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NEWS

Peregrine Falcons Return to MP for 10th Year

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(Grand Rapids, Minnesota) — On a platform 220 feet above Minnesota Power's Boswell Energy Center, a pair of Peregrine falcons are preparing a nest for their latest batch of chicks — and bird-lovers all around the world can watch on the World Wide Web.

<http://www.mnpower.com> has added a FalconCam to its Web site, www.mnpower.com, showing continuously updated (about every five seconds) images of the nest and its occupants: patriarch Bandit and his mate, Windsong, eventually to be joined by the members of the 11th family of chicks to be hatched at that location. Minnesota Power employees installed the platform in 1991 and the first chicks were hatched there in 1993.



We expect Bandit and WindSong to begin sitting on eggs sometime in April. The eggs usually hatch sometime in early May. The proud parents will raise them at the Boswell nest through the summer. Chicks are banded when they're three to four weeks old for tracking purposes.

Peregrines, the fastest raptor on earth, winter in vacation spots from Little Rock, Ark., to the tip of Argentina. Sometimes, Peregrines will winter at a power plant if there is enough open water and an adequate nearby food supply, such as pigeons. Peregrines seek private, high, out-of-the-way homes for nesting, mating and pursuing their prey. In the last few years, about 50 percent of all Peregrine chicks born in the upper Midwest were hatched at secluded homes atop stacks at power plants. The electric industry has played a key role in Peregrine falcon recovery efforts here in Minnesota and the upper Midwest. And, for the first time since 1960, Peregrines are now returning to breed on high cliffs throughout Minnesota, a more natural habitat.

Minnesota Power, headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota, is one of the companies of ALLETE, Inc. (NYSE:ALE). It is a low-cost electric utility that serves some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. Other ALLETE holdings include ADESA, the second-largest wholesale vehicle auction network in North America; AFC, the leading provider of independent auto dealer financing; and significant real estate holdings in Florida. Learn more about Minnesota Power at www.mnpower.com and about ALLETE at www.allete.com.

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