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NEWS



Peregrine Falcon Chicks to be Issued IDs

GRAND RAPIDS, Minn. — Three Peregrine falcon chicks born last month at Minnesota Power's Boswell Energy Center are scheduled to be banded at 9 a.m. Thursday, June 18 at the Cohasset plant near Grand Rapids.

Bob Anderson, project director of the Raptor Research Project (RRP), Decorah, Iowa, intends to climb 220 feet to the nesting platform perched atop the 350-foot stack to adorn each tiny ball of fluff with its own set of bands. The bands signify that the bird is from the Midwest and also allows them to be identified and entered into a University of Minnesota research database. The banding will make it possible to track the birds' activities over their lifetimes, furthering our knowledge of this once-endangered species.

The Peregrine falcon was threatened with extinction during the 1940s and '50s by the use of the pesticide DDT. Now in its 20th year, the RRP will be banding its 1,000th peregrine as a direct result of working with electric utility personnel to place nesting boxes on stacks at several Minnesota utilities, including Boswell – one of the first utilities to join the program. Minnesota Power also has a newer nesting box at its Hibbard power plant in Duluth – where three additional falcon chicks were banded by RRP last week.

This year's chicks, named Liberty, Freedom and Justice, are the 17th brood to be born at Boswell to patriarch Bandit and his mates, Skydancer – who failed to return to the nest in 2001 – and Windsong. Minnesota Power employees installed the platform in 1991 and the first chicks were hatched there in 1993.

Peregrines, the fastest raptor on earth, winter in vacation spots from Little Rock, Ark., to the tip of Argentina. Sometimes, Peregrines will winter at a power plant if there is enough open water and an adequate nearby food supply, such as pigeons.

Peregrines seek private, high, out-of-the-way homes for nesting, mating and pursuing their prey. In the last few years, about 50 percent of all Peregrine chicks born in the upper Midwest were hatched at secluded homes atop stacks at power plants. The electric industry has played a key role in Peregrine falcon recovery efforts here in Minnesota and the upper Midwest.

Minnesota Power added a FalconCam to its Web site in 2003, www.mnpower.com/falconcam, showing both continuously updated live images (about every five seconds) of the nest as well as a 24-hour view of its occupants.

Minnesota Power provides retail electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota to 141,000 customers and wholesale electric service to 16 municipalities. More information can be found at: www.mnpower.com.

The statements contained in this release and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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