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New England's Electricity Use Sets New All-Time Record

Holyoke, MA—July 18, 2006—New England's electricity use set a new all-time record today, according to ISO New England Inc., the operator of the region's bulk power system and wholesale electricity markets. Preliminary data collected by the ISO shows that electricity use reached 27,374 megawatts (MW), surpassing the previously established record of 26,885 MW, which was set on July 27, 2005.

"Temperatures in the mid-90s and high humidity combined to drive electricity use to record levels," said Stephen G. Whitley, ISO New England's Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "Despite the new record, power supplies were adequate to meet consumers' electricity needs throughout the day, and the regional power system operated reliably."

ISO New England did not have to employ special measures or issue public calls for conservation to keep supply and demand in balance.

"Given the demands record breaking electricity use placed on the region's power grid, the diligent work by New England's power industry played an important role in maintaining reliability," said Whitley.

Whitley said there should be enough power available to meet demand for the rest of the week as temperatures are expected to moderate—unless there are unexpected outages of power plants or transmission lines. Should power system problems occur, ISO New England has a series of longstanding operating measures to help maintain reliability.

Today's record-breaking demand highlights the close linkage between hot weather, air conditioning use, and electricity demand. Nine of the top 10 highest demand days occurred in 2005 and 2006, according to ISO New England records.

While electricity use continues to grow, supply has remained stagnant. Between 2004 and 2006, peak demand grew from just over 24,000 MW to more than 27,000 MW, while power supplies increased minimally. Without new resources, New England will face an increased reliance on emergency actions to balance supply and demand as early as 2007.

"Maintaining a reliable power system in the face of growing electricity demand requires comprehensive regional solutions that include investment in new, diverse sources of electricity, improvements to the transmission system, and additional demand response and energy efficiency throughout the region," Whitley said.