



**NEWS
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Xcel Energy Media Relations
600 S. Tyler St.
Amarillo, TX 79101
(806) 679-7773
www.xcelenergy.com

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Xcel Energy's Harrington Station named top power plant

Trade group cites efficiencies, cleanliness in making award

AMARILLO, Texas – Xcel Energy's Harrington Generating Station, located northeast of Amarillo, has been named "Plant of the Year" by the Powder River Basin Coal Users' Group, a trade association that promotes the safe, efficient and economic use of Wyoming's Powder River Basin coals.

Company officials attended the annual conference of the Powder River Basin Coal Users' Group in Chicago in April and formally accepted the award, and today representatives from the PRB coal group traveled to Amarillo to commend plant employees. Joining Xcel Energy in receiving the honor is Savage Harrington Energy Services, the firm that handles and processes coal before it enters Harrington's boilers.

The three-unit, 1,000 megawatt coal-powered generating facility was recognized for its innovation and best practices in safety, coal handling, plant operations and environmental performance. The PRB coal group selects a power plant each year to honor, and the award is based on an extensive review of the facility.

"This award reflects the outstanding performance of employees from both Xcel Energy and Savage, which handles the coal for Harrington Station," said Plant Director Dennis Buchanan in accepting the award.

Harrington will be featured in an upcoming edition of POWER magazine as one of the PRB coal group's Plants of the Year, and also inducted into its Power Plant Hall of Fame. Xcel Energy's Tolk Generating Station near Muleshoe, Texas, received the honor in 2010.

In making the award, the PRB coal group cited Harrington's environmental stewardship, especially the plant's efficient use of water supplies. Harrington, and nearby Nichols Generating Station, use treated wastewater from the city of Amarillo in their cooling processes. Once the water cycles through the plant four to five times, most is turned out onto nearby farms in the form of irrigation.

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Harrington also sells the ash from coal combustion to construction companies that use the ash in roadbeds and in other beneficial ways, which keeps the ash out of landfills.

In the mid-1970s, an in-house team at Southwestern Public Service Company, now an Xcel Energy company, designed three steam-driven generating units at Harrington Station that, when fully operational, have the capacity to generate a total of more than 1,000 megawatts of electricity. The design team would go on to develop the Tolk Generating Station before the team was spun off into a subsidiary company known as Utility Engineering, or UE. This company is now part of San Antonio-based Zachry Group, Inc.

The designs for Harrington Units 1, 2 and 3 called for the virtual elimination of particulate emissions. Unit 1, the first to come online in late 1976, uses an electrostatic precipitator where an electrical charge ionizes suspended particles and causes them to move toward collecting electrodes, thus removing them from the air. When Units 2 and 3 came online in 1978 and 1980, they featured the world's first large "baghouses" that act much like vacuum cleaner bags collecting particulates before they reach the outside air.

"Harrington Station has played a critical role in the development of the Amarillo and Texas Panhandle economy, providing low-cost and reliable power for almost four decades," said David Hudson, president of Southwestern Public Service Company, an Xcel Energy company. "Our employees have taken great pride in operating some of the cleanest, most-efficient power plants in the nation, and we're pleased to see their efforts honored in this way."

Xcel Energy (NYSE: XEL) is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company with regulated operations in eight Western and Midwestern states. Xcel Energy provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.5 million electricity customers and 2 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies. Company headquarters are located in Minneapolis. More information is available at www.xcelenergy.com.

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