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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY SELECTS WESTAR ENERGY'S
SMART GRID APPLICATION**

DOE, Westar now enter award negotiations

TOPEKA, Kan., Oct. 27, 2009 — Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE:WR) today announced that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has selected Westar for award negotiations for funding under the Smart Grid Investment Grant program. Westar and DOE will now move forward to determine what funding, based on the result of negotiations, the company is eligible for under the terms of the program. Westar applied to DOE on August 5 for the maximum 50% program match for its \$39.3M smart grid project. The selection notice indicates Westar will be eligible for slightly more than \$19 million. Westar's selection comes following a highly competitive review process for a share of the approximately \$3.4 billion made available to utilities under the program.

DOE's notification to Westar explained that the agency will provide questions and comments on the application to define the areas that need clarification to complete the award. When the review is complete, the DOE will inform Westar of the final amount of the award. This process is expected to take up to 90 days to complete.

If approved for funding, Westar could move forward with development of a smart grid

concept town in Lawrence, Kansas. Called “SmartStar Lawrence,” the project will include installation of about 48,000 “smart” meters. The project is estimated to cost about \$39.3 million. Once underway, it should take between 24 and 36 months to implement.

“We are pleased that we've passed the initial screen and look forward to working with the Department of Energy on the next steps,” said Bill Moore, president and chief executive officer. “We will discuss in much greater detail our SmartStar Lawrence initiative with our DOE partners. We look forward to a very constructive effort with DOE in the next few months.”

Smart grid technology is a state-of-the-art approach to managing electricity systems. In the event of a power outage, for example, Westar will more easily determine the cause and restore power more quickly. Customers with smart meters and internet access will be able to daily monitor how much electricity they use and how much it costs. DOE funding would allow Westar to implement the computer infrastructure necessary to eventually support smart meters throughout the company’s entire service territory.

Moore said, “Smart grid technology is an important part of the energy future for our customers and our company. We can learn a lot from our experience with SmartStar Lawrence.”

For more information on SmartStar Lawrence, please visit www.WestarEnergy.com.

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Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE: WR) is the largest electric utility in Kansas, providing electric service to about 684,000 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>.