

DATE Feb. 10, 2011

Final tower topped out at Crow Lake wind project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bismarck, N.D. -- On Feb. 9, the 108th turbine for the Crow Lake wind project was “topped-out” at about 2:45 p.m. This is the last turbine to be erected on the \$363-million project that began construction Oct. 5, 2010.

Even though the last turbine has been erected, it’s not ready for operation yet, according to Amanda Wangler, project engineer. “Once it’s erected, all the electrical and control connections must be tied in,” she says. “Once those are tested and cleared, then the commissioning process begins.”

During commissioning, Basin Electric’s nine wind turbine technicians at the project get intimately familiar with each turbine. “Commissioning a turbine is a step-by-step, sophisticated process. Each step is reviewed for completeness before the next step begins. Basin Electric techs follow each of the three GE commissioning crews as they test each tower to make sure it’s ready for operation,” Wangler says. “It may take a couple weeks for the GE crews to clear each turbine for operation.” Once GE commissions each turbine, it’s released to begin producing electricity. The commissioning process began in October 2010 as the first turbines were erected.

GE supplied each of the 108 1.5-megawatt-capacity turbines for this project.

The entire wind project should be fully operational by the end of February. However, work at the site will not be complete. “The next major effort for this project is clean-up and reclamation,” Wangler says. “Basin Electric works closely with the area landowners and county representatives to make sure that any disturbed land is returned to as good a condition or better than it was before construction began. This will take several more months, probably into late August, depending on weather conditions.”

The Crow Lake Wind Project consists of 101 turbines owned and operated by a subsidiary of Basin Electric, PrairieWinds SD 1, Inc. One of those turbines has been purchased by Mitchell Technical Institute for use in its wind turbine technology program. Another seven turbines are owned by South Dakota Wind Partners. PrairieWinds SD 1, Inc., has been contracted to operate the turbines for both MTI and the wind partners and purchase the power produced.

The Crow Lake Wind Project will be the largest wind project in the United States owned solely by a cooperative, and will have a generating capacity of 151.5 megawatts. The Wind Partners project will have a capacity of 10.5 megawatts.

In 2001, Basin Electric developed its first wind project – two turbines north of Chamberlain, S.D., followed by another two turbines south of Minot, N.D. Since then Basin Electric has added wind generation totaling more than 450 megawatts of wind power in the Dakotas, including power purchases from several projects with NextEra Energy Resources. In 2009, a Basin Electric subsidiary PrairieWinds ND 1, Inc. completed the largest wind project in North Dakota. That project has a capacity of 120 megawatts. When the South Dakota project is fully operational, Basin Electric will have more than 700 megawatts of wind generation to help meet the power supply needs of its member cooperatives.

ABOUT BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE

Basin Electric is a consumer-owned, regional cooperative headquartered in Bismarck, N.D. It generates and transmits electricity to 135 member rural electric systems in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. These member systems distribute electricity to about 2.8 million consumers.

For more information, go to www.basinelectric.com.