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## **Wisconsin hydro operations set generation record**

**EAU CLAIRE, Wis.** (Jan. 16, 2017) – Like Old Man River, Xcel Energy’s hydro operations keep rolling along and generating record-breaking clean energy for customers.

In 2016, the company’s 19 hydro plants in Wisconsin generated almost 1.2 million megawatt-hours of electricity, breaking the previous record of just over 1.1 million MWhs set in 1996. The record translates to an average hourly production of 137 megawatts, which served the electric needs of approximately 137,000 homes continuously for the year.

“Wind and solar draw a lot of attention when it comes to renewable energy options, but hydro remains a viable part of Xcel Energy’s clean energy mix,” said Scott Crotty, senior manager, Xcel Energy Hydro Operations. “Over the last several years, we have invested in our plants by upgrading some of the older units to increase capacity and efficiency and to keep them as a part of our generation fleet for years to come.” In total, generating capacity from those improvements increased output by about 8.5 MWs.

The upgrades along with above-average precipitation in 2016 contributed to the generation record. “The heavy rains in July presented significant challenges for our hydro plant operators and maintenance staff, but they kept the plants running safely and prevented any operational issues from occurring,” Crotty added.

Many of Xcel Energy’s hydro facilities have been fixtures on the region’s rivers for more than a century, harnessing water flows and turning them to electricity for customers – and in many cases creating recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. In fact, this year, marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lake Wissota, which was created from the Wissota Hydro.

In a typical year, hydroelectric power – including both owned and purchased power – makes up about 7 percent of the power Xcel Energy provides its 1.7 million electricity customers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. Half of the electricity the company supplies customers in the Upper Midwest comes from carbon-free sources, including hydro, nuclear, wind, solar and biomass.

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