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Winnebago Wind Project reaches new milestone with Bluestem agreement; 10 megawatt wind farm planned to be constructed during 2013

Winnebago, Neb. - The Winnebago Tribal Council has entered into an agreement July 25 with Bluestem Energy Solutions, a Nebraska based and owned company that will build and operate a planned 10 megawatt wind farm in Thurston County on Tribal land.

The Winnebago Wind Project has been in the planning stage for several years by the Winnebago Tribe. John Blackhawk Tribal Chair said, "The Tribe realized during its study of wind energy that it would need a significant partner with the resources to complete the multimillion dollar project."

Teaming up with Bluestem Energy Solutions, based in Omaha, will provide those resources with its experience in the design, construction and management of renewable energy sources including wind, allowing the project to move forward towards the construction phase. Bluestem anticipates groundbreaking to occur in 2013.

The arrangement will result in revenue streams flowing back to the Tribe from the four to six turbine projects, with the potential to provide the energy needs for the equivalent of approximately 3,500 average size Nebraska homes. The Tribe will also have an opportunity to purchase all or part of the project in the future, and Tribal members will have opportunities for employment and contracting opportunities during construction and operation.

"Bluestem is excited about the Winnebago project, the partnership that has been created, and continuing to be a part of the creation of the Nebraska wind industry, said a spokesman for the company Nicole McDermott.

As part of this project, at its March 2012 meeting, the NPPD Board of Directors authorized the District's management to finalize a conditional Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) for the Winnebago project, and when the all conditions are finalized, the Board will vote on ratification of the agreement.

Kevin Connot of Advantage Consulting Group who has been developing the project for the Tribe stated: "the Tribe's leadership has shown tremendous commitment to the project and is excited to be moving forward." Doug MacCourt, a Tribal law and energy lawyer with Ater Wynne LLP's Portland, Oregon office represents the tribe in the project and helped develop the business structure and presented the plan to the Tribal Council.

About the effort, MacCourt said, "Today, the Winnebago Tribe has taken an important step toward economic self-sufficiency. The Winnebago Wind Project is a model of a tribal-private partnership that will improve the lives of the Winnebago people and bring benefits and jobs to the region."

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