



ALLETE Board of Directors Elects Former Westar Energy CEO

Duluth, Minn., ALLETE, Inc. (NYSE:ALE) announced today that James S. Haines, Jr. has joined ALLETE's board of directors.

Haines, a former CEO of two publicly traded utilities, is widely recognized in the energy industry for his leadership skills both in the board room and regulatory arena. He was elected by ALLETE'S Board of Directors at its October 21, 2009 meeting.

From 2002 to 2007 Haines served as CEO and a Director of Westar Energy (NYSE: WR). Westar Energy, the largest electric energy provider in Kansas, serves more than 680,000 customers. Before joining Westar, Haines was the Skov Professor of Business Ethics at the University of Texas in El Paso.

From 1996 to 2001 Haines was CEO, president and a director of El Paso Electric Company (NYSE:EE). EPEC generates and distributes electricity to 360,000 customers in the Rio Grand Valley.

Haines served as executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Westar Energy from March 1992 until he was named chief operating officer in 1995. He served in that capacity until he joined El Paso Electric in May, 1996.

Haines is a 1975 graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia Law School. Upon Haines' 2007 retirement from Westar, he was appointed the Clark Distinguished Professor of Business at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Haines is a member of the board of Stormont-Vail HealthCare in Topeka and is chairman of the board of the Topeka Community Foundation.

"Jim has an excellent reputation for building relationships with regulators, investors, employees and customers," said ALLETE Chairman and CEO Don Shippar. "Jim is a proven utility leader and the board looks forward to his valued input and perspective."

Based in Duluth, Minn., ALLETE (NYSE:ALE) provides regulated energy services in Minnesota and Wisconsin, has an equity investment in the American Transmission Company, and owns BNI Coal in North Dakota and ALLETE Properties in Florida. More information about the company is available at www.allete.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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