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PRESS CONTACTS:**Andrew Fanara, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

202-343-9019, fanara.andrew@epa.gov

Percy Della, California Energy Commission

916-654-4989, Pdella@energy.state.ca.us

Design Competition to Help Spur Market for Energy-Efficient Power Supplies

California Energy Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to unveil contest details at Applied Power Electronics Conference 2004

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The California Energy Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will jointly announce an international design competition for energy-efficient power supplies on February 23 at the 2004 Applied Power Electronics Conference (APEC). The Power Sources Manufacturers Association (PSMA) has endorsed the competition as well, marking an unusual collaborative effort by industry and government.

Power supplies are devices that convert incoming ac power from wall outlets into low voltage dc power needed for various electronic products, such as cellular and cordless phones, computers, televisions, etc. Research funded by the EPA's ENERGY STAR[®] program and the Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) program has identified ac-dc power supplies as a major opportunity for reducing global energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, with more than 3 billion units in use in the United States and about 10 billion units in use globally. Many current designs are only 30 percent to 60 percent efficient, though the technology exists to achieve operating efficiencies of 90 percent or more, along with very low standby power consumption. A full 1 percent to 2 percent of all U.S. electricity use could be saved by such energy efficiency improvements.

The design competition will feature two major categories. The first category will cover internal and external "market-ready" designs that can save energy cost-effectively in particular types of consumer electronics products. The second is an "open" category, intended to showcase the most efficient power supply designs from industry and academia without cost constraints.

While the competition intends to showcase highly efficient technology, it also aims to foster the market conditions necessary for those technologies to succeed in the marketplace. Opportunities are available not just for the companies that manufacture power supplies, but also the much larger companies that buy them for use with computers, televisions, printers, monitors, etc.

Highly efficient power supplies offer powerful advantages to consumers. They tend to be much smaller and lighter than typical power supplies, increasing portability and convenience. They produce very little waste heat as well, so rarely require noisy cooling fans. Also, the most advanced designs cost only slightly more than typical products, paying for themselves rapidly by cutting energy bills.

The competition will run throughout calendar year 2004, with the winners announced at APEC 2005. For more information, visit www.efficientpowersupplies.org.

What: Press conference to unveil details for energy-efficient power supplies design competition

When: Monday, February 23, 2004, 5:00 to 5:30 p.m. PST (immediately following plenary session)

Where: Coronado Room, Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim

Who: Scheduled participants include:

- Andrew Fanara, ENERGY STAR Specification Development, EPA
- John Wilson, Advisor to Commissioner Art Rosenfeld, California Energy Commission
- Chris Calwell, Research Director, Ecos Consulting (contractor leading power supplies research)

Agenda: Project leaders will release complete rules, guidelines and judging criteria. Q & A will follow.

Attention Editors: The media coordinator at the conference is Robin Clark. She can be reached at the Disneyland Hotel, (714) 778-6600 (from Feb. 21 to Feb. 25), by cell at (703) 217-2678 or email at RClark@ICFConsulting.com.

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