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Minnesota Power breaks ground on North Dakota HVDC modernization project, a more than \$450 million investment in the state's energy future

DULUTH, Minn. – Minnesota Power joined project partners, community leaders and representatives of state, local and federal elected officials on Wednesday, Aug. 19 to celebrate the groundbreaking for the North Dakota portion of its high-voltage direct-current, or HVDC, modernization project, a more than \$450 million investment that will replace aging infrastructure, support local jobs and businesses, and strengthen electric reliability for years to come.

The event was held at the converter station upgrade site near Center, North Dakota, where construction is underway on a new facility that will replace transmission infrastructure that is nearly 50 years old.

“This converter station is more than a construction project,” said Josh Skelton, Chief Operating Officer for Minnesota Power. “It is a long-term investment in reliability, resilience and economic growth. Strong projects depend on strong partnerships, and we do not take that for granted. We’re proud to be here. We’re proud to invest here. And we’re proud to build this future together.”

Minnesota Power and ALLETE have been part of North Dakota’s energy story for more than 50 years, including ownership of BNI Coal, with investments in generation, fuel supply, transmission and wind energy. This project is the next chapter in that longstanding commitment to the state and its communities.

One of the biggest benefits of modernization is added flexibility of the new converter stations.

“One of the most important benefits of this modernization is flexibility,” Skelton said. “When extreme weather hits, when system conditions change quickly, or when energy is needed in a different place than expected, the ability to move power both ways on this line becomes a real advantage.”

A big part of this HVDC investment will be felt locally during construction. Mortenson, the project’s general contractor, is working with Minnesota Power to build the new convertor station with a strong focus on local labor and regional economic activity.

“North Dakota is an energy leader, and its workers and contractors will play an important role in building this project. We’re proud to partner on an investment that supports local labor, creates

good jobs and brings lasting economic benefits to the region,” said Jake Frazier, Mortenson Vice President and General Manager of Power Delivery.

The converter station, along with a similar facility at the other end of the HVDC line in Hermantown, Minnesota, is a key part of Minnesota Power’s transmission system for delivering safe, reliable power. It converts alternating current electricity generated locally into direct current for efficient long-distance transmission and can also convert direct current back into alternating current when electricity is delivered where it is needed.

The 465-mile HVDC line began operating in 1977 and remains a unique and valuable asset as one of only five overhead HVDC lines in the United States. Minnesota Power began planning this modernization work more than ten years ago after identifying the need to replace key equipment dating to the 1970s. In 2025, the North Dakota Public Service Commission approved permits for the project after years of study, planning and review.

The modernization project brings advanced transmission technology to central North Dakota. Siemens Energy is supplying HVDC technology for the project, part of a class of systems used around the world in major energy projects to move electricity efficiently and reliably over long distances.

“With this groundbreaking, North Dakota is becoming home to a high-tech modernization project that combines our proven HVDC experience with the next generation of converter station technology,” said Hauke Juergensen, Senior Vice President of Grid Solutions for Siemens Energy. “By building with future expansion in mind, North Dakota will have a reliable, long-term energy solution that can support economic growth and increasing demand for years to come.”

HVDC technology is especially effective over long distances, losing 15% to 30% less energy than a comparable alternating current line. That efficiency helps reduce system losses and improve overall value over time.

Local and state leaders joined Minnesota Power and project partners at the groundbreaking to recognize the importance of the investment to North Dakota’s economy and energy future.

Claire Vigesaa, executive director of the North Dakota Transmission Authority, said his organization appreciates Minnesota Power’s continued investment in North Dakota’s critical infrastructure.

“This project is providing a superhighway for North Dakota’s generation and two-way flow options to enhance grid reliability and transmission efficiency,” he said.

Minnesota Power said it has worked with local landowners, public officials and community partners throughout the planning process and is grateful for the support that helped move the project forward.

“This project represents about a \$450 million investment in North Dakota,” Skelton said. “It means construction activity, good-paying jobs, work for skilled trades and opportunities for local businesses. It also adds to the property tax base, which benefits the communities that host this infrastructure and house our employees and their families.”

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 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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