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**WESTAR ENERGY FILES LETTER OF INTENT
TO APPLY FOR SMART GRID FUNDING**

TOPEKA, Kan., July 16, 2009 — Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE:WR) Westar Energy today announced it has filed a letter of intent to apply for matching funds available under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) Smart Grid Investment Grant (SGIG) program.

The ARRA was signed into law on February 17, 2009 by President Obama. On June 25 U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced the availability of approximately \$3.3 billion in stimulus funding opportunities under the SGIG program. The Department of Energy placed a deadline of July 16 for potential applicants to file a letter of intent indicating interest in the program.

The Westar letter of intent is non-binding and will allow further exploration of the grant opportunity by the company. The letter precedes the application for funding opportunity review which is anticipated later in July. Westar anticipates seeking approximately \$20 million in federal funds from the SGIG program. This funding would allow the company to begin to implement a smart grid infrastructure in its service territory and would offset some of the cost to customers for that project.

More information will be released as the Westar application progresses. The ARRA program in whole can be reviewed and activity tracked at www.recovery.gov.

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Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest consolidated electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to more than 681,000 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>.