

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Albertans set another record demand for electricity

CALGARY, ALBERTA (January 16, 2012) – For the second time this week, Alberta’s demand for electricity reached a record all-time high of 10,609 MW, breaking the 10,315 MW record set yesterday, January 15, 2012.

“The current cold front, combined with overall provincial growth in demand for electricity, are factors contributing to the record high levels occurring this week,” says John Esaiw, Director of Forecasting for the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO).

Alberta’s demand grew 2.6 percent in 2011, continuing the strong growth trend seen in the previous year. Increased demand in major urban centres such as Calgary and Edmonton, and oilsands demand growth in northeastern Alberta were the primary contributors to this growth.

“Simply put, the transmission capacity has not kept pace with combined load and generation development in Alberta,” says Esaiw. “We need to have that transmission infrastructure in place ahead of our growing demand for electricity to ensure that investment, market access and economic development are not compromised.”

The AESO’s forecasts indicate that over the next 20 years, more than 11,000 MW of new generation is needed to replace retiring generation plants that reach the end of their operating lives as well as keep up with anticipated load growth. In Alberta, because generation resources are often located far from where the demand is, we depend on transmission lines to carry electricity from where it is produced to where it is needed.

Forecasting and planning Alberta’s electricity grid is an ongoing process and changes in economics, industrial projects and customer connection requests are continuously monitored to assess their impact on provincial forecasts and impact to the transmission system. The AESO’s system controllers monitor the electricity grid 24 hours per day, seven days per week, working collaboratively with transmission facility owners and power generation owners to ensure that even during times of high demand, contingency plans are in place and reserves are available to meet the electricity demands of all Albertans.

Albertans can help reduce the demand on the electricity system by:

- Running major appliances (washers, dryers, dishwashers) during off-peak hours (after 7 p.m.)
- Turning off unnecessary lights
- Turning off non-essential electrical appliances
- Connecting a timer to a vehicle’s block heater

To view current supply and demand on Alberta’s electricity grid, updated hourly on the AESO’s website, visit the following link: http://ets.aeso.ca/ets_web/ip/Market/Reports/CSDReportServlet.

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For more information

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As an independent system operator, the AESO leads the safe, reliable and economic planning and operation of Alberta's interconnected power system. The AESO also facilitates Alberta's fair, efficient and openly competitive wholesale electricity market, which in 2010 had about 175 participants and approximately \$5 billion in annual energy transactions.