

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Grid-Interactive Electric Water Heaters Become Focus for Peak Load Management Alliance**

(Vallejo, CA, August 12, 2013) The Peak Load Management Alliance (PLMA) has announced that Gary Connett of Great River Energy will lead the formation of PLMA's Grid-Interactive Water Heating Interest Group (GIWH-IG). Grid-interactive water heating is the emerging consensus term describing high-speed, two-way communication between the electric water heating appliance and the electric utility, balancing authority, independent system operator, or aggregation entity. When equipped with a grid-interactive control, a large-capacity, electric thermal storage water heater becomes a "battery" for storing electric energy and has the ability to follow locational marginal prices, better integrate renewable energy, and provide fast regulation service.

"This new PLMA interest group will provide a focused platform for information sharing and market development efforts in order to move grid-interactive water heating technologies from pilot project to market introduction," said PLMA Chairman Paul Tyno of REGEN Energy. "The topic might not be as sexy as electric vehicles or web-enabled thermostats, but PLMA sees a critical market need to significantly and rapidly raise the visibility for this niche opportunity and its potential to deliver energy storage and smart grid optimization."

"The benefits of this important technology aren't well understood, as evidenced by recent Department of Energy efforts to restrict or ban large-capacity electric resistance water heaters," said Connett. "This group will show that electric resistance water heaters can be a very useful tool to optimize energy use and increase efficiency in the home and on the electric grid."

Connett, the PLMA Interest Group Leader, is Director of Demand Side Management and Member Services for Great River Energy, a not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperative which provides wholesale electricity to 28 member distribution cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Those member distribution cooperatives distribute electricity to approximately 650,000 member accounts – or about 1.7 million people.

Great River Energy is a utility leader in peak load management and demand response. The cooperative has more than 352,000 controlled loads in member homes and businesses. Controlling these loads on a hot summer day allows Great River Energy to reduce peak demand by more than 300 megawatts, or 13 percent.

"We are now beginning to explore grid-interactive load management that would allow Great River Energy to better utilize our renewable energy resources and interface with the wholesale energy market. As a leader of this PLMA Interest Group, I intend to share my knowledge and skills to help the organization address the challenges and opportunities in the rapidly changing energy landscape." added Connett.

Connett has been with Great River Energy for nearly 40 years, most of those years working in the areas of demand response and member services. Gary is a recognized leader among electric cooperatives for his demand response and energy efficiency expertise. He currently chairs the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Demand Response and Energy Efficiency Technical Advisory Committee, and sits on the Executive Committee of the Electric Power Research Institute's Energy Utilization Council.

"In the late 80's and early 90's, the electric utility industry assumed a very active role in the initial development of the ground-source heat pump market," observes Steven Koep, Utility Sales Manager with Vaughn Thermal Corporation and a PLMA Board member. "I'm encouraged that PLMA foresees the need for a similar effort in order to bring the economic, environmental and societal benefits of grid-interactive water heating to end-use electric customers."

PLMA Interest Group membership will be restricted to PLMA members, but anyone will be welcome to register and attend the workshop this fall. PLMA membership and workshop registration details are available now at [www.peaklma.org](http://www.peaklma.org).

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**About the Peak Load Management Alliance.** The Peak Load Management Alliance (PLMA) was founded in 1999 as the national voice of demand response practitioners. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to the principles of demand side management, load shaping, and the integration of energy efficiency and demand response. Its membership represents a diverse collection of utilities, curtailment service providers, service and technology companies, industry consultants, and consumers. PLMA strives to be an advocate of critical energy management initiatives – providing a community of expertise within a rapidly changing energy landscape. Details at [www.peaklma.org](http://www.peaklma.org).

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