

Corps will be moving large transformer to Libby Dam in May
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Libby – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be moving a 173-ton transformer to Libby Dam in the near future. Libby area residents should be aware of the movement, which will likely take place at night to minimize inconvenience and for safety considerations. The move is tentatively scheduled for May 3 or 7.

The transformer arrived in Seattle by ship in February, was offloaded and loaded on a railcar for shipment to Libby, Mont. It arrived this month and is waiting to be trucked to Libby Dam where it will be placed in the empty 4th transformer bay. The contractor will fill the transformer with oil and reassemble on site, finishing within 30 days.

The transformer was manufactured by Hyundai Heavy Industries, Korea, under a contract awarded in April 2006. The sub-contractor handling the transport to the dam is Omega-Morgan, Tacoma, Wash.

This spare transformer was purchased to meet a requirement of the 2000 and 2006 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinions (BIOP). The 2000 BIOP had a Reasonable and Prudent Alternative (RPA) that called for a spare transformer to be on site.

By design, Libby Dam uses one transformer for each pair of generators. Should one transformer fail, the potential outage affecting two generators would be 18-24 months. Without full powerhouse capacity, the spillway would likely need to be used to pass some flow, with consequent loss of power revenue, and with high dissolved gas concentrations and potential injury to fish. With the new spare transformer on site, the outage from a failed transformer would be minimized, and is expected to be less than two months.

The Bonneville Power Administration agreed to fund four spare transformers for dams in the northwest, including this one for Libby Dam, under the Large-Capital Direct-Funded Program. The funds come from the revenue generated by hydropower dams in the Federal Columbia River Power System and are reinvested into maintenance and reliability. ###