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## Falcon chicks at Minnesota Power sites ready to fly with names from area elementary school students

Duluth, Minn. — Peregrine falcon families at both of Minnesota Power's nesting sites appear to be thriving.

Teams from the Raptor Resource Project in Decorah, Iowa, and Minnesota Power recently climbed stacks at Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset and Hibbard Renewable Energy Center in Duluth to check on the chicks in the nest boxes. Three chicks hatched at each site this spring and all six appeared well-fed and healthy.

The chicks all have names, too, thanks to area schoolchildren. Students at Cohasset Elementary School named the Boswell nestlings Hawkeye, Tiberius (from the movie "The Secret Life of Pets" and Frightful (from the book "My Side of the Mountain"). Students at STARBASE Minnesota-Duluth named the chicks at Hibbard: They are Louis, Agrios and Flecha.

With fledging underway or just days away, bird enthusiasts can still see the families via Minnesota Power's FalconCam.

Typically, a team fits the chicks that hatch nearly every spring at Hibbard and at Boswell with leg bands. However, because of this spring's outbreak of HPAI (highly pathogenic avian influenza) the raptor specialists at RPP instituted a moratorium on handling birds at the sites it monitors. At Hibbard, that meant the team could do a visual assessment of the young birds but couldn't handle them to fit them with the identification bands when they visited in late May.

But it was a different story for Boswell. By the time of the June 9 climb to the nest box, the avian flu outbreak had diminished, RPP lifted its moratorium and a team was able to place leg bands on the three chicks.

Minnesota Power is a longtime partner with the RPP, and specialists from the nonprofit organization visit Hibbard and Boswell almost every year. Chicks were banded most years since 1993 at Boswell and 2008 at Hibbard. Banding was canceled in 2020 because of the pandemic.

The RPP continues to work with Minnesota Power and other power companies across the Midwest to provide falcon nest boxes and do the leg banding that helps to maintain a healthy population. The leg bands allow researchers to track the falcons and their behavior, and do not harm the birds.

The peregrine falcon has made a remarkable comeback after use of the pesticide DDT nearly wiped out the population. The raptor was named an endangered species in the 1970s and power companies like Minnesota Power played a role in the peregrine's recovery by placing nest boxes on the stacks of their power plants. More than 35 chicks have hatched at Hibbard and more than 85 have hatched at Boswell since nest boxes were installed at the two sites.

The commitment to peregrine falcons is one example of Minnesota Power's longstanding value of environmental stewardship. Under the company's EnergyForward strategy, Minnesota Power



became the first utility in Minnesota to deliver 50% renewable vision and envisions delivering 100% carbon-free energy by 2050.

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS

One of the three chicks that hatched this spring at Hibbard Renewable Energy Center appears to be defending one of its siblings. You can just see the foot of the sibling behind the chick.

Minnesota Power employee Adam Aili holds Lucia, the resident female peregrine falcon at Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset, while the banding team fitted her chicks with identification bands. Typically, adult falcons will leave the nest box during banding but Lucia refused to leave the chicks.

Minnesota Power employee Zach Johnson passes a chick to Minnesota Power employee Adam Aili during banding activities June 9 at Boswell Energy Center in Cohasset.

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](http://www.mnpower.com).