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Wind Power Facility Receives Award for Exemplary Health and Safety Management Systems

(Santa Fe, N.M.) New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry recently approved NextEra Energy Resources, LLC near Fort Sumner as the state's eighth company to achieve Zia Star Voluntary Protection Program status.

The program recognizes companies with exemplary health and safety management systems that maintain injury and illness rates below the national average for their industry. NextEra Energy owns and operates a wind power generation facility northeast of Fort Sumner, near House, N.M.

"NextEra Energy has clearly demonstrated its commitment to the safety and health of its workers by attaining VPP recognition," Secretary Curry said. "We are pleased to add them to the list of companies that are contributing to our efforts in making New Mexico the safest state in the country. We encourage other energy producing companies to follow the excellent example set by this company."

"NextEra Energy Resources qualified for New Mexico's Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit in 2003 enabling them to build a wind farm which produces a clean, inexhaustible, domestic energy resource for our state," said Joanna Prukop, Cabinet Secretary for New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department. "Their safety award along with the clean energy and green jobs they bring to New Mexico is commendable and leads the nation to a cleaner environment through zero-emission wind energy."

The 18 full-time employees working at the site, along with the full support of corporate executives, have achieved the level of employee safety and health that qualifies them for VPP status. NMED's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau, in conjunction with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, manages the Zia Star Voluntary Protection Program. The program also recognizes companies for management leadership and commitment to a safe working environment; employee involvement in implementing the health and safety program; worksite hazard analysis; prevention and control programs and comprehensive safety and health training. Participants also receive national recognition for their accomplishments.

The facility, which was the first wind power generation facility built in New Mexico, is the first in the industry to receive the prestigious Zia Star VPP honor. The company is the second in the country to reach

VPP status. The facility has a generation capability of 204 megawatts. The site is equipped with 136 General Electric S Series wind turbines, each capable of generating 1.5 megawatts of electricity per hour.

NMED held a ceremony to recognize the company's accomplishment this month. NMED's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau Chief Butch Tongate presented the VPP award to Brent Mitchell, plant lead for the facility. A member of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department also attended the event.

NextEra Energy joins Georgia-Pacific, Intel, Roco Rescue, Honeywell, Operations Management International, ConocoPhillips San Juan Gas Plant, and ConocoPhillips Wingate Fractionator in receiving the award.

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