Million in Federal “Smart Grid” Funds

The Central Lincoln People’s Utility District’s Board of Directors has entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Energy for \$9.9 million in grant funding to improve the electric utility’s services to customers.

Central Lincoln was chosen to receive federal “Smart Grid” funds in a highly-competitive process, and was the only utility in Oregon to be awarded Smart Grid funding, although 100 utility projects nationwide received grants. Central Lincoln had already budgeted about \$10 million for Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI); the federal matching funds will support a larger project that will give customers additional information about their electricity options.

“These funds will help Central Lincoln by improving efficiency, reliability, and customer service. One example is our response when outages occur--the technology investment we make with this federal grant will allow us to track electronically where electricity service is out and where it has been restored,” said Bruce Lovelin, Central Lincoln’s Chief Engineer and Manager of Systems Engineering. “We also know the improvements to our system we’ll be making will allow customers to track their energy usage daily, and to better control how and when they spend their energy dollars.”

Central Lincoln’s Smart Grid initiative has progressed over the past fourteen years with the installation of fiber optic cable throughout the Central Lincoln service area, installation of test meters, and the upgrading of computer systems. The U.S. Department of Energy funding will enable Central Lincoln to accelerate its Smart Grid efforts. “Central Lincoln’s work in this arena has been quite visionary, and we hope this small but innovative utility will serve as a model for other public utilities in the Pacific Northwest,” said Tim Wolf, of a senior consultant with R.W. Beck, a utility engineering and planning firm.

Central Lincoln's application for federal funding received broad support, including U.S. Senators Wyden and Merkley, U.S. Representative Kurt Schrader, Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski, the Oregon Department of Energy, State Senator Joanne Verger, Representative Jean Cowan, Lincoln County's three commissioners, many mayors in the Central Lincoln service district, and others.

"We are very grateful to everyone who gave us support in our application effort," said Lovelin. "Our federal funding contract is for three years, and we will be working hard to use the funds in ways that will deliver strong value to our customers."

The Central Lincoln People's Utility District is Oregon's fourth-largest electric utility, serving some 700 square miles and approximately 81,000 people in portions of Douglas, Coos, Lane, and Lincoln counties. Central Lincoln is not-for-profit, and is publicly-owned, meaning it was created by voters to serve the public.

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