

## **Montana Renewable Energy Standard: Progress Made and Remaining Opportunities**

The Renewable Northwest Project (RNP) initiated an analysis in 2008 to estimate progress made towards achievement of the Montana Renewable Energy Standard (RES) benchmarks. The first Montana benchmark, 5% by 2008-2009, has already been achieved; additional renewable energy acquisitions are needed for subsequent compliance years. The following summarizes RNP's primary findings.<sup>1</sup>

### **Montana**

Montana enacted an RPS in 2005 which sets the following targets for public utilities and competitive energy suppliers:

- 5% for 2008 - 2009
- 10% for 2010 – 2014
- 15% for 2015 and beyond.

For purposes of this analysis, RNP focused only on compliance by NorthWestern Energy.

NorthWestern has a compliance surplus for the first target year, 2008. For the subsequent benchmarks, by 2010 NorthWestern needs an additional 20 MWA and within the next seven years needs another 61 MWA.

### **References**

“2007 Electric Default Supply Resource Procurement Plan.” NorthWestern Energy (12/07).  
Communications with NorthWestern Energy staff (12/12/08).

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<sup>1</sup> RNP gathered data about utilities' renewable energy acquisitions (existing or planned), load, and load growth forecasts, all drawn largely from public sources such as integrated resource plans, utility websites, press releases, the Energy Information Administration, and the Bonneville Power Administration. This data was used to calculate renewable energy needs for RES compliance and then compared with known acquisitions. RNP provided each utility studied with a copy of the draft results for their review and feedback. RNP updated its analysis based on utility input received. Utility involvement, however, does not represent endorsement of RNP's analysis and some utilities chose not to respond with any feedback. Further, RNP recognizes that utility plans change and evolve over time, so this analysis is a snapshot in time based on the best available data and only an estimate of what may come to pass.