

For Immediate Release
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Energy Keepers, Inc., successfully pays conveyance price for Kerr Dam

Polson, Mont. — Energy Keepers, Inc. (EKI), has successfully paid the conveyance price of \$18.2 million to purchase the Kerr Hydroelectric Project from NorthWestern Energy.

EKI is the corporation of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes responsible for acquiring the Kerr Project, and subsequently managing operations upon ownership of the hydro facility. Payment by the tribal entity concludes the final steps necessary for the Tribes to become the first in the nation to own and operate a major hydroelectric generating project.

“We paid the conveyance price, and Northwestern accepted,” said Brian Lipscomb, CEO of EKI. “Under the contract that was negotiated thirty years ago, today we can rest assured that both parties have performed, in good faith, and both EKI and Northwestern Energy have met their obligations— allowing the Tribes to become owners of Kerr Dam.”

The dam, which sits in the Flathead River just miles from Polson, Mont., was built in the 1930s, against the wishes of many tribal members, and on waterfalls that were culturally important to the Salish, Pend d’Oreille and Kootenai people. Additionally, in an arduous and dangerous construction environment, fourteen tribal members would lose their lives in construction-related accidents while building the dam.

“The Tribes have remained focused on owning Kerr because our community made great sacrifices for the dam to exist,” Lipscomb said. “Officially, we will own title to the dam on September 5, but already from a practical standpoint, we have entered the marketplace. As of today, we are approved co-licensees by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; We have paid the conveyance price in full; EKI staff alone operates the facility— the last NorthWestern operator recently retired; Power is scheduled to flow in EKI’s name this Saturday, and EKI has already sold the majority of power expected in Fiscal Year 2016.”

The payment by EKI was directed by contractual agreement set 30 years ago, when the Tribes successfully negotiated to become co-licensees of the Kerr Project, with the option to purchase the property outright by year 2015. At midnight on Saturday, September 5, the ownership title officially changes to the Tribes, and EKI says they stand ready to sell the first electrons produced to several counterparts in the wholesale energy marketplace.

“Our work has involved intensive preparations to get to this point,” Lipscomb said. “We have covered our bases, and understand that the world is watching us as the first Tribes in the nation.

We haven't left any rocks unturned regarding safety, security, operations and business administration. We are ready for this. After years of thoughtful planning, decades of preparing, and lifetimes of living near, but yet without access to this important resource, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are managing and operating the Kerr facility."

A public commemoration of the acquisition of the Kerr Project is being hosted by the Tribes on Saturday, September 5, 2015 at the Salish Kootenai College Joe McDonald gymnasium in Pablo, Mont., program beginning at 10am.