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PSC TO HOLD HEARING ON MPC'S ELECTRIC RATE  
FOR NEW SILICON PLANT IN BUTTE

The Public Service Commission will hold a public hearing Thursday, October 31, on Montana Power Company's request for approval of a market-based contract electric rate for the polycrystalline silicon plant planned to be built in Butte by Advanced Silicon Materials, Inc.

The hearing will be held Thursday at 9 a.m. in the Bollinger Hearing Room at the PSC, 1701 Prospect Avenue in Helena.

ASiMI chose Butte as the location for its proposed plant, in part, based on electric rates negotiated with MPC. If the PSC approves the ASiMI rates as proposed, ASiMI will begin taking service from the effective date of approval through January 1, 2003. ASiMI and MPC have agreed that the plant's electric power will be supplied at market-based prices and will come from MPC surpluses, until no longer available, at which time MPC will provide ASiMI's power requirements from the market. MPC proposes to treat the net revenues from the ASiMI contract as revenue credits, to be flowed through as a credit or reduction to other customers in future revenue requirement proceedings. According to MPC, the proposed contract will have no adverse future rate effect on MPC's other retail customers.

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