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NEWS

Minnesota Power gets green light for local solar projects that support economic recovery for communities affected by COVID-19

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power's plans for a \$40 million investment in solar energy received unanimous approval today from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

In June 2020, Minnesota Power announced plans to build three solar projects in June 2020 after the MPUC asked utilities to evaluate projects they could speed up as a way to support the recovery of local economies affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The company plans to construct approximately 20 megawatts of solar arrays in northern Minnesota that also will help it meet the state of Minnesota's Solar Energy Standard. In addition, the investment advances Minnesota Power's EnergyForward strategy and its vision for delivering carbon-free energy by 2050.

The projects are a 9.6-megawatt array at Minnesota Power's Laskin Energy Center, adjacent to the Laskin Energy Park in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota; a 10-megawatt array near the company's Sylvan Hydro Station near Brainerd, Minnesota; and a 1.6-megawatt array on a proposed site on Riley Road in the city of Duluth.

Minnesota Power estimates the three projects will:

- Create 38 local construction jobs.
- Provide enough energy to power 4,000 homes.
- Add \$10 million to the 2021 gross regional product.
- Increase annual local government revenues by about \$55,000 via direct tax payments and an additional \$110,000 indirectly.

The projects will use solar panels manufactured in Mountain Iron, Minnesota, by Heliene Inc. and leverage existing electrical infrastructure. Construction will get underway this summer with the arrays expected to be generating electricity in 2022.

Minnesota Power's solar energy plan enjoyed support from a number of organizations. In a letter to the MPUC, the Laborers International Union of North America Minnesota & North Dakota said, "Minnesota Power's investment will not only lead to direct construction job creation, but it will help to position Minnesota as a leader in the rapidly growing clean energy economy. MP's commitment to buy regionally produced solar panels will create good paying manufacturing jobs and help to grow Minnesota's clean energy manufacturing economy. Additionally, Minnesota Power's continued decarbonization of their energy portfolio can provide taconite producers a competitive advantage in global markets as demand for low carbon materials grows."

Other organizations supporting the three solar projects include the Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association, BlueGreen Alliance, Hispanics in Energy and Grace Multicultural.



“We are committed to our communities and are pleased to play a strong role in the economic recovery of our region through these three renewable energy projects. We appreciate the broad support for these projects and the MPUC’s approval today,” said ALLETE President and CEO Bethany Owen. “The construction of solar arrays at sites in Hoyt Lakes, near Brainerd and in Duluth will provide local construction jobs, boost the tax base of local economies, and provide more clean energy for our customers. These economic recovery projects also gave us a great opportunity to begin incorporating changes into the procurement processes in order to identify more diverse suppliers and ultimately strengthen communities.”

When completed, Minnesota Power’s energy portfolio will have approximately 30 megawatts of solar energy, including the existing 10-megawatt solar array at Camp Ripley, the Minnesota National Guard Base near Little Falls. Minnesota Power also has a community solar garden with a 40-kilowatt array in Duluth and a 1,000-kilowatt array in Wrenshall, and continues to explore additional community solar options.

Minnesota Power also is committed to providing opportunities for customers and communities to directly participate in a clean energy future. The company’s customer solar rebate program has been in place since 2004 and its low-income solar program, the first of its kind in Minnesota, advances solar projects that benefit income-qualified customers or facilities that serve income-qualified customers.

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, 15 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.