

Utility Aims for Zero Carbon Emission From Electric Power

By The Associated Press

Dec. 4, 2018

DENVER — A utility serving 3.6 million electricity customers in eight states said Tuesday it will try to eliminate all its carbon emissions from electrical generation by 2050.

Xcel Energy CEO Ben Fowke acknowledged that not all the technologies the company needs to meet that goal are available yet on a commercial scale, but he said he is encouraged by advances in clean energy technology.

"If we put our minds to it," Fowke said, "we will find the best solution to get us there."

He told the Colorado Sun the goal is a response to climate change.

"This risk of climate change isn't going away and we want to be the company that does something about it and hopefully inspire others to do something about it too," he said.

Xcel has been increasing its solar and wind power generation but said reaching zero carbon emissions could require the company to continue operating its nuclear power plants and using carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration would capture carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels and keep it out of the atmosphere.

Xcel has two nuclear power plants in Minnesota, near the towns of Monticello and Red Wing.

Xcel is based in Minneapolis but made the announcement in Denver, part of its service area. The company has customers in Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin.

Xcel also supplies natural gas to 2 million customers across its service area. Their service won't be affected, spokeswoman Michelle Aguayo said.

Xcel said it has already reduced carbon emissions by 35 percent across its eight states since 2005. It set an interim goal of trimming those emissions by 80 percent by 2030.

In Colorado, Xcel is already planning to retire two coal-fired electrical generating stations about a decade early and expand its solar, wind and natural gas generation.

The company has said that will save consumers about \$213 million by 2054 because renewables are getting cheaper.