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NEWS

Minnesota Power receives green light for Camp Ripley 10 megawatt solar array

Duluth, Minn. – Minnesota Power’s plans to install a solar energy array at Camp Ripley received the go-ahead from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on Thursday, January 28.

Commissioners unanimously approved the 10-megawatt installation, which will be built at the Minnesota National Guard’s base in central Minnesota on the southwestern edge of Minnesota Power’s service territory. The \$30 million project will help Minnesota Power, a utility division of ALLETE Inc. (NYSE: ALE), achieve about one-third of its requirement under the state’s Solar Energy Standard.

“Both Minnesota Power and the National Guard are on the front lines of providing cleaner energy forms,” said Al Hodnik, ALLETE chairman, president and CEO. “It’s exciting to partner with Camp Ripley in meeting its renewable energy goals as we build our very first utility scale solar project. This initiative is the latest step in how Minnesota Power is achieving its EnergyForward strategy of a balanced energy supply of one-third renewable energy, one-third natural gas and one-third coal.”

Construction of the solar array is expected to begin in May and continue through the summer. It’s anticipated the project will be generating solar power by November. Minnesota Power’s first utility-scale solar array will utilize about 80 acres of underutilized property at the National Guard’s 53,000-acre regional training facility near Little Falls, Minn. The Project will be made up of 120,000 thin-film photovoltaic panels manufactured by First Solar, a PV provider based in Ohio. Minnesota Power has contracted with M+W Group, a global engineering and construction company, to build the array; Hunt Electric is a primary subcontractor with other subcontractors to follow.

“We appreciate the support of our regional partners of Little Falls and Morrison County, as we develop this solar project to help meet the state’s energy goals while also answering the nation’s call to transform its energy landscape,” said Hodnik.

The solar array, the largest solar project on any National Guard base in the nation, is part of a broader partnership between Minnesota Power and the National Guard. In an agreement signed in 2014, Minnesota Power and the National Guard outlined plans for identifying ways Camp Ripley could reduce its energy usage and provide enhanced energy security for the military site.

The project is designed to allow Camp Ripley to use the energy produced by the array during emergencies when the electric grid is down, providing enhanced energy security for the military site. At most times, the solar energy produced would be utilized by Minnesota Power’s customers.

The solar standard, enacted in 2013 by the Minnesota Legislature, requires 1.5 percent of a public utility’s applicable retail sales to come from solar energy sources by 2020.

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, 16 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.

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