



Avista boosts public safety with enhanced Wildfire Resiliency Plan

06/29/20

SPOKANE, Wash., June 29, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Avista is implementing additional measures to enhance its ability to mitigate the potential for, and impact of, wildfires within its service territories. Building on prevention and response strategies that have been in place many years, the Company has committed to a new comprehensive 10-year Wildfire Resiliency Plan that includes improved defense strategies and operating practices for a more resilient system.

"Avista has a long history of proactively adopting industry-best practices to manage wildfire risks, which is why we've again taken it upon ourselves to identify new tools and measures to better protect the people and communities we serve," said Dennis Vermillion, Avista president and CEO. "While power-line infrastructure is but one of numerous potential causes for wildfires, we're committed to reducing risks by doing our part and helping others to do theirs."

Avista spent the last year developing its Wildfire Resiliency Plan through a series of internal workshops, industry research and engagement with state and local fire agencies. The Company took a comprehensive look at its existing wildfire defenses and considered each tactic individually to determine if it could be expanded or improved upon. Improvements to infrastructure and operational practices were identified as key components to the plan.

The formalized plan emphasizes continued collaboration with land-management and fire-response agencies. It promotes increased public and worker safety as well as protection of physical assets and property. It also identifies measures to further minimize service disruptions caused by wildfires and other extreme weather events.

The plan's recommendations are focused in key areas:

Grid Hardening – Infrastructure will be replaced and/or strengthened (especially in fire-prone areas) with fire-resilient materials such as steel vs. wood poles and the addition of fiberglass cross-arms to better protect electrical equipment and reduce the likelihood of spark-ignition sources. Power-line inspections will also be enhanced with aerial surveys.

Vegetation Management – Oversight of fire-prone areas will be increased to further reduce contact between vegetation and power lines. More frequent inspections will include the use of aerial surveys to identify tree/vegetation encroachments that require follow up work.

Situational Awareness – Operational decisions will be improved by leveraging current systems to better monitor and control the grid. Dashboard technology will be developed to enhance fire-risk assessment through weather forecasting. Fire-risk near more densely populated areas will be prioritized.

Operations and Emergency Response – The potential for wildfires will be decreased during severe conditions by physically patrolling outage areas prior to re-energizing distribution lines to mitigate the risk of sparks. Advanced training and simulation will also be initiated to better prepare Avista personnel to work with fire professionals during wildfires.

Worker and Public Safety – Partnerships with emergency first responders will be enhanced by incorporating designated Avista personnel into the Incident Command System. Calls to 911 will also be initiated by Avista when transmission-line disruptions occur during fire season to help firefighters more quickly check and extinguish possible fires. In addition, Avista's 550 electric-line workers will receive training in working with fire responders.

More information about Avista's Wildfire Resiliency Plan can be found at myavista.com/wildfire.

About Avista Utilities

Avista Utilities is involved in the production, transmission and distribution of energy. We provide energy services and electricity to 393,000 customers and natural gas to 361,000 customers in a service territory that covers 30,000 square miles in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and parts of southern and eastern Oregon, with a population of 1.7 million. Avista Utilities is an operating division of [Avista Corp.](https://www.avista.com) (NYSE: AVA). For more information, please visit www.myavista.com.

The Avista logo is a trademark of Avista Corporation.

To unsubscribe from Avista's news release distribution, send a reply message to lena.funston@avistacorp.com

Contact:

Annie Gannon, communications manager, annie.gannon@avistacorp.com
Avista 24/7 Media Access 509-495-4174



Source: Avista Corporation