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**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

## **MGE First Utility in DNR's Top Tier Environmental Leadership Program**

Madison, Wis., Oct. 18, 2012—Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) has been designated the first utility in Wisconsin to participate in the highest level (Tier 2) of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Green Tier environmental leadership program. MGE is only the fifth state company to achieve Tier 2 status.

MGE is participating in the Green Tier program to continue its voluntary commitment to superior environmental performance. In cooperation with DNR, MGE will set goals to make significant environmental improvements.

MGE improvement projects will include:

- Dane County manure digester. MGE will help clean area lakes through its support of an innovative manure digester. The company is subsidizing this project through its purchase of electricity from this anaerobic digester when construction is completed in 2013.
- Yahara WINS. MGE is participating with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, Dane County, municipalities and other partners to implement a groundbreaking phosphorus reduction effort in the Yahara River watershed.
- Dane County Clean Air Coalition. As one of the founding members, MGE continues its partnership with businesses, schools and government agencies to improve air quality. MGE implements operation-specific measures year-round, such as reducing idling for trucks. On Clean Air Action Days, MGE steps up its actions, such as limiting small engine use, increasing employee carpools and suspending vehicle fueling.
- Community Environmental Advisory Group (CEAG). Under Tier 2, MGE will continue working on its environmental progress with its CEAG, which has community, business, government, environmental and DNR representatives. It is one of the longest-running groups of its kind in Wisconsin.

"MGE continues to build upon its strong tradition of environmental stewardship. That tradition includes discontinuing coal burning at our Blount Street power plant, being recognized by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency for the utility Green Power program of the year and having one of the highest participation rates nationwide of customers who choose to purchase green power," said Gary Wolter, MGE's chairman, president and CEO. "As a local energy company, participating in the Green Tier program reinforces our commitment to our community and to excellent environmental performance."

(more)

MGE participated in DNR's Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program for 10 years and helped formulate and implement the regulatory flexibility and superior environmental performance that led to the passage of the Green Tier law.

"MGE is one of DNR's longest standing and most valued partners in the Green Tier program," said DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp. "We are very grateful for their leadership in the pilot program and really look forward to working together to achieve more environmental and economic success in Tier 2 of Green Tier."

Green Tier encourages a collaborative approach to environmental performance between the DNR and Wisconsin businesses, local governments and other organizations. As part of Green Tier, participants voluntarily commit to reducing their environmental footprint by developing proactive management strategies. These plans act as a roadmap, helping organizations see opportunities to adopt new technologies and practices to continually improve their environmental performance.

In exchange for a commitment to superior environmental performance, the department offers benefits to Tier 1 and Tier 2 participants including a single point of contact with the department for easier communications, the use of the Green Tier logo in marketing and annual public recognition of participation. MGE and DNR agreed to a five-year contract under the Green Tier program's Tier 2 level. MGE entered the Green Tier program at the Tier 2 level because of its established environmental management system (EMS) and the work done with the pilot program. As a Tier 2 participant, MGE will continue to regularly review progress and identify new opportunities through its EMS.

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