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Burns & McDonnell Reaches Substantial Completion on A.J. Mihm and F.D. Kuester Reciprocating Engine Power Generating Stations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

New Plants Part of Long-Term Grid Enhancement Plan for UMERC

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — Burns & McDonnell has reached substantial completion after successful startup and commissioning of F.D. Kuester Generating Station and A.J. Mihm Generating Station in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Owned and operated by Upper Michigan Energy Resources (UMERC), a subsidiary of WEC Energy Group, the 54-megawatt A.J. Mihm Generating Station is located in Baraga County, while the 126-MW F.D. Kuester Generating Station is located in Marquette County. Both plants are powered by 18-MW, natural gas-fueled Wärtsilä 18V50SG reciprocating engines that are configured to quickly ramp up or down to balance system demands.

Burns & McDonnell was selected as the engineer-procure-construct (EPC) contractor for the two plants in late 2017. Construction began in February 2018, and generating stations reached commercial operation March 31.

The advanced reciprocating engine technology was selected because each engine can be separately dispatched, providing enhanced power quality and grid stability. This characteristic is especially important in the Upper Peninsula. The project included construction of a 138-kilovolt (kV) switchyard and installation of state-of-the-art air quality control equipment at each plant. The generating stations replaced capacity provided by the coal-fueled Presque Isle Power Plant.

A.J. Mihm Generating Station consists of three, 18-MW Wärtsilä 18V50SG engines while F.D. Kuester Generating Station consists of seven engines. Each 325-ton engine was shipped by ocean vessel from Italy to dock facilities in L'Anse, Michigan, then offloaded onto special 400-foot heavy-haul trailers for final transport to respective job sites in Baraga and Marquette counties.

"We have designed and built many of the utility-scale reciprocating engine projects in the country, says Rick Halil, president of the Energy Group at Burns & McDonnell. "The generating stations are demonstrating how flexible, fast-start, low-cost gas-fired generation resources can improve resiliency and power factors on the regional grid."

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