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Minnesota Power working round the clock to respond to storm outages *Company estimates multi-day outage given the extensive damage*

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power is responding as quickly as possible to safely restore power after severe storms blew through the Little Falls and surrounding area Thursday night.

High winds caused significant tree damage, which resulted in broken power poles and downed power lines. Crews worked through the night to restore power to 7,000 customers in the western region of Minnesota Power's service territory. Resources are focused on the hardest hit areas of Little Falls, Eagle Bend, Verndale, Clarissa and outlying areas to restore power to the remaining 2,400 customers.

Additional line crews from the company's outlying areas have been called in to assist and crews from neighboring utility Xcel Energy are joining the restoration effort. Power is expected to be restored to customers throughout the day today, but due to the significant damage the company anticipates the majority of the remaining customers will be restored by late Saturday evening with the possibility of some outages extending into Sunday.

The safety of our crews and customers is of top priority during this outage response. Stay clear of downed power lines, poles and wires. Keep pets and children away from those areas. Do not attempt to touch or lift any wire with poles or sticks or trees that may be lying on wires. Do not get out of your vehicle on or near wires. All power lines should be considered energized and dangerous.

Our customers' patience is appreciated as we recognize the inconvenience caused by loss of power.

Power restoration a situation like this is a phased approach. Public safety and critical infrastructure is the first priority. Crews begin with the larger transmission lines, move to the primary distribution lines, then move into neighborhoods to repair individual services.

This approach allows us to restore power to a larger number of customers as quickly as possible, helps eliminate exposure to hazardous safety conditions such as low-hanging energized lines, and allows us to restore critical loads such as hospitals and public safety as quickly as possible. Damaged transformers serving multiple customers are repaired first, then transformers serving individual customers.

Some customers who have damage to their electric service meter and mast will need to contact an electrical contractor for repairs before Minnesota Power can restore power to the residence.

For the latest outage information, customers are encouraged to visit the Minnesota Power Outage Center at <http://www.mnpower.com/OutageCenter>, and download the Minnesota Power outage app for smartphones. Customers also can follow Minnesota Power on Facebook and Twitter to get outage updates.

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.

