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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: October 8, 2025

Minnesota Power, Great River Energy break ground on transformative transmission line for a reliable, resilient grid

Northland Reliability Project is first major transmission initiative in MISO's Tranche 1

BECKER, Minn. – Energy leaders and state partners gathered today at a groundbreaking celebration for the Northland Reliability Project, a transformative transmission project that will boost grid reliability and resilience in northern and central Minnesota as the clean-energy transition continues.

Jointly owned by Minnesota Power and Great River Energy, the Northland Reliability Project is the first major transmission initiative from MISO's Tranche 1 to break ground. Leaders from Minnesota Power, Great River Energy, the Midcontinent Independent Operator (MISO), the Minnesota Department of Commerce and the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission were among those who attended the event at the Sherburne History Center in Becker, Minnesota.

"The Northland Reliability Project is about building a stronger, resilient grid for our communities," said Priti Patel, Great River Energy vice president and chief transmission officer. "Great River Energy is owned by the people we serve, and we invest in reliability for our members and neighbors. We're proud to work with local partners and support the communities that make this project possible."

The 180-mile, double-circuit capable 345-kV transmission line will extend from near Grand Rapids in Itasca County to near St. Cloud in Benton County and into Sherburne County and largely follows existing transmission line corridors. The Northland Reliability Project will help maintain a reliable and resilient local and regional power grid as more renewable energy is brought online; existing power plants are retired; more homes and businesses shift to electricity to power appliances, equipment and heating and cooling systems; and more frequent extreme weather events occur.

"When it comes to the electric grid, we're all in this together. This project will serve the greater good, with the reliability benefits extending far beyond the areas served by Minnesota Power and Great River Energy," said Josh Skelton, Minnesota Power chief operating officer. "As the grid becomes increasingly renewable, transmission lines like this will continue to be the workhorses that move electricity from where it's generated to where it's needed. Reliability is a win for everyone, customers small and large alike."

The joint project is one of 18 transmission projects approved in July 2022 by the region's grid operator, MISO, in the first phase of its Long Range Transmission Plan to integrate new generation resources and strengthen the grid.

"Today's groundbreaking showed what true collaboration can achieve, with utilities, regulators and communities working together to strengthen reliability for Minnesota and the region," said Brian Tulloh, executive director for external affairs at MISO. "Kudos to MISO members Great River Energy and Minnesota Power for moving expeditiously on the Northland Reliability Project."

Minnesota Power and Great River Energy held nearly 30 public open houses and stakeholder meetings to engage with landowners, local governments, agencies, Tribal Nations and tribal organizations. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved the Certificate of Need and Route Permit for the high-voltage transmission line in January.

"The Commission is pleased to see the Northland Reliability Project moving forward, ensuring Minnesota's energy system remains strong, reliable, and ready for the future," said Katie Sieben, chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Pete Wyckoff, deputy commissioner of energy resources at the Minnesota Department of Commerce, said, "The Northland Reliability Project fulfills a variety of needs. It allows us to deliver more clean, affordable homegrown electricity from where it is produced to where it is needed while enhancing the capacity, reliability, and resiliency of Minnesota's electric system."

Construction began this fall in Benton and Sherburne counties and will begin on the northern segment in 2026 with the route running through Itasca, Aitkin, Crow Wing and Morrison counties. The transmission line is expected to be in service by 2030 and is estimated to cost more than \$1 billion. Final project costs will be determined by final routing and design considerations.

"Michels is proud to be a partner in the construction of this important first phase of the Northland Reliability Project," said Pat Michels, president and CEO of Michels Corp. "We are ready to contribute to its success and look forward to a great project."

For more information and a map of the Northland Reliability Project's route corridor, visit northlandreliabilityproject.com.

About Minnesota Power

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 150,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

About Great River Energy

Great River Energy, Maple Grove, Minnesota, is a not-for-profit wholesale electric power cooperative which provides electricity to approximately 1.7 million people through its member-owner cooperatives and customers. Through its member-owners, Great River Energy serves two-thirds of Minnesota geographically and parts of Wisconsin. Learn more at greatriverenergy.com.

About ALLETE, Inc.

ALLETE, Inc. is an energy company headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota. In addition to its electric utilities, Minnesota Power and Superior Water, Light and Power of Wisconsin, ALLETE owns ALLETE Clean Energy, based in Duluth, Minnesota; BNI Energy in Bismarck, North Dakota; and New Energy Equity, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland; and has an 8% equity interest in the American Transmission Co. More information about ALLETE is available at www.allete.com. *ALE-CORP*

ALLETE calculates and reports carbon emissions based on the GHG Protocol. Details in ALLETE's [Corporate Sustainability Report](#).

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