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NEWS

ALLETE Announces Agreement To Sell Enventis Telecom To HickoryTech Corporation

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DULUTH, Minn.—ALLETE, Inc. (NYSE: ALE), announced today it has agreed to sell its subsidiary Enventis Telecom to HickoryTech Corporation (Nasdaq:HTCO) of Mankato, Minn. for \$35.5 million. Under the terms of the agreement, ALLETE will sell all of its stock in Enventis to HickoryTech. The sale is expected to be completed around the end of the year pending regulatory approval.

"Through creativity and expertise, Enventis developed a well-regarded reputation as a leading regional transport and network integration company," said Don Shippard, president and CEO of ALLETE. "While Enventis is positioned for continued success, we realize that our current strategic direction and Enventis' opportunities for expansion do not coincide. We believe HickoryTech will capitalize on Enventis' diverse strengths and potential for growth."

Enventis Telecom is a regional telecommunications provider and network infrastructure integrator specializing in Internet Protocol (IP) communications and custom engineered solutions. With headquarters in Minneapolis, Enventis serves more than 300 business customers in over 40 communities in the Upper Midwest. ALLETE acquired Enventis in 2001 and combined it with its MP Telecom subsidiary.

HickoryTech is a diversified communications company with operations in Minnesota and Iowa. HickoryTech is the largest telephone company headquartered in Minnesota and the twenty-ninth largest telephone company in the United States. Its products include local phone service, Internet/digital subscriber line, Broadband, digital TV, long distance, business IP Telephony/data solutions and information solutions.

"We are pleased to have the Enventis Telecom team join HickoryTech," said John Duffy, president and CEO of HickoryTech. "With its solid record of success as a regional fiber network and IP Telephony provider, Enventis Telecom adds real value to HickoryTech."

ALLETE, headquartered in Duluth, Minn., provides energy services in the Upper Midwest and has significant real estate holdings in Florida. More information regarding ALLETE is available at www.allete.com. More information about Hickory Tech is available at www.hickorytech.com.

The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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