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ALLETE Clean Energy Finalizes Sale of Thunder Spirit Wind Project to Montana-Dakota Utilities

DULUTH, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- ALLETE Clean Energy (ACE) has finalized its sale of the Thunder Spirit wind development to Montana-Dakota Utilities after wrapping up construction on the project in December.

A subsidiary of ALLETE Inc. (NYSE:ALE), ALLETE Clean Energy built the 107 Megawatt (MW) wind farm near Hettinger, N.D., under a development agreement with Montana-Dakota Utilities (MDU), a division of MDU Resources Group (NYSE:MDU). Montana-Dakota acquired the finished project for \$200 million and will operate the wind farm for use by its utility customers. Thunder Spirit will generate enough electricity to power about 30,000 homes.

"ALLETE Clean Energy continues to build its capabilities with the successful construction and sale of Thunder Spirit," said Eric Norberg, president of ALLETE Clean Energy. "We look forward to leveraging our growing operational and development capabilities as we continue to explore opportunities in the renewable energy marketplace."

Thunder Spirit is the first project ALLETE Clean Energy has developed and built for another company. The project features 43 Nordex N100 2.5MW turbines that were shipped from the German wind equipment manufacturer via the St. Lawrence Seaway into the Port of Duluth-Superior in Minnesota and then trucked to North Dakota. During peak construction, more than 200 contract employees were at work across the 10,000 acres of land included within the wind farm's perimeter. Thunder Spirit is about 100 miles southwest of Bismarck, N.D., in Adams County.

Norberg cited the strong and collaborative working relationship with MDU and support from residents, city and county officials, and leaseholders in the Hettinger community as important factors in the project's success. Area residents joined government representatives, utility executives and contractors in August at a community event where they signed their names on one of the project's 160-foot fiberglass wind blades.

"I'm so impressed and grateful for the outstanding cooperation and support we received at every level," Norberg said. "Thunder Spirit is a tremendous carbon-free energy resource in an energy-rich state, and we are pleased to play a role in MDU's delivery of renewable energy to its utility customers."

"It is so rewarding to see a project of this magnitude come together to provide our customers with a low-cost source of power," said Nicole Kivisto, president and CEO of Montana-Dakota. "We could not have finished this project in a timely manner without the dedicated work of our employees, ALLETE Clean Energy's management, and the construction provided by Wanzek Construction and Nordex. It was a great partnership."

In recognition of the Hettinger area's support of renewable wind energy, ALLETE Clean Energy recently donated \$10,000 to the Adams County Community Foundation, a newly created fund of the North Dakota Community Foundation that is designed to support a wide variety of community efforts, including senior centers, hospitals, public parks, food pantries and arts programs.

"We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this important endeavor that will help to ensure a strong future for communities in Adams County," said Wells McGiffert, Project Manager for Thunder Spirit.

Thunder Spirit is the latest successfully completed project for a company that has experienced rapid growth since it was formed four years ago, now owning and operating wind generation facilities in four states with a total capacity of more than 500MW. ALLETE Clean Energy's most recent acquisition was a 101MW facility in Armenia Mountain, Pa., earlier this year. ALLETE Clean Energy also owns and operates the Chanarambie-Viking and Lake Benton wind farms in southwest Minnesota, Storm Lake 1 and Storm Lake 2 in Iowa, and a wind farm in Condon, Ore.

Video of the project can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/CJPzCfjvWu8>

ALLETE Clean Energy was established in 2011 to acquire or develop capital projects to create energy solutions by way of wind, solar, biomass, hydro, natural gas, shale resources, clean coal technology and other emerging energy innovations.

ALLETE is an energy company headquartered in Duluth, Minn. In addition to its electric utilities, Minnesota Power and Superior Water, Light and Power of Wisconsin, ALLETE owns ALLETE Clean Energy, based in Duluth, U.S. Water Services headquartered in St. Michael, Minn., BNI Coal in Center, N.D., and has an eight percent equity interest in the American Transmission Co. More information about ALLETE is available at www.allete.com. ALE-ENRG

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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