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Minnesota Power moves EnergyForward with ribbon-cutting for first of three planned solar projects in the region

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power today dedicated its new 1.6-megawatt Jean Duluth Solar project on Riley Road in Duluth. It is the first of three projects totaling more than 20 megawatts that the company is building this year and part of the company's Energy Forward strategy to produce and deliver energy from increasingly cleaner sources.

Energy from the site will feed Minnesota Power's overall system, adding renewable solar energy to the grid that serves the company's 145,000 customers. Its output is expected to be about 2,500 megawatt-hours of electricity each year, or enough energy to power nearly 300 homes.

With construction complete, Minnesota Power is working through the commissioning process of connecting the project to the grid. Jean Duluth Solar is expected to be producing energy for customers by early December.

The three solar projects Minnesota Power is building are part of an approximately \$40 million investment approved by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission to boost the region's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The company also is constructing a 15.2-megawatt solar array near the company's Sylvan Hydro Station near Brainerd and a 5.6-megawatt facility next to the company's Laskin Energy Center in Hoyt Lakes. The projects are being built using solar panels manufactured in Minnesota and with local union construction labor.

"This project is the first of three solar projects Minnesota Power is building in Northern Minnesota today to support the regional economy and to generate more local renewable energy -- a win-win-win for our customers, communities and the climate," said ALLETE Chair, President and CEO Bethany Owen. "We're proud and excited to make the investment in these solar projects that support local jobs, local manufacturing, and local communities, exactly as we planned and exactly what the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission envisioned when they approved the projects in 2021. We believe that investing in the clean-energy transformation is an investment in this thriving region we love."

Jean Duluth Solar sits on about 8.5 acres of land leased from the city of Duluth and is just north of the Lake Park Athletic Complex of soccer and baseball fields. All of the 3,770 solar panels for the Duluth project were produced at Heliene's Mountain Iron, Minnesota, facility. The bifacial panels can collect light directly from the sun or reflected off the ground or snow to produce electricity, and are mounted on single-axis trackers that rotate the panels to track the sun from east to west every day.

The Jean Duluth Solar project created about 14 local union construction jobs and was constructed by local contractors Hunt Electric and Ulland Brothers. In addition, Minnesota Power contracted with Cambria County Association for the Blind and Handicapped to supply the cable support system for the 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.

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Minnesota Power's lease payments to the city of Duluth augment the city's Energy Fund to continue the city's work on energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Duluth Mayor Emily Larson praised Minnesota Power's state-leading efforts on meeting goals for renewable, safe energy, and doing so fairly for everyone.

"This is such an exciting day, because seeing a project like this, completely local—this is everything that a mayor would really, really want, and it is everything that I think our community and our region deserves," she said, with local labor, local investment and locally produced renewable energy that supports a local climate action plan. "This project hits all of those buckets so beautifully."

Also speaking at the event were Lucas Franco, research manager for Laborers International Union of North America; and Anita Grace, co-vice chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Energy Utility Diversity Group.

Franco touted the project's use of local labor, saying Minnesota Power's clean energy transition is ensuring local workers are not left behind by creating family-supporting jobs.

Grace said Minnesota Power was the first company to take the Diversity Stakeholder Group's recommendations, and "really knocked it out of the park" by meeting the goals on diversity, local contracts and use of small businesses laid out by the group she helped lead.

When the three solar projects are complete, 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. 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.

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.