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## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS AT WESTAR ENERGY'S LAWRENCE ENERGY CENTER TO FURTHER REDUCE EMISSIONS**

### **Improvements will enhance existing emission reduction equipment.**

TOPEKA, Kan., May 20, 2009 — Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE:WR) today announced it is constructing two new fabric filtration systems and upgrading other air emission control equipment at its Lawrence Energy Center (LEC), a coal-fired power plant located near Lawrence, Kan. Westar is installing fabric filtration systems on generating units 4 and 5, plus rebuilding the sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) scrubber systems on those units. Westar is also enhancing the burner systems on units 3, 4 and 5. These upgrades will help further reduce emissions of particulate matter, SO<sub>2</sub>, nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) and mercury. In addition, Westar will rebuild the existing electrostatic precipitator on unit 3.

A fabric filtration system, also known as a baghouse, is an enclosure with thousands of suspended fabric filter bags that collect particulates as the flue gas runs up through it. Electrostatic precipitators use an electrostatic charge to remove particulates from flue gas. Scrubber systems use a water and limestone mixture to remove most of the SO<sub>2</sub> from flue gas. Enhancements to the burner systems improve combustion efficiency to lower NO<sub>x</sub> from the flue gas.

“Upgrades at the Lawrence Energy Center are just one more step in our effort to make all of our plants even cleaner while allowing us to continue to meet our customers’ energy needs,” said Doug Sterbenz, executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Engineering is under way and construction on the modifications should begin in 2010 and the systems are expected to be operational by no later than 2013. At its peak, construction is expected to create 350 jobs. The projects are estimated to cost \$370 - \$380 million. These investments are eligible to be recovered in our retail rates through our Environmental Cost Recovery Rider.

While traffic around the plant will increase during construction, Westar believes the impact to the local region will be positive. In addition to job creation, local commerce will improve due to material purchases, meals and lodging. In the long term, the county tax base will grow.

Lawrence Energy Center has a long history of environmental stewardship. The first SO<sub>2</sub> scrubber in the United States was installed on Lawrence Unit 4 and it became operational in 1968.

The first SO<sub>2</sub> scrubber in the United States to be installed as original equipment on a fossil fuel generating unit was on Lawrence Unit 5 in 1971.

And in 1987, the first low nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) burner in the world was installed as a retro-fit on Lawrence Unit 5. This technology lowered NO<sub>x</sub> emissions through more efficient mixing of fuel and air.

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Attached: Preliminary 3D model of LEC unit 5 fabric filter layout

Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to about 679,000 customers in the state. Westar Energy has about 6,800 megawatts of electric generation capacity and operates and coordinates more than 35,000 miles of electric distribution and transmission lines.

For more information about Westar Energy, visit us on the Internet at <http://www.WestarEnergy.com>.

Forward-looking statements may include words like “believe,” “anticipate,” “target,” “expect,” “pro forma,” “estimate,” “intend,” “guidance” or words of similar meaning. Forward-looking statements describe future plans, objectives, expectations or goals. Although Westar Energy believes that its expectations are based on reasonable assumptions, all forward-looking statements involve risk and uncertainty. Therefore, actual results could vary materially from what we expect. Please review our Form 10-K for the period ended Dec. 31, 2008 and our Form 10-Q for the period ended Mar. 31, 2009 for important risk factors that could cause results to differ materially from those in any such forward-looking statements. Any forward-looking statement speaks only as of the date such statement was made, and the company does not undertake any obligation to update any forward-looking statement to reflect events or circumstances after the date on which such statement was made except as required by applicable laws or regulations.

# Preliminary model of LEC Unit 5 fabric filter layout

