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Contact: Amy Rutledge
Manager - Corporate Communications
Minnesota Power/ALLETE
218-723-7400
arutledge@mnpower.com

Contact: Deb Mirasola
Director, Communications and Marketing
Dairyland Power Cooperative
Office: 608-787-1378
Cell: 608-792-3704

Media Advisory

Open Houses in Superior provide first look at proposed natural gas power plant

Event hosted by Minnesota Power and Dairyland Power Cooperative

Superior, WI—The public is invited to learn more about the Nemadji Trail Energy Center natural gas power plant at two upcoming open houses. Hosted by Minnesota Power and Dairyland Power Cooperative, the open houses will provide an ideal forum for residents to ask questions and receive information about the location, purpose and timeline for the project. The proposed 525-550 megawatt plant will generate natural gas-powered electricity for the region.

Public open houses:

When: Thursday, Sept. 7

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Where: Elks Lodge

1503 Belknap Ave., Superior Wisconsin.

Minnesota Power, a utility division of ALLETE Inc., and Dairyland Power Cooperative announced plans in June to build the renewable-enabling Nemadji Trail Energy Center at a premier industrial site in Superior, pending regulatory approval. The Superior site for the estimated \$700 million combined-cycle power plant was selected following a Midwest-wide search.

The facility will employ approximately 22-25 people when completed and create an estimated 260 construction jobs and 130 indirect jobs. Because of its proximity to Minnesota, the facility is expected to bring benefits to both states. It is one of the single largest private investments in the area's history and is estimated to provide more than \$1 billion in regional economic benefits over 20 years and generate \$1 million in annual revenue for Douglas County and the City of Superior.

The Nemadji Trail Energy Center is a key component of both Dairyland Power Cooperative's and Minnesota Power's energy mix transformation. Both companies have added renewable resources to their systems while lowering their carbon profile. Natural gas supports the addition of renewable energy to the grid while maintaining reliability by providing critical backup to intermittent renewable resources, such as when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. The two companies will share the energy produced at the plant to provide electric service to their respective customers and consumers.

The natural gas power plant is part of Minnesota Power's recently proposed resource package that includes 250 megawatts of wind power and 10 megawatts of solar energy, both through power purchase agreements.

"This is the next significant chapter of Minnesota Power's *EnergyForward* strategy, representing the largest cumulative addition to our power supply mix since 1980," said Julie Pierce, vice president of strategy and planning for Minnesota Power, who led the package development. "With these resource additions, we

continue to be a leader in the nation's transformation to provide more renewable energy, and are positioning our power supply to remain safe, reliable, cleaner and competitive for the future."

"This project is an important component of Dairyland's ongoing *Preferred Plan* for resource diversification," says Rob Palmberg, Dairyland's Vice President, Strategic Planning. "The Nemadji Trail Energy Center will provide an agile and affordable resource that supports the major wind and solar energy investments Dairyland continues to implement. Natural gas plants provide critical back-up to intermittent renewable sources of power, like solar and wind. The Nemadji Trail Energy Center will respond on demand, providing the energy required by our membership and Minnesota Power's customers exactly when they need it."

About Minnesota Power:

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.

Under its Energy *Forward* strategy, Minnesota Power has made significant strides reducing carbon on its system through the addition of renewable resources and the retirement of small coal units. Nearly 30 percent of the companies' current energy mix comes from renewable energy—a significant change from 2005 when the company was about 95 percent coal. The company's long-term goal has evolved to have a combined balance of two-thirds renewable energy and renewable-enabling natural gas and one-third environmentally compliant coal. More information is available at www.mnpower.com.

About Dairyland Power Cooperative:

Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland (a Touchstone Energy Cooperative) provides the wholesale electrical requirements for 24 distribution cooperatives and 17 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of more than a half-million people in the four-state service area. Dairyland delivers electricity via 3,195 miles of transmission lines and 292 substations located throughout the system's 44,500 square mile service area.

Today, Dairyland's generating resources include coal, natural gas, hydro, wind, solar and biogas. Dairyland's Preferred Plan for resource diversification is economically and systematically diversifying the cooperative's energy resources and reducing its overall carbon footprint. More information is available at www.DairylandPower.com.

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