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Connexus Energy's innovative solar-plus-storage project under construction

(Ramsey, MN) –Connexus Energy today announced that its innovative solar-plus-storage project is under construction. The project is believed to be one of the first in the country to use batteries integrated with a solar array to manage peak demand.

Connexus Energy, Minnesota's largest electric cooperative and a member of Great River Energy, is building two more solar arrays. Sites in Ramsey and Athens Township will add 10 megawatts of renewables to Connexus' energy mix. However, what makes this project cutting edge is that Connexus Energy is integrating large scale battery storage at both sites, for a total of 15 megawatts of battery storage.

"We've listened to our members who tell us they want more renewable energy, but they also do not want their electricity to cost more," says Connexus CEO Greg Ridderbusch. "Energy prices differ throughout the day. Most solar energy is produced when there is lower demand and the price is lower. Our plan is to discharge the stored solar energy during peak hours when energy costs are the highest. We refer to this as time-shifting solar energy to a time of day when it has more value."

Connexus Vice President of Power Supply Brian Burandt says it's taken several years to turn this project into reality. "We needed to find suitable sites, get the permitting done, and go through the process of selecting our partners for solar-plus-storage. We are looking forward to working with our partners to deliver a successful project. ENGIE North America (formerly SoCore Energy) is our partner for the solar portion and NextEra Energy Resources for the battery storage."

"We are truly excited to be working with Connexus on this project to deliver clean, reliable, and cost-effective renewable energy to communities in Minnesota," said Luis Felipe Birolini, President of ENGIE's U.S. solar business. "We have brought solar capacity to many parts of

Minnesota over the past couple of years and are happy to be continuing to grow renewable production in Anoka and Isanti counties.”

A subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources will build, own, and operate the two separate battery energy storage facilities, which will utilize advanced lithium-ion battery technology and will be fully integrated with the co-located solar facilities to provide the solar energy time-shifting services to Connexus Energy.

The National Renewables Cooperative Organization ran a Request for Proposals on behalf of Connexus Energy and supported the development and structuring of the project. “We congratulate Connexus in achieving its vision to provide cost-effective renewable energy to its members with its solar-plus-storage project,” said Eric Spigelman, director of renewables development for NRCO.

“There are a number of other groups we’ve relied upon for advice and support as this project was being developed,” adds Ridderbusch. “Fresh Energy and the University of Minnesota’s Energy Transition Lab are prominent stakeholders in this emerging area of energy innovation. As the demand for renewable energy grows, energy storage is an increasingly valuable tool.”

The Ramsey and Athens Township solar arrays with the integrated battery storage will be in service before the end of this year.

Connexus Energy is the largest member-owned utility in Minnesota providing electricity and related products and services to approximately 132,000 homes and businesses in portions of Anoka, Chisago, Hennepin, Isanti, Ramsey, Sherburne, and Washington counties. Additional information about Connexus Energy is available online at connexusenergy.com.