JAMESTOWN bpu BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

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NEWS RELEASE: for immediate release

Members of the Board of Public Utilities learned at their Tuesday Board meeting the tremendous impact the recent upgrade of the electric system has had on BPU customers.

Wally Haase, BPU General Manager, gave the Board a complete report of an outage that occurred Tuesday, December 3.

At approximately 6:30 AM, the entire electric generation station tripped offline as a result of a problem with the coal delivery system to #9 boiler which caused the boiler to shut down. A domino effect then occurred with #5 turbine generator tripping offline, then boilers #10 and #12 tripped, causing #6 turbine generator and thus the entire BPU generating station was at a standstill.

The BPU upgraded its electric system as part of the $40 million Gas Turbine Project and installed two new 35 kV tie lines as well as two new transformers (T8 and T9) and has transferred half of the distribution circuits from the old 13.8kV bus to the new 13.8kV plant. Without these important improvements to the electric system in place, this December 3rd occurrence would have resulted in a widespread power outage.

Before the recent system upgrade, the loss of generation supporting the plant 13.8 kV distribution bus (an average 40 megawatts load), would have caused the overload and subsequent trip of the old 13.8kV tie lines between the Dow Street substation and the plant bus. The old tie lines were not rated to support the entire generating station load and power plant generation had to be maintained at all times to keep that bus operating.

Under the old system, this outage would have caused a significant loss of power to English, Huxley, Newland, Regent, Jones, Washington and Steele Substations effecting approximately 12,000 to 13,000 customers in Celoron, downtown Jamestown, and the commercial and industrial customers in the vicinity of Fairmount Avenue. Due to the nature of the Samuel Carlson Generating Station, it takes substantial time to restore the plant to full generating capacity. In about two hours, power would have been restored to about one-third of the affected customers. After an additional two hours, the second third of the customers would have had their power restored and finally, the remainder would have power after approximately six hours. Because of the length of the outage and the nature of the weather conditions on that day, the customers in the affected areas would have experienced rolling blackouts until all BPU generation could be restored. Instead, because of the BPU electric system improvements completed over the past two years, this generation outage was invisible to BPU customers.

Haase explained to the Board that, "The completion of these projects has greatly improved the quality and reliability of service the BPU provides to its customers. A six-hour outage on a frigid day would have had tremendous ramifications on our community. Schools and businesses would have been closed and it would have been most uncomfortable for the very young, the infirm and the elderly to withstand rolling blackouts as power was being restored. We are now reaping the benefits of the foresight of the Board members and leaders who supported this very expensive upgrade to the electric system enabling the Board of Public Utilities to offer our customers the best in system reliability."