



March 23, 2018

Patricia Van Gerpen, Executive Director
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
500 E. Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: NG18 - _____ - NorthWestern Energy 2018 Economic Development Budget and 2017 Economic Development Annual Report

Dear Ms. Van Gerpen:

In accordance with the Decision and Order approving the Settlement Stipulation Agreement for NG11-03, NorthWestern Corporation, dba NorthWestern Energy ("NorthWestern") hereby submits its proposed economic development 2018 budget and 2017 actual expenses for the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission's ("Commission") review and approval.

NorthWestern's proposed 2018 economic development budget is shown in Attachment A. Attachment B is NorthWestern's 2017 economic development budget as approved in Docket NG17-005 and actual expenses for 2017. The stipulation agreement for NG11-03 provides for an economic development annual budget cap of \$30,000 that can be allocated to natural gas customers. These costs are to be split 50/50 between NorthWestern Energy and our natural gas customers. Therefore, the customer share of those expenses is capped at \$15,000. While our overall 2017 budget and expenses exceeded the \$30,000 cap, NorthWestern is providing a full representation of its economic development contributions that benefitted our natural gas customers in South Dakota for the Commission's information.

The Commission will note that there are some adjustments from the 2017 budget as presented in Docket NG17-005 and actual expenses in 2017. In some cases, NorthWestern did not receive a payment request from an organization that traditionally was supported or we decided to offer support to another organization that we have not in the past. The final adjusted dollar amount that was spent in 2017 was \$3,475 more than the overall adjusted budget as approved by the Commission in Docket NG17-005. Budgets will have some fluidity from year to year as community economic development needs or priority projects change. No funding provided by NorthWestern Energy for economic development purposes in 2017 was used for lobbying at the state or federal levels.

Advantage South Dakota is the flagship economic development tool used by NorthWestern Energy. It is a regional partnership organization involving NorthWestern, community or regional economic development leaders from within our service territory, and the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED). Advantage South Dakota uses a regionalized approach in developing economic development opportunities and promoting job growth for member communities. During 2017, Advantage South Dakota continued its focus on workforce development and recruitment. As noted last year, Advantage South Dakota provided grants starting in 2015 to help fund local workforce initiatives within its membership. Workforce initiative grants provided to natural gas utility communities included Aberdeen, Mitchell, Huron, and Yankton. These workforce initiative grants culminated with final payments in 2017. As mentioned last year, Madison applied for a workforce initiative grant in 2016 that is being used for an 'English as a Second Language' program. That workforce grant terminates in 2018.

In mid-2017, the group gathered to identify additional opportunities that are available through Advantage South Dakota. One area that was identified involved the training of economic development practitioners as well as business leaders in participating communities. To that end, the group completed the activities necessary to



broadcast Aberdeen's 'Power Hour' training sessions to business leaders in participating communities. This involved the purchase and installation of the equipment necessary to view the biweekly broadcasts. Additionally, the group allocated dollars so that economic development practitioners can attend one training program per year to enhance their skills. This may also include attendance at a site selector conference that could spawn local job creation. Additional information related to Advantage South Dakota can be found on its website (<http://www.advantagesouthdakota.com>).

During 2018, NorthWestern Energy will focus on working with local community leaders, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations to promote their communities as good places to do business. A key component of that partnership effort will be Advantage South Dakota. We will also continue to work with existing service territory businesses in regard to business expansion opportunities. NorthWestern will leverage our key account activities to identify and support business expansion and retention opportunities. In addition, we will look to attract out-of-state businesses that provide products and services to our local businesses, thus creating employment clusters.

NorthWestern Energy takes its role in helping South Dakota to remain viable and competitive in the economic development arena very seriously. We understand the value of partnerships and well planned communications to highlight the advantages of South Dakota's business climate to businesses looking to locate or expand within our service territory. The importance of that collaborative effort translates to new jobs and business opportunities for our customers. NorthWestern appreciates the opportunity to assist our communities in reaching their goals.

NorthWestern Energy respectfully requests Commission approval of our proposed 2018 economic development budget and 2017 expenses. If there are any questions regarding this filing, please contact me at your convenience.

Thank you,

Pamela A. Bonrud

Director – Government and Regulatory Affairs

pam.bonrud@northwestern.com

O 605-978-2900

C 605-321-4025

Cc: Rick Edwards, Director Community Connections, NorthWestern Energy
Paul Mantz, Specialist Key Accounts & Economic Development, NorthWestern Energy