

Gas & Petroleum Fueled Generating Facilities

Montana is home to six large scale natural gas electric generation plants and one petroleum coke generation plant. The Dave Gates and Basin Creek plants near Butte are 'peaker' plants that are used by NorthWestern Energy when market conditions are favorable. Peaker plants are electric power plants that generally run only when there is a high demand for electricity. Dave Gates also provides regulation for the electric grid which helps balance the transmission system as it moves electricity from generating sources to retail consumers. These two plants run at about 20% of their nameplate capacity. The Montana-Dakota Utilities plants and Basin Electric plant (Culbertson) located in Eastern Montana are on the U.S. Eastern electric grid and are also peaker plants. These plants run infrequently, and ran at about 10% of total nameplate capacity in 2017. The Yellowstone Energy Limited Partnership (YELP) petroleum coke electric plant is a Qualifying Facility supplying NorthWestern Energy and is fueled with waste products generated by the ExxonMobil Billings Refinery. It ran about 80% of nameplate capacity in 2017. Natural gas power plants provide 1.5 to 2 percent of total electric generation in Montana annually.

