

For Immediate Release:

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Heat Wave Drives Record Electricity Usage in New York

Rensselaer, N.Y.— Breaking a record set in 2006, the sixth day of a persistent heat wave produced record demand for electricity across New York on Friday, the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) announced today.

Between 3 and 4 p.m. today, the NYISO recorded an hourly average peak load of 33,955 megawatts (MW), surpassing the previous record of 33,939 MW set on August 2, 2006. It is possible that demand could continue to rise and the record peak load could change later today.

“Due to the superb teamwork and coordination of New York’s transmission owning utilities, electric generating companies, demand response resources, energy services providers and government agencies, we have successfully met record-high electric demand with sustained reliable operation of the bulk electric system,” said NYISO President and CEO Stephen G. Whitley.

Throughout the record-setting week, unprecedented levels of generator availability were experienced with every bulk power-producing asset within New York state in operation. “This is truly one of the great success stories of New York’s competitive energy markets,” said Mr. Whitley. “With the correct market signals, we are seeing much greater levels of asset availability and performance.”

Managing electricity supply is only part of the equation. The NYISO’s demand response programs that compensate large energy users to reduce their consumption in peak demand periods are another key to successfully managing record energy demand. Combined with statewide calls for voluntary reductions from the governor and local requests from utilities and power authorities, the NYISO has more than 1,200 MW of demand response resources to help manage demand during the highest demand periods. The programs were deployed to relieve the historically congested areas of the lower Hudson Valley and southeastern New York every day this week and were activated statewide on Thursday and Friday.

“As a direct result of numerous initiatives to enhance regional, cross-border collaboration, we experienced significantly improved communications and operational coordination with our neighboring control areas to keep the power flowing,” Whitley said.

The daily peak loads recorded in New York this week were 32,703 MW (Monday, July 15), 32,223 MW (Tuesday, July 16), 33,254 MW (Wednesday, July 17) and 33,450 MW (Thursday, July 18).

Peak loads are measurements of the average total electric demand by consumers for a one-hour period. One megawatt of electricity is enough to power between 800 and 1,000 homes. Peak demand usually occurs in the late afternoon in winter and summer. In summer, usage climbs each day during a heat wave causing the load to grow every day over the course of the heat wave. During these periods, as throughout the year, the NYISO works with power plants and transmission-owning utilities to maintain reliable service to consumers.

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The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) is a not-for-profit corporation responsible for operating the state’s bulk electricity grid, administering New York’s competitive wholesale electricity markets, conducting comprehensive long-term planning for the state’s electric power system, and advancing the technological infrastructure of the electric system serving the Empire State.

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