



January 30, 2018

—Via Electronic Filing—

Daniel P. Wolf Executive Secretary Minnesota Public Utilities Commission 121 7th Place East, Suite 350 St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2147

RE: RENEWABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND OVERSIGHT PROCESS

 $1^{\text{st}}$ ,  $3^{\text{rd}}$  and  $4^{\text{th}}$  Cycle Quarterly Status and Progress Report

DOCKET NOS. E002/M-00-1583, E002/M-07-675 and E002/M-12-1278

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Enclosed for filing is our quarterly status report on the various energy production projects, research and development projects and higher education block grant programs that have received a grant award from Xcel Energy's Renewable Development Fund.

This progress report is being provided for informational purposes only. We do not request a comment period concerning this information. If a party wishes to comment on a specific project, we believe they should do so through a request to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

We have electronically filed this document with the Commission, and copies have been provided to parties on the service lists noted above. Please contact me at <u>allen.krug@xcelenergy.com</u> or (612) 330-6270 if you have any questions regarding this filing.

Sincerely,

/s/

ALLEN D. KRUG ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT, STATE REGULATORY POLICY

Enclosure

c: Official Service List

# STATE OF MINNESOTA BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Nancy Lange Chair
Dan Lipschultz Commissioner
Matthew Schuerger Commissioner
John Tuma Commissioner
Katie Seiben Commissioner

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION OF NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY FOR APPROVAL OF A RENEWABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND OVERSIGHT PROCESS DOCKET NOS. E002/M-00-1583 E002/M-07-675 E002/M-12-1278

**QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT** 

#### INTRODUCTION

Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy, submits to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission this fourth quarter 2017 status report<sup>1</sup> on 20 RDF projects regarding Renewable Development Fund (RDF) project activity for the first, third, and fourth funding cycles.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This status report reflects updated information on all active RDF projects from the previous quarterly report. It does not include projects that have been completed during a prior quarter. A final report for all completed projects has been posted to the RDF website at: <a href="www.xcelenergy.com/rdf">www.xcelenergy.com/rdf</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> All project and administrative costs and activities associated with Docket No. E002/M-03-1883 has been satisfied, as such the second funding cycle is not included in this quarterly report. See the *Petition of Northern States Power Company for Approval of a Renewable Development Fund Oversight Process*, Docket Nos. E002/M-00-1583 et al., COMPLIANCE FILING – QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT (July 29, 2015).

## FIRST FUNDING CYCLE – PROJECT STATUS AND PROGRESS

AH-01: Crown Hydro (3.2 MW Hydroelectric Generation Facility)

Start Date: April 3, 2002 Grant Amount: \$5,100,000 End Date: 400 days from Property Acquisition Date Funds Invoiced: \$1,538,591

**Project Summary:** This Renewable Energy Production Project is located on the Mississippi River as it flows through the City of Minneapolis and is designed to provide 3.2 MW of renewable hydropower near the historic St. Anthony Falls Milling District.

Fourth Quarter Activity: In this quarter project activity has focused on the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) 106 Process. A website designer has been hired to assist in updating content and modify design of the Crown Hydro website. An immediate change was made to facilitate public comments through the website. A public Consulting Parties meeting was held on October 25, 2017 at Minneapolis Public Library concerning the proposed Areas of Potential Effect (APE) and narrative. A request for concurrence on the APE was sent to Minnesota SHPO. A 30 day comment period on the APE began October 30, 2017. Comments were received from Friends of the Lock & Dam, Minnesota SHPO, and Streamline Associates. On December 6, 2017, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) held a public teleconference to discuss the status of consultation under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the application to amend the license of the unconstructed Crown Mill Hydroelectric Project. Minnesota SHPO indicated the area for project construction is not clearly delineated. Crown Hydro agreed to make the APE larger. The Minnesota SHPO noted that the FERC project boundary has been expanded and is much larger than originally defined. FERC reminded that the project boundary is to only include lands necessary for project purposes. Two Tribes have asked for a tribal survey of the area. Crown Hydro is working with the Tribal SHPO to conduct these surveys. It is anticipated that a Working Group is to be established as suggested in the FERC public teleconference.

## THIRD FUNDING CYCLE - PROJECT STATUS AND PROGRESS

**RD3-77: Coaltec** (Gasification of Alternative Fuels to Convert Waste Material to Energy)

 Start Date: October 22, 2008
 Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

 End Date: July 22, 2012³
 Funds Invoiced: \$850,000

**Project Summary:** This Research and Development Project is intended to use one or more locally available biomass products, such as turkey litter, to supply a solid-fuel, fixed-bed gasifier to prove the feasibility of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) technology using alternative fuels in a commercial setting to generate electricity.

**Fourth Quarter Activity:** In this quarter, Coaltec continues to try and procure a power unit to complete the remaining two milestones. The final milestones consist of the operation of a fully commercial gasification to heat and power system to collect one year of heat and power generation data for analysis.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A contract extension is pending to allow for the discovery and acquisition of satisfactory financing for the acquisition of a power generator. If such funding is obtained, RDF administration will review the financing terms and determine, with input from the advisory group, if certain administrative amendments to the grant contract are warranted to facilitate completion of the final project milestones.

## Fourth Funding Cycle – Project Status and Progress

## Renewable Energy Production Projects

**EP4-11:** Innovative Power Systems (0.96727 MW<sub>DC</sub> Solar Generation Project)

Start Date: December 1, 2015

End Date: December 22, 2017

Grant Amount: \$1,850,000

Funds Invoiced: \$1,850,000

**Project Summary:** This project installed 967.27 kW $_{\rm DC}$  of roof-top, solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity on four commercial buildings within the Energy Innovation Corridor along the Green Line Light Rail line in Saint Paul to demonstrate a development process utilizing private investment as a strategy for prudent commercial solar growth.

Fourth Quarter Activity: Project activities during this quarter include the completion of the final report, submission of an invoice, and the final payment. A project presentation was given to the RDF advisory group on October 10, 2017. A 38.54kW<sub>DC</sub> array was installed at 1000 University Avenue. Prior to executing the RDF contract, the original proposal was to install 120 kW but the structural engineer limited construction to only the newer portion due to uncertainty of the load capacity on the older structure. An 110.7kW<sub>DC</sub> array was installed at 1919 University Avenue. To meet electrical code the entire switchgear was replaced which delayed the final interconnection and increased project costs. A 432.96kW<sub>DC</sub> array was installed at 2550 University Avenue which was the largest and most challenging due to the roof was divided into 10 'drainage basins that created significant pitch changes. A 384.6kW<sub>DC</sub> array was installed at 1000 Westgate Drive on a mixed-use commercial building that houses numerous bio-laboratories and clean rooms. The roof had numerous 4-6' vent stacks that provided a design, engineering and installation challenge in order to minimize shading and a relatively light load-bearing roof capacity. All construction activities have been completed and the arrays are in service and producing power. The last facility was commissioned November 27, 2017. All power is delivered through a net-metering agreement with NSP.

All project activity has been satisfactorily completed as required by the RDF grant contract. A final payment has been made and the project file has been closed. A copy of the final report is posted on the RDF web page at www.xcelenergy.com/rdf.

# EP4-15: Minnesota Renewable Energy Society (1.0 MW<sub>DC</sub> Solar Garden Pilot)

Start Date: February 17, 2015

End Date: May 17, 2017<sup>4</sup>

Grant Amount: \$2,661,320

Funds Invoiced: \$0

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to install 1,000 kW $_{\rm DC}$  solar PV capacity and demonstrate the concept of collective Solar Garden ownership as a way to increase the penetration of solar renewable electric production in Minnesota.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During this quarter, the Department of Commerce provided comments on a proposed contract amendment. The contract amendment would allow third party ownership so that MRES could access to tax credit financing and use the CSG pricing tariff rather than a PPA pricing structure, thereby reducing the grant contract. The Company also requested feedback on whether MRES could use a portion of the unused grant monies to install a third garden for low-income subscribers in Minneapolis. In the Department's comments, it proposed an alternative that would allow third party ownership, but would keep energy pricing as originally proposed and the grant award would be reduced to \$514,352 due to reductions in the project budget. Reply comments will be submitted in January 2018.

**EP4-20: Target Corporation** (350 kW <sub>AC</sub> Target Midway Solar PV)

 Start Date: June 12, 2015
 Grant Amount: \$583,513

 End Date: December 11, 2017
 Funds Invoiced: \$583,513

**Project Summary:** This project installed 418 kW $_{AC}$  of roof-top solar PV capacity as part of a retail showcase development at the SuperTarget Midway store in St. Paul.

Fourth Quarter Activity: Project activities during this quarter include the completion of the final report, submission of an invoice, and the final payment. A project presentation was given to the RDF advisory group on August 8, 2016. The solar field is comprised of 1,638 Suniva MVX modules. The modules are polycrystalline units mounted on a fixed racking system oriented due south at a 30 degree tilt. The 30 degree tilt helps optimize system size on the roof and the tilt will help remove snow. The racking system is manufactured by Sunlink. Thirteen modules are wired together in a series string resulting in maximum open circuit voltage on the array of 580V<sub>DC</sub>. Electricity from the series strings is fed to the DC circuit combiner,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Pending PUC approval of modifications to the RDF grant contract submitted on September 22, 2017.

which groups strings together in parallel and produces a single output circuit. All construction activities have been completed and the array is in service and producing power. The facility was commissioned April 28, 2016. To date the facility has produced 510 MWh of energy. All power is used on site and delivered through a netmetering agreement with NSP.

All project activity has been satisfactorily completed as required by the RDF grant contract. A final payment has been made and the project file has been closed. A copy of the final report is posted on the RDF web page at <a href="https://www.xcelenergy.com/rdf">www.xcelenergy.com/rdf</a>.

**EP4-22: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board** (200  $kW_{DC}$  Solar Generation Facility)

Start Date: October 28, 2014

End Date: December 28, 2017

Grant Amount: \$969,741

Funds Invoiced: \$0

**Project Summary:** This project intends to demonstrate the effectiveness of alternative solar designs, such as carports and canopies, when roof-mounted designs are not feasible. This is achieved through the installation of  $200~\mathrm{kW}_\mathrm{DC}$  of solar PV capacity at five locations within the Minneapolis park system.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) presented their final report to the RDF advisory group and provided a tour of each array to RDF administration. Each of the arrays demonstrated an alternative technique and design for placement of solar at challenging sites that had installation barriers (i.e. structural, historical, security, etc.). All the arrays are producing power and used made-in-Minnesota panels, installers, and consulting firms. The Parade Ice Arena has the greatest electrical usage of any of the MPRB facilities and has the structural capacity to bear the weight of the array and is also has good visibility near the downtown core. The solar installation at Webber Park is located on the pump house for the natural swimming pool and the filtration pond. The site was selected since it met the criteria that the pump house was a new building with no shading and had a roof that was south facing. The park is used year around with swimming in the summer and ice-skating in the winter. The solar installation at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Junior Park is located on the roof of the park's multipurpose room. The site was selected since it was a south facing roof but shading restricted installation to the upper part of the roof. The solar installation at Lake Nokomis Beach is a shade structure. Although the beach is seasonal, the array is adjacent to the walk/jog/run/bike path which is used year around. The solar installation at East Phillips Park is located on the south facing wall of the gymnasium, on the Community Center. The site was selected since the facility is used year around with diverse and

numerous levels of program activities from ranging from community recreation and cultural events to support the great ethnic diversity of the neighborhood.

**EP4-24: Bergey Windpower** (500 kW<sub>AC</sub> Wind Generation Facility)

Start Date: November 24, 2014 Grant Amount: \$1,106,600 End Date: November 24, 2017<sup>5</sup> Funds Invoiced: \$0

**Project Summary:** This project intends to increase the market penetration of small wind turbines within Minnesota. The project achieves that goal by installing fifty 10 kW<sub>AC</sub> wind turbines in Stearns, Benton, Meeker, Lincoln, Murray, Nobles and Pipestone Counties.

Fourth Quarter Activity: Bergey's request to RDF Administration to use a new Bergey Excel 15 turbine, which is rated at 15 kW capacity and has a higher energy output rather than the Bergey Excel 10 which is rated at 10 kW capacity remains under consideration. During the past quarter the first 10 kW turbine installation in Ruthton has continued to operate at 100% availability since commissioning and produced 8,287 kWh during the fourth quarter. Marketing has been renewed to identify Xcel Energy customers to be project participants.

**EP4-29: Dragonfly Solar** (997.5  $kW_{DC}$  Solar Generation Facility)

Start Date: September 8, 2016

End Date: May 8, 2018

Grant Amount: \$1,650,000

Funds Invoiced: \$0

**Project Summary:** This project intends to improve the infrastructure efficiencies and power production of an existing set of wind farm by installing up to 997.5 kW<sub>DC</sub> solar capacity at a wind farm south of Dodge Center, Minnesota. By adding solar to the wind facility the net effect is an increase in production which is closer in the aggregate to firm capability.

**Fourth Quarter Activity**: During the past quarter, the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) was approved by the PUC. In addition, a land lease was signed, a field survey of the property was completed, and an application for a Conditional Use Permit

<sup>5</sup> On August 29, 2017 Bergey requested a two year contract extension and the ability to use a 15kW wind turbine rather than a 10 kW wind turbine as reported in the prior quarterly report. A contract extension is pending the review and analysis of the proposed amendment.

(CUP) was submitted to Dodge County for a setback variance. In discussions with the landowner to the east, it was determined that it would be easier to operate farm machinery in this field if a setback to the west was minimized. The Dodge County Board of Adjustments will take up the setback request early in the first quarter of 2018. A purchase order has been issued for Heliene 72P-325-SW PV modules to lock in pricing and delivery date. Dragonfly is getting quotes on pier installation before a selection decision on final racking is made. Because of the cold weather, there is a concern about the cost of driving the piers through frost and consequentially an alternate bid for a surface ballasted racking system has been made. Construction is anticipated to begin in early February 2018.

**EP4-34: City of Saint Paul** (Lowertown Ballpark 103.5 kW<sub>DC</sub> Solar Generation Facility)

Start Date: February 9, 2015

End Date: December 22, 2017

Grant Amount: \$555,750

Funds Invoiced: \$555,750

**Project Summary:** This project installed 103.5 kW $_{\rm DC}$  of ground-mounted solar PV capacity at the new Lowertown Ballpark (CHS Stadium) in downtown Saint Paul.

**Fourth Quarter Activity:** Project activities during this quarter include the completion of the final report, submission of an invoice, and the final payment. A project presentation was given to the RDF advisory group on July 11, 2017. The facility consists of two arrays: a 58.3 kW<sub>DC</sub> PV shade pavilion over a spectator terrace and a 44.16 kW<sub>DC</sub> array at the northeast corner of the ballpark. This highly visible project is part of a larger sustainability initiative of the Saints and the City of Saint Paul and complies with the City of Saint Paul Sustainable Building Policy. Estimates indicate that approximately twelve percent of the ballpark's energy will be produced by the solar arrays. With a prominent presence at CHS Field and through interactive kiosks in the stadium concourse, the arrays have significant positive exposure to park visitors which has more than 400,000 spectators per year. Because one array is built as a pavilion amenity which provides shade and shelter for people to gather beneath, each visitor is given an opportunity to interact with the solar arrays directly. This helps establish a unique understanding of the project. It was important that the arrays were visually accessible to guests and a part of the experience of going to the ballpark. All construction activities have been completed and the array is in service and producing power. The facility was commissioned May 18, 2016 and produced 118,569 kWh of power during the first year. All power is used on site and delivered through a netmetering agreement with NSP.

All project activity has been satisfactorily completed as required by the RDF grant contract. A final payment has been made and the project file has been closed. A copy of the final report is posted on the RDF web page at <a href="www.xcelenergy.com/rdf">www.xcelenergy.com/rdf</a>.

## Research and Development Projects

**RD4-1:** University of Minnesota (Development of a Novel Gasification Technology for Distributed Power Generation from Solid Wastes)

Start Date: January 4, 2017 Grant Amount: \$999,999 End Date: January 4, 2020 Funds Invoiced: \$139,221

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to develop a fast gasification-based electricity generation technology that based on microwave heating to raise the process temperature and increase heating rate enables distributed generation of electricity from biomass and other solid waste at the site of biomass generation.

**Fourth Quarter Activity**: During the past quarter, research focused on biomass conversion in the presence of microwave absorbent SiC and catalysts. The use of catalysts is intended to alter the gas composition and convert tar for a cleaner gas product. The University conducted gasification experiments using a system in which the microwave chamber was filled with SiC balls as the reaction bed. During the gasification process, the SiC bed was stirred continuously with an auger for even heating and char discharge. The gasification experiments yielded data for analysis. The temperature was monitored, fractional yields were determined, and the composition of the gas and bio-oil characterized. It was found that methane was the dominant gas at the lower temperature range of 450°C- 500 °C. The maximum heating value was obtained at 500 °C.

**RD4-2:** University of Minnesota (Optimizing Renewable Electric Energy Generation on Minnesota Dairy Farms)

Start Date: June 2, 2015

End Date: June 2, 2018

Grant Amount: \$982,408

Funds Invoiced: \$407,279

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to develop a renewable electric generation model that improves the long-term profitability of Minnesota dairy farms and reduces their carbon footprint by establishing a model net-zero energy dairy parlor. An integrated on-site generation system consisting of approximately 20 kW<sub>DC</sub> of wind and 54 kW<sub>DC</sub> of solar PV capacity will be designed, installed, and performance-tested as part of this project.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter, with the completion of construction and installation of the dairy thermal energy SCADA system and the

renewable electric generation systems (54 kW solar PV, 20 kW wind), activities have shifted to data collection, analysis, and presentation. A regional, public meeting was held at the WCROC facility in Morris, MN called the Midwest Farm Energy Conference which included many presentations related to swine and dairy energy systems including one about this project. About 75 people attended the conference. A literature review was conducted assessing best management practices for integrating renewable energy generation on dairy farms. Many farms have installed renewable energy systems, but nothing analogous to the system level energy re-design incorporated into the WCROC dairy parlor was found. A preliminary life cycle assessment model has been developed for the WCROC milking parlor. An LCA model is a tool that tracks inputs and outputs of the dairy system to look at how a change in inputs or processes will change the outputs and the downstream environmental impacts of the system. Fossil energy and greenhouse gas differences between the baseline dairy system and the energy enhanced system are being analyzed using renewable electricity production from the installed solar and wind energy systems.

**RD4-7: InterPhases Solar** (New CIS Solar Cells with All-Solution-Based Roll-to-Roll Processing)

 Start Date: January 12, 2017
 Grant Amount: \$1,000,000

 End Date: January 12, 2020
 Funds Invoiced: \$131,023

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to advance copper indium selenide thin-film (CIS) technology towards commercial production by combining the deposit of all the device components into a roll-to-roll (R2R) single step electrodeposition (SSE) process for CIS solar cell manufacturing.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter, InterPhases has been developing and advancing a new rapid thermal annealing system for continuous R2R processing. New parts have been procured, and equipment has been adapted to work on the R2R system. For example, the controller system has been modified with two-stage digital programmable timers and is being integrated into the annealing R2R module. Characterization of the CISe film continues to investigate the many unusual properties, resulting from InterPhases' unique deposition process. A number of new instruments and techniques have recently emerged for characterization of nanomaterial properties. Since these instruments are beyond the project budget to be conducted in-house, InterPhases has been collaborating with a number of companies to gain access to high-resolution nano-techniques. Techniques such as an atomic force microscopy, capacitance microscopy, kelvin probe force microscopy, and scanning spreading resistance microscopy are providing invaluable information on the unique optoelectronic properties of the CISe films. The results from advanced

nanomaterial characterization are helping to redesign the device structures for better performance and easier processing. Current research focused on new photoluminescence imaging methods, which avoid the need for electrical contacts and can be applied after the absorber deposition, without the need for complete device fabrication.

**RD4-8: City of Red Wing** (City of Red Wing Refuse Derived Fuel Production Facility)

Start Date: February 6, 2017

End Date: February 6, 2021

Grant Amount: \$1,999,500

Funds Invoiced: \$0

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to demonstrate the production of a cleaner refuse derived biomass fuel by improving the recovery of more recyclables, the removal of fuel contaminates and achieve a reduction in fuel hauling costs.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter Red Wing obtained bids for work to replace damage created by the June 7, 2017 fire within the Incinerator Building. Fire damage will require demolition of the incinerator building, replace and insulate the roof of the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and construct a shop building. On December 11, 2017, the City Council approved a contract with Fitzgerald Construction to demolish the Incinerator Building with work anticipated to begin in first quarter 2018. Also on December 11, 2017 the Council awarded a contract for the replacement of the MFR roof and insulation with work also anticipated to begin in first quarter 2018. Cleaning of the MRF building is being contracted with a separate entity. The former Incinerator Building also housed a shop. A pre-engineered steel building will be erected. Challenges in preparing the site have been extensive as the ground was once a marsh and used to deposit waste materials in the past. Materials have been ordered, an excavation contracts approved and final design pieces are being prepared. The new shop will also serve in the short-term as the replacement to the Incinerator Building which will not be complete until the end of 2018. The City Council approved a professional service agreement with RRT Design and Construction for the design and construction oversight of replacing Incinerator. The City additionally approved a proposal from RRT to evaluate the current condition of all of the MRF equipment since the fire and oversee its restoration to pre-fire condition.

**RD4-11:** University of Minnesota (Demonstrating Potential for Distributed Power Generation Using Converted Biomass)

Start Date: September 3, 2015

End Date: October 3, 2018

Grant Amount: \$1,899,449

Funds Invoiced: \$17,482

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by using torrefaction to produce a biofuel that can be used for cost-effective distributed power generation.

**Fourth Quarter Activity:** During the past quarter the boiler and structure design was completed. The engineering review of boiler design work is underway, as is the production of boiler drawings. Focus has shifted towards the design of the steam engine and steam expander. Significant attention is being paid towards sizing of key valve gear components and relationships between the cylinders and the crankshaft. These inputs will shape overall final massing and the dimensioning of key components to accommodate internal pressure and forces. A purchase order for the live bottom feeder and feed bucket elevator was issued. Quotes are in for all manual and automated valves and quotes for instrumentation are about 75% complete. Orders are being placed as needed. Fabrication on system components is underway and some parts have been completed. The detailed design for the moving bed torrefaction system has been completed and reviewed. In addition, a process hazards analysis of the new unit has been prepared, reviewed, and approved for the new equipment. Site preparations have been reviewed with the staff at NRRI's Coleraine facility and specific work is underway to accommodate the installation of the new equipment once manufactured. Site assembly will then commence at the Coleraine site.

# RD4-12: University of Minnesota (Wind Turbine Generated Sound)

Start Date: June 2, 2015 Grant Amount: \$625,102 End Date: September 2, 2018 Funds Invoiced: \$312,351

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to provide technically defensible data on noise from wind turbines and usable information on how humans perceive and respond to wind turbine sound.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter the wind farm analysis was completed and the milestone reports are being prepared for submission in the next quarter. Results from the field campaign are being used in the human response testing. A kick-off meeting on the algorithm development and implementation for forced air flow separation was held. Details on the variables used and how a new turbine control will be implemented are being developed. Results from the first series of human response were reviewed and the first 50 subjects did not indicate any adverse effects to infrasound or amplitude modulation from quasi-raw acoustic recordings in the field. Some characteristics of the recorded infrasound and amplitude modulation stimulus were enhanced to exaggerate the peak of the infrasound and the

modulation depth of the amplitude modulation. Therefore, a new infrasound stimulus for human response tests was created and underwent pilot testing with twelve individuals. No adverse effects were reported. The human response testing group presented their work at the Acoustical Society of America Conference. Analysis of the human response studies has begun. The team is developing methods for analyzing the data and continues to discuss variations for assessing the data. Development of guidelines on noise monitoring has also begun. Specifically the team has identified specifications of a new noise monitoring system that is similar to what noise regulators use and developed a method for characterizing amplitude modulation with the system.

**RD4-13: University of Minnesota** (Virtual Wind Simulator with Advanced Control and Aeroelastic Model for Improving the Operation of Wind Farms)

 Start Date: June 2, 2015
 Grant Amount: \$1,391,684

 End Date: June 2, 2020
 Funds Invoiced: \$500,140

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to develop, demonstrate, and transfer into practice a numerical wind simulation model for optimization of performance, financial decision making, and operational planning for existing and new wind energy plants. The predictive capabilities of the Virtual Wind Simulator (VWS) developed and validated from Cycle Three research will be augmented by adding an aeroelastic model and integrating advanced turbine control algorithms.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter field testing of the load reduction performance of the Individual Blade Control (IBC) at the Eolos wind turbine continued and data collection at the Pleasant Valley wind farm and the simulation of Vantage wind farm in the state of Washington were completed. SoDAR measurements at Eolos established a baseline for incoming wind and turbine wake when the turbine operates with its standard pitch control algorithm. Data from the wind turbine controller was also collected to validate IPC calculations and that the algorithm is robust enough to handle short communication losses as well as occasional bad data from strain sensors in the wind turbine blades. Once all the control algorithms have been vetted and all foreseeable scenarios have been tested in simulation, testing of the algorithm on the turbine will commence. A very large set of simulation data were collected for different wind farms including the Pleasant Valley wind farm, Horns Rev wind farm and Vantage wind farm. The large size of the data (more than 20 TB for each wind farm) and the complexity of the wind fields pose a great challenge for data analysis. The current effort in code development is to find ways to process the data for better analysis and the ability to transfer between different computing facilities.

**RD4-14: Barr Engineering** (Development of Health Assessment Tool for Utility-Scale Wind Turbine Towers and Foundations)

Start Date: November 16, 2016 Grant Amount: \$161,081 End Date: November 16, 2018 Funds Invoiced: \$66,300

**Project Summary:** The goal of this project is to develop portable sensors to assess the health and life expectancy of wind turbine towers and foundations.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the past quarter the evaluation of the data processing methodology was completed with the exception of an analysis of the time period that measurements are collected. This measurement assessment will require a full analysis of a database that began in 2011 from the Eolos wind turbine which will necessitate a very significant amount of processing time. Determining the minimum amount of analysis time required for an accurate assessment of structural health and remaining useful life will significantly optimize the system by limiting the number of measurements required and the length of time the system needs to be deployed. The research team investigated combinations of sample rates and strain sensor quantities to optimize (minimize) the amount of data needed to accurately assess the health of a wind turbine foundation and estimate its remaining useful life. The Eolos sensor system is comprised of 20 strain gauges and ten thermocouples. The research team started with the assessment of all 20 strain gauges at 20Hz and repeated the calculation of damage equivalent load and foundation rotational stiffness multiple times with different subsets of sensors and sampling rate. The results show the calculations of foundation rotational stiffness and damage equivalent load (DEL) are sufficiently estimated when using a 10 Hz sampling rate and three strain gauges. This sample rate and number of strain gauges provides estimations of DEL and stiffness that are very similar to the estimations provided by the full Eolos system of 20 strain gauges measuring at a rate of 20Hz.

## **Higher Education Block Grant Programs**

## HE4-1: Minnesota State Higher Education Block Grant

 Start Date: April 11, 2016
 Grant Amount: \$5,500,000

 End Date: April 11, 2019
 Funds Invoiced: \$2,400,000

**Program Summary:** Minnesota State (aka Minnesota State Colleges and Universities) has formed a program administered by the Minnesota Energy Center (MnEC), to stimulate research and development into renewable electric energy technologies. MnEC will disburse funding for multiple projects within the MnSCU system. The primary focus is development of programming to prepare technicians for the energy production industry including biomass, solar, and wind.

Fourth Quarter Activity: During the prior quarter research activity has been progressing for all nine projects.

- Research at Riverland College in Albert Lea who are developing a universal and scalable smart grid power converter have completed electrical transfer function modelling using a resistive inductive model to develop a robust control design. The research group continues work on development of a Low Energy Bluetooth interface feature. Integration with a touch screen interface is in process. A grid simulator has been delivered and will be constructed in the next quarter.
- Researchers on vertical axis wind turbine (VAWT) performance at Minnesota State Mankato (MSM) are working through security issues for access to the Minnesota Supercomputing Institute for modeling tests. The flow model being developed can combine multiple geometric configurations and simulated VAWTs. Other campus based equipment is being tested for accuracy and needed calibration for application.
- An anaerobic digestion system has arrived at St. Cloud State University (SCSU) to
  move forward with microbial power and bioproduct production from food waste
  research. Installation and system start-up are expected during first quarter 2018 and
  experiments are expected to begin in the second quarter of 2018. A ribbon cutting
  is expected to coincide with Earth Day activities at SCSU.
- The first series of pilot experiments to fine-tune an anaerobic digester microbiome to maximize biogas production at SCSU has been completed. A second replication is in progress. The metagenomics pipeline for data analysis has been set up, tested with two data sets, and is now ready for the results from the first pilot.
- The PV panel solar soiling project at Century College in White Bear Lake has completed installation of power production monitor system. An irradiance meter has been installed. Sensor wires have been installed to monitor surface temperature, voltage, and current. Main control cabinet equipment is near completion. System is generating electricity and monitoring of varied outputs

- continues. Data collection has begun and modifications have been implemented. The weather station and dust particulate collection data has presented several challenges with data management.
- Research on axial flux systems at MSM has begun modeling of generator fields to develop the simulation model. Additionally, this project is developing a wind gust modeling for use in development of a new VSG model.
- Microwave plasma generation researchers at MSM have been working through space issues to install and operate equipment. The microwave plasma system has been ordered and is expected to arrive nest quarter. The project has also received a donated biomass gasifier from the U of M.
- Researchers at MSM who are developing a microgrid model with Wide Bandgap
  Multiport Converter have built the basic modules for power converter design
  testing. Model and simulation platforms development are about 80% completion.
  New wide bandgap device development is at 50% development and component
  construction has begun.
- The Riverland Community College Plug and Play generation project in Austin is well into the research of current installed costs for varied designs. Analysis is focused on methods to control installation costs and evaluation of alternate materials for installations.

### HE4-2: University of St. Thomas Higher Education Block Grant

 Start Date: August 12, 2015
 Grant Amount: \$2,157,215

 End Date: August 12, 2018
 Funds Invoiced: \$1,438,143

**Program Summary:** The University of St. Thomas (UST) will install a sustainable, 0.25 MW peak, multi-purpose microgrid at their Saint Paul Campus and establish an Engineering Senior Design Clinic to provide a platform for power systems engineering education for undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Engineering. UST will establish a K-12 educational curriculum developed in conjunction with Minnesota State Academic Standards for renewable energy, which will integrate live remote access to the facility across Minnesota.

Fourth Quarter Activity: In the past quarter planning with the general contractor, Ryan Construction and Hallberg Engineering, continues to progress into the Request for Information (RFI), Request for Proposal (RFP), and Request for Quote (RFQ) stages for the microgrid hardware and equipment. The hardware and equipment needed is comprised of: the microgrid relaying-and-protection system, the diesel gensets, the battery storage node, the solar PV array, the load bank, the substation, and the control-system/communications system. The relaying-and-protection hardware was received on schedule in December. The RFP process for the diesel gensets and battery storage node was also completed in December. Cummins, a

Minnesota company, was selected as the diesel genset vendor and the units have been ordered. Enersys was selected for the battery storage node and the storage node was ordered. Responses to the RFPs/RFQs for the solar PV array and the load bank were received and are being evaluated. Preliminary details of the substation have been specified by Xcel Energy Distribution. A state-of-art distributed intelligence control system is being developed through a 3-way arrangement between Xcel Energy, Amzur Technologies, and the University of St Thomas. Amzur Technologies is an Information Technology solutions and support firm and a leading developer of smartgrid control software. Responses to the RFP/RFQ for the general electrical subcontractor have been received and are being evaluated.

## HE4-3: University of Minnesota Higher Education Block Grant

 Start Date: August 20, 2015
 Grant Amount: \$3,000,000

 End Date: August 20, 2018
 Funds Invoiced: \$3,000,000

**Program Summary:** The University of Minnesota has formed the Renewable Electricity for Minnesota's Future, a \$3 million block grant for funding research in renewable electric energy. The grant will be managed by the Institute on the Environment (IonE) and used to support research in renewable electric energy generation and management by University of Minnesota scientists and engineers.

**Fourth Quarter Activity:** In the past quarter the Renewable Electricity for Minnesota's Future project made significant progress. The Controlling Wind Plant Power group conducted more field deployments to characterize the atmospheric flows at unprecedented spatial and temporal resolution. They also identified the spatiotemporal signature of turbine wakes from both measurement data and computer simulation results, and applied the analysis to wind turbine control. A graduate student from the Pyrite Iron Disulfide: Low-cost Solution for Renewable Electricity project presented his work on missing sulfur atoms as the origin of doping in this material at a major international conference. Two graduate students from this group also independently competed for and won second prize in the Dow Sustainability Challenge in December—an achievement entirely based on their progress with pyrite as a solar cell material, as funded by the RDF. The Grid Interface for Renewables, Storage and Green Micro-grids group added inertial control and synthetic damping functions to the proposed Microsoft Management Console (MMC)-based interface. This scheme will allow the MMC-interfaced renewable sources to closely emulate conventional (synchronous machine based) power plants and help with grid stability. The Net-load aggregation algorithm has been tested and validated with a network of distributed computational units (Raspberry Pi Model 3) in real time to meet an aggregated demand service request. A Network-reconstruction algorithm was developed and tested in simulation to recover network topology. The Direct Conversion of Heat

to Electricity group developed a metal electrode for an all-epitaxial device structure and through demonstration tests the proof of concept of heat to electricity conversion was demonstrated. A predictive model of ferroelectric energy conversion that serves as the basis to design energy conversion devices with optimal ferroelectric performance was developed. Finally, a provisional patent application was approved for this team.

## Other Cycle 4 Activity

During the fourth quarter of 2017, activities have progressed related to development of the remaining Cycle Four grant contracts. 25 Cycle Four grant contracts have been executed. As of the end of the fourth quarter of 2017, one Energy Production contract is pending approval by the PUC, eight Energy Production projects have been completed and one Energy Production project was terminated. The remaining executed Cycle 4 contracts include 12 Energy Production and Research and Development project contracts and three Higher Education Block Grant program contracts currently active, as described above.

As reported previously, the Company continues to collect requested due diligence materials, develop contract exhibits to be attached to the remaining RDF grant contracts, and work with the three remaining grantees to move their projects forward. Drafts of contract exhibits have been prepared and provided to all three grant recipients for review and modification. Xcel Energy continues to keep the RDF advisory group updated on the progress of these projects.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Xcel Energy appreciates this opportunity to provide this report summarizing the projects funded by the RDF during the fourth quarter of 2017.

January 30, 2018 Northern States Power Company

#### **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

- I, Carl Cronin, hereby certify that I have this day served copies of the foregoing document on the attached list of persons.
  - <u>xx</u> by depositing a true and correct copy thereof, properly enveloped with postage paid in the United States mail at Minneapolis, Minnesota
  - xx electronic filing

DOCKET NOS. E002/M-00-1583 E002/M-07-675 E002/M-12-1278 (OFFICIAL SERVICE LIST)

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of January, 2018

/s/

Carl Cronin

Regulatory Administrator

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