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April 14, 2009
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rocky Mountain Power Foundation grant supports long-term self-sufficiency for Wyoming families

ROCK SPRINGS, Wyo. — The Rocky Mountain Power Foundation has awarded a \$5,000 grant to Wider Opportunities for Women to help support a project aimed at helping residents within several Wyoming communities attain long-term self-sufficiency, including the accumulation of assets necessary to make ends meet.

Wider Opportunities for Women works nationally to build pathways to economic independence for families, women and girls. It offers tools to policymakers, employers and families to help these individuals build economic security within and across generations. To assess and better align social, economic and workforce development policy and practice within Wyoming communities, Wider Opportunities for Women will be working in collaboration with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Wyoming Department of Workforce Services is a national leader in defining risks and opportunities, addressing local issues of global change, and helping stakeholders across the country in business, government, education, economic development, human services and philanthropy find ways to adapt and thrive.

“It is important for families to be given the opportunity and resources to become self-sufficient. It is good for the family unit, the community and the health of our nation’s economy,” said Craig Nelson, Rocky Mountain Power customer and community manager. “This program is essential, especially given the nation’s current economic status.”

“We appreciate the support of the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation,” said Joan Kuriansky, executive director of Wider Opportunities for Women. “The foundation grant will help us identify innovative strategies that employers, city leaders and individuals can take to help Wyoming families make ends meet in these trying times.”

As part of the program, Wider Opportunities for Women will keep track of a select number of low-income workers to measure change in key areas that can influence success. These areas include adult participation in education and training, wage increases over multiple years relative to the cost of living in their communities, accumulation of defined percentage of funds to protect against emergencies, changes in employer practices (e.g., establishment of career ladders, redesign of personnel policies), and changes in public policy (social, workforce, education and economic). This information will help Wider Opportunities for Women develop a model that can be replicated in other communities, along with a toolkit to support this work, which will be distributed to local organizations throughout Wyoming.

Wider Opportunities for Women was founded in 1964 to promote economic opportunities for women and girls in its home community of Washington, D.C. Since that time it has evolved into a national organization. It is recognized nationally for its skills training models, technical assistance, and advocacy. Today, Wider Opportunities for Women leads several national initiatives including the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Project, now in 38 states, including Wyoming. In 2006, Wider Opportunities for Women launched the Elder Economic Security Initiative, now in 12 states, to look at what it takes for an elderly individual or couple to meet daily needs of living based on their health and housing status. For more information visit www.wowonline.org

About the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation

The Rocky Mountain Power Foundation is part of the PacifiCorp Foundation, one of the largest utility-endowed foundations in the United States. The foundation was created in 1988 by PacifiCorp, an electric utility serving 1.7 million customers in six Western states as Rocky Mountain Power (Utah, Wyoming and Idaho) and Pacific Power (Oregon, Washington and California). The foundation's mission, through charitable investments, is to support the growth and vitality of the communities served by Pacific Power and Rocky Mountain Power. For more information visit www.rockymountainpower.net/rmpfoundation.