DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE: LODI ENERGY CENTER POWERS UP
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Dateline: August 2012, Lodi, California. This month is indeed a monumental one in the history of your community-owned electric utility. Joining Lodi Electric Utility are twelve other public entities (please see list below) for the dedication of the Lodi Energy Center (LEC).

This state-of-the-art power plant – constructed on City of Lodi property – features “fast-start” gas turbine technology, which increases the power plant’s efficiency and makes it one of the cleanest gas-fired generation facilities in the country. This ability to cycle up and down more readily allows the LEC to respond to electricity prices. The LEC is expected to run 80 percent of the time, but when less expensive power is available the plant will be able to quickly cycle down, which in turn will provide the Lodi shareholders with the lowest cost energy pricing available. Additional benefits include minimal greenhouse gas emissions and an increased ability to use renewable resources, both mandated by the State of California; the creation of jobs in the Lodi area, including the Helmets to Hardhats Program for our veterans; and additional revenue for the City as the LEC will use Lodi’s wastewater for cooling from the White Slough Water Pollution Control Facility.

The Lodi Energy Center will generate nearly 290 megawatts of electricity, with the citizens and business owners of Lodi receiving roughly 26 megawatts of this power daily. In utility terms, we consider this a reliable and continuous flow of “base-load” electricity, providing an affordable and stable price for years to come. The Lodi Energy Center is adjacent to the City’s White Slough facility at Highway 12 and Interstate 5.

The other partners involved in the Lodi Energy Center include: City of Azusa, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), City of Biggs, California Department of Water Resources (CDWR), City of Gridley, City of Healdsburg, City of Lompoc, Modesto Irrigation District, Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative, Power and Water Resources Pooling Agency (PWPRPA), Silicon Valley Power (City of San Jose), and City of Ukiah.

NEW BUILDING EFFICIENCY STANDARDS ARE COMING SOON

The California Energy Commission, the state agency charged with promoting, implementing, and enforcing energy efficiency, recently unveiled new building efficiency standards.

Effective January 2014, all new residential structures built in California must be 25% more efficient than current building standards; meanwhile, commercial new construction standards must be 30% more efficient than current guidelines.

For residential properties, builders will be required to outfit new homes with solar ready roofs, more efficient windows, whole house fans, insulated hot water pipes, and more. Nonresidential structures must have solar ready roofs commencing in January 2014, as well as high performance windows that maximize day-lighting or “free” lighting, cool roof technologies, and other energy efficiency measures.

Although the new building efficiency standards will increase the price of a new home (estimates place the added cost at roughly $2,300 per new home), energy efficiency professionals estimate monthly utility savings of close to $30 per month.

Compared to the current building efficiency standards, referred to as the 2008 standards, the new 2014 regulations will lead to 25% less energy use for heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, and water heating for residential and nonresidential buildings in California.