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NEWS

Minnesota Power crews to travel to Puerto Rico, joining industry power restoration mission

Employees volunteered just before the holidays to help restore power for at least 30 days

DULUTH, Minnesota – Nearly twenty Minnesota Power and Superior Water, Light and Power lineworkers and support staff will be traveling to Puerto Rico in early January to help restore power as part of the first major wave of mainland industry assistance for the U.S. territory hit by hurricanes Irma and Maria.

Twelve Minnesota Power lineworkers, one Superior Water Light and Power lineworker and one supervisor will be departing on Jan. 12 for Puerto Rico, where they will be united with six Minnesota Power line trucks, a mechanic's truck, two pickup trucks and other equipment that will be shipped to the island earlier. They will be accompanied for support by a mechanic, an engineer and a logistics expert.

On Christmas Day, nine employees left Duluth and Little Falls to drive vehicles, tools and other equipment to the Port of Chickasaw, near Mobile, Alabama, where the vehicles and equipment will be shipped by barge to the island. The crews are expected to arrive in Alabama on Wednesday, Dec. 27, with the materials to be shipped later this week.

The Minnesota Power crews will spend at least 30 days in Puerto Rico, where some people have been without power for more than 90 days since Hurricane Irma hit in early September. Irma was followed about two weeks later by the more-destructive Hurricane Maria that knocked out power to most of the island.

Minnesota Power, an ALLETE (NYSE:ALE) company, immediately offered to send the crews after a mid-December call for personnel by the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), the association that represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. Minnesota Power's call for volunteers then filled quickly as lineworkers and drivers to get trucks to the port committed to the effort just a few days before Christmas.

"Asking for volunteers to leave families and homes for more than four weeks is never done lightly, and is even harder to do around the holidays. It was heartwarming to see our employees step up as quickly as they did," said Brad Oachs, Minnesota Power President of Regulated Operations. "We are committed to the delivery of safe and reliable power whether to our communities or to the people of Puerto Rico who have suffered so much."

"We're proud to help our fellow U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico regain the comfort, security and quality of life ripped from them by these monstrous hurricanes. As we saw here in the Northland after the July 2016 wind storm, mutual assistance is integral to natural disaster recovery among mainland electric utilities," said Al Hodnik, chairman, president and CEO of ALLETE. "Extending this

assistance to Puerto Rico will speed the island's recovery as we share our people, expertise and equipment."

The Minnesota Power crews are part of a larger industry response in Puerto Rico after the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority, also known as PREPA, requested EEI's help in late October. Since then, EEI has placed an incident management team in each of PREPA's seven regions to assess damage and prepare for the influx of crews and equipment. Two Minnesota Power employees traveled to Puerto Rico in early December to set up lodging, food and other necessities for the incident management teams.

The crews are scheduled to be in the field restoring power by Jan. 15. They'll be working in the Mayaguez region in western Puerto Rico with Southern Company crews, supporting the overall hurricane response led by PREPA and the Army Corps of Engineers. The plan is to begin work in more urban areas where power to the greatest number of customers can be restored, then move into more remote, mountainous areas.

About 3,500 lineworkers from PREPA, the New York Power Authority, Con Ed and Army Corps of Engineers contractors are working in Puerto Rico now. The Army Corps is bringing in about 1,500 more contract lineworkers, and the EEI-led program will add about 1,500 lineworkers to fill a manpower gap expected as more material arrives in Puerto Rico.

EEI, the American Public Power Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association helped develop a memorandum of understanding with PREPA that now allows electric companies to enter into emergency agreements to provide resources and workers to PREPA on a not-for-profit basis.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 145,000 customers, 16 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.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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