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NEWS

State designates Minnesota Power a Yellow Ribbon Company

Duluth, Minn.— ALLETE/Minnesota Power has received state recognition for its support for veterans, active-duty service members and their families.

The first Duluth-based company to earn Yellow Ribbon status, Minnesota Power also is the 50th employer in the state recognized for coordinating support systems for military-connected employees and their families.

The company joined with the state of Minnesota and the Minnesota Air National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing to celebrate the achievement on Tuesday, May 10 at the 148th base adjacent to Duluth International Airport.

Overseen by the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program supports service members, veterans and their families by connecting them with career counseling, professional development and employment resources. To earn a Yellow Ribbon designation, companies must build relationships with local military leaders, identify which employees have military connections and commit to hiring, supporting and retaining veterans.

"While we are very proud to receive this recognition, what matters most is what it means to our military-connected employees and their families," said Al Hodnik, president and CEO of ALLETE, Minnesota Power's parent company. "ALLETE and its subsidiaries have for decades supported veterans, military members and their families quietly and behind the scenes. An organic employee effort recently grew out of that spirit of commitment to veterans which led the State of Minnesota to designate MP as a Yellow Ribbon Company. This designation along with demands placed on military families in this era of increased National Guard deployment only heightens the need to raise all ALLETE employees' level of commitment to those who have and continue to ensure our security, comfort and quality of life here in the United States."

The assistance Yellow Ribbon companies extend to veterans, service members and their families are felt across the communities they serve. There are more than 13,000 soldiers and airmen in the Minnesota National Guard. In Minnesota Power's service territory, St. Louis County alone is home to nearly 19,000 veterans. And about 400 members of the Air National Guard's 148th Fighter Wing and the Army Reserve's 312th Engineer Company, both based in Duluth, are deployed overseas.

"Given the many connections of our military members, veterans and their families, Yellow Ribbon is another way for us to give back to the community," said Al Rudeck, Minnesota Power vice president of strategy and planning and executive lead for the company's Yellow Ribbon Committee. "We want to leave a lasting legacy of caring — a legacy of caring for our co-workers and a legacy of caring for our communities. If we can leave that legacy of giving back, I really think that's going to make a big difference not only in the community and to all the families involved, but also in a small way to serve our country."



Deployments and separation can be hard on Guard and Reserve soldiers and airmen and their families, and often present financial hurdles as well. One example of a Yellow Ribbon requirement is a pay differential program in which the company covers the difference between military pay and civilian pay during deployments and training, keeping families whole financially. Minnesota Power has had such a program for years.

For veterans, the problems upon returning to civilian life also can be daunting. The U.S. government estimates that nearly 48,000 veterans are homeless on any given night. And an average of 22 veterans take their own lives each day across the country.

One Minnesota Power employee experienced the loss of a close friend and fellow Marine after transitioning out of the Corps. Jeff Love turned the pain of that loss into motivation to help the company gain Yellow Ribbon status by joining its Yellow Ribbon Committee.

“As a former Marine and Army National Guardsman, I can’t say how pleased I am to be a part of Minnesota Power’s effort to become a Yellow Ribbon Company,” Love said. “The support we have received as a steering committee from all who have heard our message is overwhelming, and truly a testament to the kind of people we have working here. I am very proud to have served our nation, and honored to now help those who may need a little help with life’s ups and downs.”

Love spoke at the May 10 ceremony along with Col. Jon Safstrom, commander of the 148th Fighter Wing; Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard; a representative of Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton’s office; Al Rudeck, Minnesota Power vice president of strategy and planning and executive lead for the company’s Yellow Ribbon Committee; Duluth Mayor Emily Larson; and Al Hodnik, president and CEO of ALLETE (NYSE:ALE), Minnesota Power’s parent company.

The Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program began in Minnesota in 2007, when large numbers of National Guard and Reserve soldiers and airmen were returning from overseas deployments in the war on terrorism and the war in Iraq. Because Minnesota has no active-duty military base, it lacked the support infrastructure to help people after deployments.

“We are so pleased to have Minnesota Power join the state’s 98 Yellow Ribbon Community Networks in 219 cities and 26 counties that synchronize efforts in support of service members, veterans and military families,” said Annette Brechon Kuyper, Director of Military Outreach for the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs.

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon created community support systems for returning part-time soldiers and airmen. Under the program, families receive reintegration training before the unit returns. When the unit hits the demobilization site, a team mentally prepares the soldiers for re-establishing relationships with their spouses, children, parents and workplace. It has been recognized as a model program and implemented in many states across the nation.

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.

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.