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Touchstone Energy Cooperatives name maker space in new facility
Local cooperatives collaborate for $500,000 sponsorship

BISMARCK – Gateway to Science, North Dakota’s hands-on science center, is pleased to announce that Touchstone Energy Cooperatives will name the second-floor maker space in the new Gateway to Science facility.

“Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have supported the science center since the beginning,” Gateway to Science Executive Director Beth Demke remarked. “I can’t think of a better place to display their name than our new maker space. It is a perfect fit with Touchstone’s Cooperative Principles—the maker space is all about education, cooperation, and community development. We are inspired by this collaboration between Great River Energy, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Minnkota Power Cooperative, and other local Touchstone Energy cooperatives.”

The 7,800-square-foot Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Innovation Space at Gateway to Science will feature movable tables, flexible seating, and a mix of high-tech and low-tech tools and resources. Visitors of all ages can design, prototype, and create using 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, electronics, and more.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives’ $500,000 commitment to the Gateway to Science capital campaign will provide an environment that helps build 21st century skills, such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking, which are important in the classroom, the workplace, and the public sphere.

“Great River Energy values opportunities to support non-profit educational organizations that have a positive impact in our local communities. This donation is important because it will help students develop skills to succeed as future leaders in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics,” said Al Christianson, Director, Business Development and Governmental Affairs, Great River Energy.
“We are excited about the opportunity to bring the Innovation Space to life because it’s unlike anything else in North Dakota,” said Paul Sukut, Basin Electric CEO and general manager. “The STEM activities that Gateway to Science offers are a great way for students to receive hands-on learning for so many topics that are important to our industry. It is our hope that the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Innovation Space helps inspire innovative thinking in all of us!”

“We are thrilled to support the creative young minds in our state by helping improve access to first-class educational resources in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math,” said Mac McLennan, Minnkota president and CEO. “The maker space will provide students and community members with the innovative resources that will prepare them for a future that is increasingly driven by technology. We thank Gateway to Science for its continued commitment to helping people across our state build bright futures.”

Gateway to Science anticipates and welcomes additional Touchstone Cooperatives to join in the sponsorship of the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Innovation Space once construction commences.

To learn more about the new Gateway to Science facility, visit gatewaytoscience.org/building.

**Great River Energy** is a not-for-profit wholesale electric power cooperative that provides electricity to 28 member-owner distribution cooperatives. Great River Energy owns and operates two plants in North Dakota, Coal Creek Station and Spiritwood Station, and also purchases electricity from the Ashtabula II and Emmons-Logan wind farms. Together, our systems provide power to approximately two-thirds of Minnesota geographically and parts of Wisconsin, serving 700,000 families, farms and businesses. Great River Energy is the second largest electric power supplier in Minnesota and one of the largest generation and transmission cooperatives in the nation.

**Basin Electric Power Cooperative** is a consumer-owned, regional generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota. It generates and transmits electricity to 141 member rural electric systems in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. These member systems distribute electricity to about 3 million consumers.

**Minnkota Power Cooperative** is a not-for-profit electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Grand Forks, N.D. Formed in 1940, Minnkota provides wholesale electric energy to 11 member-owner distribution cooperatives in eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota. Minnkota’s primary source of electric generation is the Milton R. Young Station located near Center, N.D.

**Gateway to Science**, North Dakota’s hands-on science center, is located in the Frances Leach High Prairie Arts & Science Complex, 1810 Schafer Street in Bismarck, N.D. In addition to an interactive exhibits gallery, they offer STEM educational outreach programs serving people of all ages, including out-of-school time clubs, camps, and free family events. Visit gatewaytoscience.org for more information.

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