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I&M Breaks Ground on Michigan Solar Power Plant

FORT WAYNE, Ind. – Indiana Michigan Power (I&M), an operating unit of American Electric Power (NYSE: AEP), held a groundbreaking ceremony today for its first solar power plant in Michigan, on a 35-acre site just east of Watervliet.

The Watervliet Solar Power Plant will have more than 50,000 solar panels and generate up to 4.6 megawatts of emission-free energy. The facility is expected to generate energy equivalent to powering about 650 homes annually.

“I&M is pleased to add solar power to our fleet of emission-free generation sources in Michigan,” said Paul Chodak III, President and Chief Operating Officer of I&M. “Four decades after our Cook Nuclear Plant began generating carbon-free energy in Michigan, this solar power plant is part of a pilot project that will play a significant role in I&M’s use of the sun to provide energy. I&M already uses wind, water and nuclear energy to generate half of our power, and solar is yet another emission-free energy source.”

“I&M wishes to thank the Watervliet community for welcoming us,” Chodak said. “Growing solar energy and harvesting the sun in the same manner that this land was once used to harvest crops is an innovative use of the property.”

The Watervliet plant is one of four solar power generation plants in I&M’s Clean Energy Solar Pilot Project. The Deer Creek plant near Marion, Ind., has been operational since late in 2015. Construction has already begun at the Twin Branch and Olive plants, both in St. Joseph County, Indiana. All three of the Michiana solar plants will be generating energy for customers by the end of 2016.

Together, the four plants will have the capacity to generate about 15 megawatts of energy and have the ability to power the equivalent of 2,000 homes. I&M will build upon the experience in generating solar energy and plants’ interconnection with the electric grid as the company looks to build additional solar plants in the future.

I&M contracted with First Solar Inc., a global leader in photovoltaic (PV) solar energy solutions, to build the three Michiana area plants.

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Indiana Michigan Power (I&M) is headquartered in Fort Wayne, and its 2,450 employees serve more than 589,000 customers. It operates 2,600 MW of coal-fired generation in Indiana, 2,160 MW of nuclear generation in Michigan and 22 MW of hydro generation in both states. The company also provides its customers 450 MW of purchased wind generation and, by the end of 2016, approximately 15 MW of large-scale solar generation.

American Electric Power is one of the largest electric utilities in the United States, delivering electricity and custom energy solutions to nearly 5.4 million customers in 11 states. AEP owns the nation's largest electricity transmission system, a more than 40,000-mile network that includes more 765-kilovolt extra-high voltage transmission lines than all other U.S. transmission systems combined. AEP also operates 223,000 miles of distribution lines. AEP ranks among the nation's largest generators of electricity, owning approximately 31,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S. AEP's utility units operate as AEP Ohio, AEP Texas, Appalachian Power (in Virginia and West Virginia), AEP Appalachian Power (in Tennessee), Indiana Michigan Power, Kentucky Power, Public Service Company of Oklahoma, and Southwestern Electric Power Company (in Arkansas, Louisiana and east Texas). AEP's headquarters are in Columbus, Ohio.

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