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### PGE shares decline on NYSE trading debut

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PORTLAND, Ore. -- Shares of Portland General Electric Co. stock fell nearly 5 percent on Monday, the company's first day of "Enron free" trading.

The company is Oregon's largest, oldest utility and faced a tumultuous time when Enron owned it, beginning in 1997. For the past few weeks, the utility has been celebrating its status as "Enron-free."

PGE serves about 775,000 customers in Portland and the northern Willamette River valley, which are expected to see population increases above the national averages.

"The market goes up, and the market goes down," PGE's chief executive and president, Peggy Fowler, said of the stock's drop.

Fowler was in New York with company executives and supporters to ring the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange and to mark another milestone in PGE's independence.

About 62 million shares of PGE stock are going to creditors as part of the bankruptcy settlement. Of those, about 43 percent had been distributed as of Monday, and 57 percent remains in a reserve to settle claims. The company has said the amount of stock in the reserve is expected to fall below 30 percent within two years.

PGE opened Monday at \$29.45 a share, hit a high at a dime higher, and then lost \$1.47 to close at \$27.98. Volume was 695,000 shares.

Despite a few questions, the company's prospects are good, said Portland utility and energy analyst Robert McCullough.

"Enron still has a right to vote the stock" that hasn't been distributed, he said, which might raise questions among some investors.

Beyond that are a few regulatory issues and a highly publicized dispute with the city of Portland over the company's state tax payments and its rates, McCullough said. The city has demanded the company fork over documents, and the utility said it will resist in the courts.

But "PGE is a peach of a utility," McCullough said. "The utility itself is in good shape."

Emerging from the Enron era, Fowler said the company would emphasize that it is "100 percent regulated" with its own board and a straightforward business model. She said PGE's focus on its core business of distributing electricity would hark to an era when traders considered energy stocks reliable, and a bit boring.

"We would love to be boring," she said. "Plain vanilla is fine."