



## Empowering Workers to Compete and Excel

*City Light crews are now repairing and upgrading turbines at Boundary Dam*

When electric utilities typically inventory their assets, they count power plants, generators, substations, and miles of wire. At City Light, our most important asset is the skill, dedication, and loyalty of more than 1,700 employees. Each makes a vital contribution to accomplishing City Light's mission, and together they constitute a competitive advantage for efficiency and innovation unmatched by any other utility in the nation.

This remarkable team mastered multiple challenges in 1999, including \$14.5 million in upgrades and improved connections within downtown Seattle's distribution network. Customer needs have created skyrocketing energy loads, requiring additional total capacity in excess of 40 MVA, or four times previous averages. This ongoing, complex effort takes careful coordination by City Light, other utilities, private contractors, and customers, and it is essential to maintaining Seattle's leadership in the new global economy.

### **Focus:** Throwing the First Switch

*In 1999, City Light engineers and electricians completed one of the most daunting — and unusual — assignments in the utility's history by running power to Safeco Field. The new home of the Seattle Mariners American League baseball team posed a near-impossible deadline and a host of complexities in bringing electricity to the giant stadium with its massive, rail-mounted retractable roof, located between downtown and the city's main industrial tract. City Light worked closely with the Public Facilities District, the stadium's builder, to deliver electricity on time and on budget for the Mariner's first game in their new stadium on July 15.*



The foundation of City Light's historical ability to generate and deliver low-cost power was laid 80 years ago with farsighted public investments in developing the Skagit River's hydroelectric potential. Protecting these assets is now crucial to our continued success in the 21st century. City Light workers recently completed the last of a major cycle of upgrades at the Gorge, Ross, and Diablo dams on the Skagit, and also undertook to



“design and build” major turbine and generator improvements at the Boundary Dam in Northeast Washington state (see Focus).

One of City Light’s more public successes of 1999 was its effort to address the so-called “Y2K bug.” City Light took the remote potential for computer malfunctions seriously, but it also saw Y2K as an opportunity to upgrade and strengthen essential information and control systems. City Light not only experienced no computer breakdowns over New Year’s, it entered 2000 with more efficient systems in place and with higher customer confidence in the reliability of its services.

### *Serving Customers New and Old*

Deregulation remains one of City Light’s most fundamental challenges, and we continue to demonstrate that a public utility can meet — and beat — the competition. In 1999, City Light separated its Power Marketing function from its System Control Center to better focus staff effort. The new marketing unit is located in Key Tower and employs state-of-the-art technology to leverage the utility’s previous energy management investments. With the aid of new talent recruited from the private sector, the Power Marketing Group topped its annual goal, contributing to an increase of \$19 million in net “non-firm” energy sales.

One of City Light’s proudest achievements in 1999 reflects its commitment to both customer convenience and worker development. The newly renovated South Service Center provides consumers with an attractive new environment in which to conduct business and pay bills. It also incorporates modern Apprenticeship Training Labs where workers can gain experience and skills handling live electrical equipment.

As a by-product of such worker training and motivation, City Light has reduced overhead, recruited more experienced employees, and lowered accident rates and insurance costs. Its customers also benefit directly, as demonstrated by City Light crews’ quick response in

restoring power to 20,000 citizen-owners after a wind storm in March 1999. Mother Nature struck again in August with severe lightning storms, including hits in the area of City Light’s Skagit River dams. Vital assets were protected by quick staff action, and line crews worked around the clock to restore power to local homes and businesses.

### **Focus:** Rebuilding Boundary’s Turbines



*Chronic vibration problems have beset City Light’s largest generators since the mid-1980s, when they were installed in a rock cavern adjacent to Boundary Dam in the extreme northeast corner of Washington. When City Light put the huge repair job to bid, its own workers sat down at the local diner and worked out the numbers on napkins. Then they proved to management that they could do the job better — and cheaper — than outside vendors. Boundary Dam crews designed and built massive lathes to smooth turbine rotors and other parts to exacting tolerances, and have so far saved rate payers \$2.5 million. The entire Boundary project is on schedule for completion in 2006, and costs are running one-fourth below the original \$131 million estimate.*

### **Focus:** Heroic Action Saves Lives on the Skagit

*City Light workers on the Skagit were confronted with a different kind of emergency on November 8, 1999, when a heavily loaded dump truck plunged into Diablo Lake. A second truck followed after its driver attempted to save the first man, and both were in imminent danger of drowning. Fortunately, City Light workers Paul Jones, Debbie Abel, and Jeff Martin arrived by boat to rescue the pair and take them to shore. City Light workers Dale Gardner, Lane Dexter, and Sara Dexter administered first aid and conveyed the injured drivers to a paramedic unit for evacuation by helicopter. Both men recovered due to the quick action and life-saving skills of City Light employees.*



Seattle City Light’s System Control Center

