

SMUD expands its control area

Early on Dec. 1, the transmission control area in California operated by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) incorporated the California-Oregon Transmission Project (COTP) and the Modesto Irrigation District systems. These additions interconnect SMUD's control area with a control area operated by the Bonneville Power Administration just north of the California-Oregon border and the Turlock Irrigation District's control area to the south.

A control area performs a balancing function in which customer usage and resources are matched on a moment-by-moment basis. In addition, a control area operates the transmission system, monitoring power lines to ensure they are operated within the reliable limits of the system in addition to coordinating the operation with neighboring control areas.

These additions complete the second part of a two-phase project in which the Western Area Power Administration Sierra-Nevada Region (WASN) system was incorporated earlier this year. The SMUD control area also has several ties with the California Independent System Operator.

The COTP and WASN systems were incorporated into the SMUD area following a long public process and months of preparation. As part of the public process, WASN needed to develop a replacement after the termination of a long-term operating arrangement with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. In the end, the SMUD control area was selected as the entity to best meet WASN needs. The COTP was incorporated at the request of the Transmission Agency of Northern California.