

Trimont Chocolate Festival • Iberdrola Renewables • Great River Energy

For Immediate Release – July 11, 2009

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Iberdrola Renewables and partners dedicate Elm Creek Wind Power Project

Landowner-developed wind farm generates enough homegrown electricity to serve the annual energy needs of about 29,000 homes

TRIMONT, Minn.—Thousands of participants at the Trimont Chocolate Festival were on hand to dedicate the Elm Creek Wind Power Project on Saturday, July 11.

The Elm Creek project and the nearby Trimont Area Wind Farm are Minnesota's best development models for a unique landowner partnership, said Tim Seck, director of development for Iberdrola Renewables, the owner, builder and operator of the two wind farms.

"Elm Creek, like the Trimont Area Wind Farm before it, was born in the minds of local farmers," Seck said. "They wanted to get into the wind farming business and performed much of the initial development work."

"When we won a power purchase agreement from Great River Energy for the Trimont project, we knew we would not be able to secure turbines or build a project. So we said 'let's bring in the professionals,'" said Neal VonOhlen, a landowner and chief manager of the landowner groups for both Trimont and Elm Creek.

After a search of wind power companies, the landowners picked Iberdrola Renewables, then PPM Energy, to build and operate the Trimont project. As a result of the successful working relationship at Trimont, Iberdrola Renewables and the local landowners partnered again to develop the Elm Creek project. In return for performing much of the up front development work, participating farmers receive both lease payments and revenue participation. It amounts to about \$1.5 million every year, spread among the landowners of the Trimont and Elm Creek projects.

Meanwhile, the two projects pay property taxes to Jackson and Martin counties ranging from \$700,000-\$800,000 every year.

"The Trimont model worked so well, everybody wanted to do it again," VonOhlen said.

"I am thrilled to see another wind energy project dotting the horizon in Southwest Minnesota," said Congressman Tim Walz. "The First District is blessed with tremendous wind energy resources that are extremely important to our economy. The Elm Creek Wind Power Project is an important source of revenue to our farmers whose land contains the wind turbines and also for Jackson County, which will receive more than \$500,000 annually in additional property tax revenues. I recently introduced two bills in Congress to help farmers and rural families take advantage of incentives to expand wind production and I hope to see more wind projects in the future as a result of the legislation."

"This is another big day for Minnesota as we continue to lead the nation in the production of renewable energy," said Bill Glahn, director of the Minnesota Office of Energy Security. "Projects like Elm Creek Wind will help us achieve our goal of generating 25 percent of our energy from renewable sources by the year 2025."



Each of the projects generates enough electricity to serve the annual energy needs of nearly 29,000 Minnesota homes. Great River Energy purchases all the output from both the Trimont and Elm Creek projects to serve the energy needs of its 28 member cooperatives.

"With the addition of the Elm Creek Wind Farm, Great River Energy has more than 315 megawatts of wind capacity under contract – the most of any cooperative in the country," said Mark Rathbun, Great River Energy's renewable energy project leader. "This gives us a great start toward meeting the state of Minnesota's renewable energy standard."

The Elm Creek wind farm consists of 66 wind turbines, each as tall as a 27-story building. The project encompasses about 9,500 acres of land leased from 56 local landowners who continue to use the land for corn and soybean farming.

Typically, wind farms take only 1-2 percent of the land out of agricultural use; the rest can continue to be used as before.

Iberdrola Renewables currently is in the permitting process with the hope of building the 150-MW Elm Creek 2 in 2010 or 2011.

Iberdrola Renewables is the world's leading provider of wind power, and ended the first half of 2009 with 10,003 MW of total installed capacity. www.iberdrolarenewables.us

Great River Energy is a not-for-profit cooperative which provides wholesale electricity to more than 1.7 million people through 28 member distribution cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. With more than \$2.8 billion in assets, Great River Energy is the second largest utility in the state, based on generating capacity, and the fifth largest generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in the United States. Great River Energy's member cooperatives range from those in the outer-ring suburbs of the Twin Cities to the Arrowhead region of Minnesota to the farmland of southwestern Minnesota. Great River Energy's largest distribution cooperative serves more than 120,000 member-consumers; the smallest serves just over 2,400. For more information, visit www.greatriverenergy.com.

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