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News Release



Number: 06-038

Date: Oct. 6, 2006

End-of-year project ensures Fort Wainwright's power plant ready for winter

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The end of the fiscal year may not be the best time to get tasked with a rush project, but through teamwork and cooperation, it's not impossible to make it happen.

Fort Wainwright, Alaska, needed large scale maintenance to its switchgear and breaker system at the power plant and provision of a backup power source for the power plant before winter began. The Installation Management Agency contacted the Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville, Ala., to manage the project.

Work started on the \$409,000 project in June with a deadline to have the maintenance completed by Oct. 1 – before winter set in. The October 1 deadline was critical because of the possibility of an electricity shortage due to one of the steam turbine generators being out of service this winter.

“The project went smoothly,” said Pat Driscoll, the chief of Utilities for Public Works at Fort Wainwright. “The Huntsville Center was wonderful to work with; I was impressed with the professionalism displayed by John (Trudell) and Mark (Allen).”

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be repaired quickly,” Trudell said. Maintenance and repairs had been made only as necessary to keep the system operational.

“These breakers and relays had been originally built in the 1950s, so we had to make sure they operated properly and that Fort Wainwright had extra breakers on hand in case they needed them,” Trudell said. “We rebuilt the ones in the plant and got some spares of the same vintage from Eielson Air Force Base (Alaska).”

Golden Valley Electric Association, the local utility company, was an integral part of this effort, moving quickly to put in an emergency transformer and feeder to provide backup power for the post, Trudell said.

With this maintenance completed and tested, the power plant at Fort Wainwright is ready for winter.



PHOTO CAPTION: Huntsville Center managed the \$409,000, four-month project to overhaul the breakers, left, and the Switch Gears, cabinets on the right, before the Oct. 1 deadline. Photo by Brad O'Banion, Ameresco Solutions Inc.