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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### BPA Engineers Send Woodlawn Elementary Students Into Overdrive

PORTLAND, OR— It is an event filled Tuesday for Woodlawn Elementary School teacher Dina Scottel's fourth grade class. Cupcakes and streamers decorate a table at the front of the classroom... it is somebody's birthday. And, the kids get to play one of their favorite games, *Silent Ball*, in which a big fuzzy ball is passed around the room in a whisper-quiet fashion.



But, despite the games and sugar treats, the real excitement comes when Bonneville Power Administration Engineer Brian Scott and Recruiting & Staffing Advisor Aimee Fahey arrive. Scott and Fahey are visiting as part of National Engineers Month, and their marshmallow-toothpick tower exercise is about to send Ms. Scottel's fourth graders into overdrive.

Scottel scheduled the visit to get her students interested in science and math beyond the classroom. "I'm hoping this new experience will show the kids what they can be; especially the

minorities in the class. I want them to get excited about going into math and science."

Scottel's plan worked, evidenced by a room full of hands shooting into the air each time Scott or Fahey asked a question. And, while the kids absorbed plenty of information from Scott and Fahey's brief lecture about engineering and hydroelectric power, it was during the marshmallow-toothpick tower exercise that the kids learned the most.

Groups of students had to draw plans, vote collectively on a group blueprint, and construct the tallest, stand-alone tower from a limited number of marshmallows and toothpicks. The marshmallow limit worked like a charm to challenge the kids to think strategically (and to prevent temptation from eating the delicious treats during the experiment). The exercise demonstrated engineering qualities such as logic, communication, and problem solving.



**National Engineers Month** (February) is orchestrated by the **Business Education Compact**, a local non-profit organization dedicated to "making learning real" for Oregon and SW Washington students. In its 16<sup>th</sup> year, the program has enabled more than 275,000 students to have the privilege of interacting with a real engineer in their classroom to date.

If you live in the Pacific Northwest, chances are you use electricity marketed and delivered by the **Bonneville Power Administration** - best known as BPA. BPA is a not-for-profit federal electric utility that operates a high-voltage transmission grid comprising more than 15,000 miles of lines and associated substations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana. It also markets more than a third of the electricity consumed in the Pacific Northwest.

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