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Contact: Amy Rutledge
Manager - Corporate Communications
Minnesota Power/ALLETE
218-723-7400
arutledge@mnpower.com

Minnesota Power hosts Minnesota Public Utilities Commissioners to highlight local solar economic development projects

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power, an ALLETE company (NYSE:ALE), was proud to host Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) Chair Katie Sieben and Commissioner John Tuma Tuesday as they toured the Laskin Energy Center solar project in Hoyt Lakes and the Heliene solar panel production facility in Mountain Iron.

The 5.6-megawatt Laskin solar project is one of three Minnesota Power is building this summer as part of an MPUC-approved effort to boost the region's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The company also is constructing a 15.2-megawatt array near the company's Sylvan Hydro Station near Brainerd, Minnesota; and a 1.6-megawatt array on Riley Road in the city of Duluth.

All of the solar panels for the projects are locally produced at Heliene's Mountain Iron facility, and all three projects will be constructed by local labor.

In addition, Minnesota Power contracted with Cambria County Association for the Blind and Handicapped to supply the cable support system for the three solar arrays as part of its effort to promote diverse suppliers. The nonprofit organization in Ebensburg and Johnstown, Pennsylvania, employs nearly 300 people with disabilities.

Minnesota Power estimates the three solar projects will:

- Create 38 local construction jobs.
- Provide enough energy to power 4,000 homes.
- Add \$10 million to the 2022 gross regional product.
- Increase annual local government revenue by about \$55,000 via direct tax payments and an additional \$110,000 indirectly.

"We are grateful the MPUC commissioners traveled to our region today to see first-hand just some of what Minnesota Power is doing to advance sustainable, clean energy in our region while investing in the local economy," said ALLETE Chair, President and CEO Bethany Owen. "From a local solar panel producer to local labor and strong collaboration with our local communities, the dividends from these investments will stay here and continue to support a thriving region with opportunities for everyone to succeed. These solar projects clearly demonstrate that investing in the clean-energy transformation is good for our communities and the climate – as well as our customers."

Built in 1953 as Minnesota Power's second coal plant, Laskin Energy Center served the early taconite operations on the Iron Range. It was converted to natural gas in 2015. The construction of the solar array at Laskin is part of Minnesota Power's effort to support communities that host existing power plants. Construction of the Laskin solar project is underway, with completion of all three regional solar projects anticipated later this year.

"We believe an important element of a just transition to a clean-energy economy is supporting the communities that host our existing thermal power plants," said Minnesota Power Chief Operating Officer Josh Skelton. "We intend to continue our strong, decades-long relationships as foundational to building a sustainable, clean-energy future. Our journey together will benefit the planet and the people we serve."

Minnesota Power became the first utility in the state to deliver 50 percent renewable energy to customers in 2020. The investment in the three solar projects is one part of Minnesota Power's EnergyForward vision to achieve a 100% carbon-free energy supply by 2050.

When the three solar projects are 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 purchases power from a 1-megawatt array in Wrenshall.

Minnesota Power 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 and 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.