

PPL Montana Dedicates New Powerhouse at Century-Old Rainbow Hydroelectric Facility

Ceremony celebrates completion of \$245 million redevelopment project

GREAT FALLS, Mont., July 10, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- PPL Montana officially dedicated a new 60-megawatt powerhouse Wednesday (7/10) at its Rainbow Dam hydroelectric facility near Great Falls.

The ceremony, which drew a host of state and local officials, celebrated completion of a \$245 million redevelopment project. The new facility replaces a century-old powerhouse and boosts Rainbow's generating capacity by 70 percent.

"One hundred and thirty years after Great Falls was founded on a vision that its waterfalls could power industry and progress, we remain inspired by the falls and by the power and potential energy of the Missouri River," said Pete Simonich, vice president and Chief Operating Officer of PPL Montana.

"With just one unit, the new state-of-the-art powerhouse can generate about 70 percent more power than the old powerhouse's eight units combined," he said. "And it can produce enough clean, renewable electricity to power 45,000 homes."

Construction of the new facility began in October 2009 and was completed earlier this year. The project required the removal of more than 500,000 tons of earth and rock. More than 50,000 cubic yards of concrete were poured, and 7 million pounds of rebar went into the new powerhouse.

"As projects like Rainbow demonstrate, hydropower continues to offer promise and potential," said Simonich. "Modernization and upgrades to existing facilities offer an opportunity to increase capacity without the need for construction of new, large dams."

The project created more than 200 construction jobs, relied heavily on Montana subcontractors and gave the local economy a boost even as the nation dealt with a lingering recession. Incentives made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 helped make the project possible.

In addition to the new powerhouse, the redevelopment project included the replacement of 23 miles of 100-kilovolt power lines, substation upgrades at PPL Montana's five Great Falls hydroelectric plants, and installation of a new Crooked Falls switchyard. The enhancements will strengthen the reliability and efficiency of electrical systems connecting PPL Montana's Great Falls facilities to NorthWestern Energy's grid.

PPL Montana's Rainbow Dam, which began operation in 1910, is 1,055 feet long and 29 feet high. The new powerhouse sits about 2,500 feet downstream from the dam and 200 feet from the old powerhouse. Water flows down a 2,500-foot power canal and through a 25-foot diameter penstock to the new turbine generator. The turbine's slower rotation, wider flow passages and fewer rotating surfaces make it easier for fish to pass through unharmed.

The new facility began commercial operation in late April and represents the largest single private investment in Cascade County history.

PPL Montana provides safe, reliable energy from coal-fired power plants at Colstrip and Billings, as well as 11 hydroelectric plants along West Rosebud Creek and the Missouri, Madison, Clark Fork and Flathead rivers. It has a combined generating capacity of more than 1,200 megawatts and has offices in Billings, Butte and Helena. PPL Montana and its 500 employees are dedicated to Montana and its communities, supporting educational, environmental and economic development programs across the state. PPL EnergyPlus operates a trading floor in Butte that markets and sells power for PPL Montana in wholesale and retail energy markets throughout the western United States. PPL Montana and PPL EnergyPlus are subsidiaries of PPL Corporation (NYSE:PPL). More information about PPL Montana is available at www.pplmontana.com.

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