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**\*PHOTO OPPORTUNITY\***

**WESTAR ENERGY CELEBRATES EMPORIA ENERGY CENTER'S  
COMPLETION WITH OPEN HOUSE MAY 5**

Topeka, Kan., May 1, 2009 – Westar Energy will conduct an open house at its new Emporia Energy Center on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, starting at 11:30 a.m. The energy center, which was constructed in two phases, recently completed Phase II construction.

Neighbors to the plant and state and local leaders have been invited to attend the open house. Media is welcome to attend and stay for lunch, catered by Bobby D's BBQ of Emporia. Guided tours of the plant will be available.

The Emporia Energy Center, a 665 megawatt natural gas-fired combustion turbine peaking power plant, is located about six miles northeast of Emporia. Emporia was one of 29 communities that expressed an interest in hosting the plant.

Phase I of the energy center began generating energy to meet customer needs when it was completed in June 2008. Phase II was completed in late February 2009, about two months earlier than anticipated. Total cost of the project was about \$308 million, about \$10 million less than originally projected.

“By bringing the plant in ahead of schedule and under budget, coupled with its higher-than-planned megawatt performance capability, Emporia Energy Center has come in at a cost per kilowatt 11 percent better than anticipated,” said Greg Greenwood, Westar Energy vice president, generation construction.

As a “peaking plant,” Emporia Energy Center is intended to operate during Westar Energy’s highest customer demand conditions, primarily on hot summer days. It is one component of the diverse capital investments Westar Energy is making to meet its customers’ needs. The portfolio of capital projects includes environmental upgrades at its existing power plants, an expanded transmission network to serve Kansas and the region well into future decades, the largest wind energy program in Kansas and energy efficiency initiatives.

**Directions to the plant site:** I-35 to Exit 138, Road U (east of Emporia). Go north on Road U about 2.5 miles to Road 200. Turn west on Road 200 and proceed about 1.1 miles to the Emporia Energy Center site. Parking is available on the drive east of the plant site.

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Attached: Three (3) photos and Open House Program

Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest consolidated electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to more than 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>.