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Technology for the Big Picture: Energy Efficiency Plays It Forward
NEEA, Northwest utilities, retailers promote super energy-efficient electronics

(Portland, OR) — As consumer purchases trend toward bigger and better electronics — devices that can be huge energy users — the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA) is partnering with Northwest utilities and select retailers to promote technologically advanced televisions, desktop computers and monitors that also are especially energy efficient.

Beginning October 2010, “Energy Forward” becomes a new retail mantra. Participating retailers will display a bright orange button guiding shoppers to electronics that are among the best made today — and that also are at least 30 percent more energy-efficient than the basic ENERGY STAR specification.

Consumers can find the most energy-efficient electronics throughout the Northwest, at quality retailers including Sears, Wal-Mart, Costco, Kmart, Sam’s Club and a range of regional and independent retailers.

New research on consumer electronics preferences conducted by NEEA reinforces the notion that when it comes to high-end electronics purchases, shoppers want the latest and best technology for the money. Performance comes first. The good news for organizations like NEEA and the utilities, which are actively working to promote energy savings, is that performance and efficiency go hand in hand.

“This year, shoppers will see an entirely new generation of electronics — all engineered to use much less energy,” said Karen Austin, president of consumer electronics for Sears Holdings. “The ‘Energy Forward’ message tells customers in the market for a new television that the newer, most technologically advanced products can also save hundreds of dollars in energy costs over the life of the television.”

Television use alone in the Northwest consumes nearly 3.7 billion kilowatt hours of energy each year, according to estimates from the Northwest Power and Conservation Council. And that use is growing exponentially. The International Energy Agency estimates that consumer electronics represent 15 percent of worldwide home power demand — with television use a major portion of that. The agency estimates that without major changes, that percentage is expected to triple by 2030.

“If all consumers in the Pacific Northwest purchased these Energy Forward TVs over other models, we could save enough electricity to power all the homes in Seattle and Spokane for one year,” said Stephanie Fleming, senior manager of NEEA’s residential sector. “Northwest consumers would save an estimated \$60 million in annual energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of removing 60,000 cars from the road.”

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More information on “Energy Forward,” including a list of retailers and a complete list of super energy-efficient consumer electronics, is available at www.energyefficientelectronics.org. You can also follow Energy Forward and join in the conversation at twitter.com/energy_forward.

About NEEA: The Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance is a non-profit organization working to maximize energy efficiency to meet our future energy needs. NEEA is supported by and works in collaboration with Bonneville Power Administration, Energy Trust of Oregon and more than 100 Northwest utilities on behalf of more than 12 million energy consumers. NEEA uses the market power of the region to accelerate the innovation and adoption of energy-efficient products, services and practices. Since its inception in 1997, NEEA initiatives have saved enough energy to power more than 450,000 homes each year. Energy efficiency can satisfy more than half of our new demand for energy, saving us money, and keeping the Northwest a healthy and vibrant place to live. For more information, visit neea.org.

About ENERGY STAR: ENERGY STAR is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that helps consumers and businesses save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.

The ENERGY STAR label is now on major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics, and more. EPA has also extended the label to cover new homes and commercial and industrial buildings. ENERGY STAR saved business, organizations and consumers \$17 billion in energy savings in 2009 alone.

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Interviews with retailer and utility representatives, along with retail signage graphics, are available upon request.