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# NEWS

## Minnesota Power aims to increase solar rebates, expand energy efficiency programs

DULUTH, Minn.—Increasing the amount of money available for solar rebates and expanding its successful energy conservation program are at the heart of proposals Minnesota Power submitted today to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Minnesota Power, an operating division of ALLETE Inc., proposes to expand its SolarSense program to approximately \$1 million annually for the next three years, effectively tripling the rebate dollars available to customers for installation of solar systems at their homes and businesses.

Customers could receive rebates of up to \$20,000 depending on the size of the system they install. A typical residential customer installing a 5 kilowatt solar system could receive roughly \$6,000 in SolarSense rebates, potentially reducing the cost of the system by 30 percent. SolarSense has provided rebates to help customers reduce the upfront costs of solar and make personal solar a more viable option since 2004.

In addition to including more money for customer rebates, the SolarSense proposal also includes funding for solar education and outreach, research and development, program development and delivery, and the creation of a new solar pilot program for low-income customers.

“Our customers’ interest in solar energy continues to grow and there are multiple ways we are seeking to respond to this trend based on individual customer preferences,” said Tina Koecher, manager of customer solutions for Minnesota Power. “Expanding the SolarSense program, for example, will allow us to provide additional incentives and expertise to people who have homes or businesses in locations with plenty of sun and want to produce solar energy on site.”

The SolarSense proposal complements Minnesota Power’s proposal for its first community solar garden, now under review by the MPUC. The community solar garden is designed for customers who want to go solar but who either rent or don’t have a home or business site that is well-suited for generating electricity from the sun. Customers would be able to purchase energy from the solar garden in several ways, depending on their preference.

Meanwhile, Minnesota Power also is renewing its commitment to conservation and energy efficiency through its Power of One Conservation Improvement Program. In its proposal to the MPUC, the company outlines how it will strengthen and expand its existing programs to continue to meet the diverse needs of its customers.

The company’s conservation program offerings include rebates on energy-efficient lighting, appliances and HVAC; help with incorporating energy efficiencies into new home construction; and a Home Energy Analysis where customers can better understand how they use energy and how to get more for their energy dollar. Program offerings also help businesses stay competitive by being more energy efficient and supply rebates, design assistance and expertise to commercial, industrial, agricultural and public sector customers.

“Minnesota Power’s Conservation Improvement Program has a proven track record, surpassing the state’s 1.5 percent energy-savings goal since 2010,” Koecher said. “We intend to build on what’s been successful while also drawing on experience and best practices in the industry to make the program even more responsive to customers. We’re confident that with engagement from our customers we’ll continue to be able to deliver on the state’s goal.”

Energy efficiency and solar energy are important components of Minnesota Power’s EnergyForward strategy to achieve a balanced energy mix of one-third coal, one-third natural gas and one-third renewable energy. In addition to smaller scale solar initiatives, Minnesota Power expects to commission production from its 10-megawatt Camp Ripley utility-scale installation later this year which will add solar energy to the Company’s general energy supply.

Both the SolarSense and Conservation Improvement Program proposals are subject to regulatory approval.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 144,000 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). (ALE-ENRG)

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