



Media contact:
Leonard Allen,
sr communications representative
Phone: 785.575.8444
leonard.allen@WestarEnergy.com

Investor contact:
Bruce Burns,
director, investor relations
Phone: 785.575.8227
bruce.burns@WestarEnergy.com

**NATIONAL MAGAZINE NAMES NEW WESTAR ENERGY POWER PLANT
FINALIST FOR “PROJECT OF THE YEAR”**

Emporia Energy Center Up for Best Gas-fired Project Award

TOPEKA, Kan., Oct. 8, 2009 — Westar Energy, Inc. (NYSE:WR) today announced that the editors of Power Engineering magazine and PennWell Corp. have named Westar’s new Emporia Energy Center a finalist for the magazine’s “Project of the Year” award.

Power Engineering magazine annually names three finalists in each of four categories: Best Coal-fired Project, Best Gas-fired Project, Best Nuclear Project and Best Renewable/Sustainable Project. Emporia Energy Center is a finalist for Best Gas-fired Project. The other two finalists in the category are the Gissi combined-cycle plant in Italy, owned by Abruzzoenergia, and the Gateway Generating Station in California, owned by Pacific Gas & Electric. The winners in each category will be announced December 7.

“Emporia Energy Center has been a great addition to Westar’s fleet of generating plants and an essential component of our Comprehensive Energy Plan,” said Bill Moore, president and chief executive officer. “Along with our three wind farms, energy efficiency programs and our high-performing coal, nuclear and other natural gas plants, our Emporia Energy Center is helping Westar meet customer demand at low cost and with a high degree of reliability.”

Emporia Energy Center was designed as a natural gas peaking plant intended to operate during periods of highest customer demand, primarily on hot summer days, and to be flexible enough to help Westar’s system address variable wind energy conditions. The second and final phase went into operation in late February 2009, two months ahead of schedule and \$13.4 million under budget. The plant is rated at 665 megawatts, enough to power 400,000 Kansas homes.

“That the plant has higher production capability than expected, coupled with bringing the project in under budget, means that our installed cost per kilowatt was 12 percent lower than planned,” said Greg Greenwood, Westar’s vice president of generation construction.

Black and Veatch provided engineering and construction services for the project.

Emporia Energy Center operates with the most efficient combustion turbines available today (four GE LM6000 aero derivative units and three GE 7FA units). Natural gas supplies come from this region. That includes reclaimed landfill gas that might otherwise be wasted, staying consistent with Westar’s long-standing commitment to be a good steward of the environment.

“Black and Veatch and GE are tremendous partners in these projects and contributed significantly to the success of the project,” Greenwood said.

Power Engineering magazine covers the electric utility industry. PennWell Corp. is an energy marketing and publication company based in Tulsa, OK. The magazine’s Best Coal-fired Project finalists are in Kentucky, Omaha and Springfield, Ill. There are two Best Nuclear Project finalists in Mississippi and one in California. Best Renewable/Sustainable Project finalists are in Minnesota and two in California.

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>.