

- PPM Energy ■ IBERDROLA RENEWABLES ■ Xcel Energy ■
- South Dakota State University Innovation Campus ■
- Brookings Economic Development Corp. ■
- Elkton Public School ■

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 21, 2008

**Congressional Delegation, Local Elected Officials and Community
Celebrate S.D.'s Newest Wind Power Project
*Economic development, educational opportunity highlighted***

BROOKINGS, S.D. – U.S. Senators Tim Johnson and John Thune joined Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin, local elected officials and top energy industry executives today to hail the positive economic impact of the state's newest wind power project, MinnDakota. Hundreds of local families who directly benefit from wind energy development were also in attendance at the ribbon cutting ceremony at South Dakota State University. Gov. Mike Rounds proclaimed April 21-28 as South Dakota Wind Energy Week.

Located in the rolling farmlands of Brookings County, South Dakota and Lincoln County, Minnesota, MinnDakota Wind Power Project has 100 wind turbines that generate enough electricity to power 58,000 homes served by Xcel Energy.

In addition to clean, renewable energy, the project will generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in positive economic impact for these rural counties, according to project developer PPM Energy.

"Renewable energy projects like the MinnDakota Wind Power Project not only generate clean sources of energy, they also create jobs here in South Dakota," U.S. Senator Tim Johnson said. "Helping reduce our nation's dependence on fossil fuels and developing new sources of energy is crucial, and I am proud of the many partners who have made this project possible. In the next few years South Dakota will develop several large wind energy projects and I look forward to working with the project developers as well as the communities supplying home-grown energy."

"The MinnDakota wind facility near Brookings is a visible symbol of the progress the wind industry is making in South Dakota," U.S. Senator John Thune said. "Successful projects like this one will encourage the further development of renewable energy technologies and further integration of wind into our national energy strategy. I am proud to help wind energy producers in growing the industry via federal incentives and I will continue to work on behalf of wind in the future."

"The opening of the MinnDakota Wind Farm by PPM in South Dakota is a significant step forward in tapping into the enormous potential for wind power in our state," Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin said. "As the largest wind power installation in South Dakota, the opening of MinnDakota not only represents our state's continued commitment to playing a pivotal role in diversifying our nation's overall energy portfolio, but will also bring jobs and spur overall economic development in and around Brookings County. I congratulate the forward-thinking entrepreneurs at PPM Energy for seizing the opportunity to encourage wind power development in the state and am hopeful that through continued partnerships between states and companies along with incentives and support from the federal level, we will continue to see more projects like MinnDakota in South Dakota and across the nation."

MinnDakota has already provided a boost to construction jobs, as well as full-time operations staff based in the community. PPM is also actively engaging local students, who may grow up to be the next generation of wind technicians.



Elkton Public School students with their model wind turbine in a project sponsored by PPM Energy

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The wind power project is located in an area of rapidly expanding alternative energy development, including wind power, biofuel and photovoltaic technologies.

“The Brookings area provides the perfect combination of wind resource backed by a strong collaboration between public and private entities all focused on job growth and creating opportunity,” said Don Furman, Senior Vice President for Development, Transmission, and Policy for PPM Energy. “As a result, we are planning to expand our wind development in this region.”

The entire capacity of the MinnDakota Wind Power Project has been contracted to Xcel Energy. The company is the country’s leading wind power provider. Xcel Energy offers a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.3 million electricity customers through operations in eight Western and Midwestern states.

“The MinnDakota wind farm is an important addition to South Dakota’s renewable generating sources,” said Dave Sparby, Acting President and CEO of Northern States Power-Minnesota, an Xcel Energy company. “With this addition, South Dakota ranks fifth in the nation in the percentage of electricity generated by wind, according to the American Wind Energy Association. The wind farm also contributes to Xcel Energy remaining the No. 1 wind power provider in the country. Those are significant accomplishments, and we congratulate South Dakota on its commitment to renewable energy.”

“Our continued partnership with Xcel Energy means that more areas of the country can now count wind energy as part of their supply, and our operations continue to grow,” said Kevin Devlin, Vice President of Wind Operations for PPM Energy. “Our parent company, IBERDROLA RENEWABLES, alone has committed to bringing online 1,000 MW of new wind energy in North America every year. That’s nearly ten MinnDakotas every year.”

Positive Economic and Environmental Impact

MinnDakota is expected to generate hundreds of thousands of dollars in positive economic impact for the community each year. At the peak of construction there were 250 workers on site. Going forward, there will be 10 to 12 full-time operations and maintenance employees based in the region.

“Brookings County has experienced a long history of steady population and job growth,” said Al Heuton, Executive Director of Brookings Economic Development Corp. “The MinnDakota project has been a tremendous addition to our new economy development efforts, and our goal is to see a continued expansion of wind energy, as well as other renewable resources such as ethanol and photovoltaic technologies.”

MinnDakota is a model for sensitive land use. While the entire project spans approximately 15,000 acres, the actual footprint of the turbines and associated facilities uses less than two percent of the total area within leased land. Landowners continue using the remainder of the land, primarily for farming.



MinnDakota Wind Power Project manager Dave Sweet at work on the site

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Engaging the Wind Technicians of Tomorrow

MinnDakota represents a successful collaboration among the wind industry, national and regional government and institutions such as South Dakota State University. PPM plans to have an office at the university's new Innovation Campus, in the Innovation Center Building, now under construction.

“The Innovation Campus is South Dakota’s first university-related research park, where people and ideas will come together and create technology solutions that will change how we live,” said Teresa McKnight, CEO and Executive Director of South Dakota State University Innovation Campus. “Companies like PPM will be able to partner with SDSU faculty and researchers, and have opportunities to employ SDSU students through internships, assistantships, part-time and full-time employment.”

In addition to the company’s collaboration with SDSU, PPM Energy recently engaged three classes at Elkton Public School to create their own model wind turbines. The following day, the students visited a working turbine at the MinnDakota site and learned about a day in the life of a wind technician.

“We want all our students to make that connection from the classroom to the real world,” said Tony Simons, Superintendent of Elkton Public School. “The wind turbines and this project are the wave of the future, and our students need to learn about careers associated with these industries. It’s a huge opportunity for our students and teachers to get involved.”

About PPM Energy

PPM Energy, headquartered in Portland, Ore., is one of North America’s leading wind power providers with more than 2,000 MW of wind power in operation, plus over 800 MW of clean gas-fired generation and over 58 BCF of gas storage. PPM is part of IBERDROLA RENEWABLES, the leading wind energy provider in the world, with more than 7,700 MW of wind power online worldwide and with a pipeline of more than 42,000 MW of wind power. www.ppmenergy.com