

Achimowin

2021
1st Unit In Service Special Edition

Keeyask provides first power to the grid

On February 16, 2021 at 14:55, the first of seven generating units at Keeyask was brought into service and is now connected to the Manitoba Hydro power grid, supplying electricity to all Manitobans.

“I am very proud of our Keeyask team and everyone that had a hand in reaching this goal, all of us should be,” said Lorne Midford (Manitoba Hydro, Vice President of Asset Planning & Delivery). “Keeyask will supply renewable and reliable power for many decades, and it is a testament to the team effort and the sacrifices so many people have made.”

Dave Bowen (Manitoba Hydro, Keeyask Project Director) said, “This is really a product of all the people - from organizations to communities to individuals - who came together to reach this goal. It took hard work, perseverance, tackling and overcoming multiple challenges, and - yes - there were personal sacrifices and that is what makes this milestone so significant. We are creating a legacy that will provide benefits to Manitobans for decades to come.

Since signing the Joint Keeyask Development Agreement in 2009 – which officially launched the project – thousands of people have worked continuously to reach this milestone. Partnering with four First Nations – Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation, and Fox Lake Cree Nation – Manitoba Hydro (as the Project Manager) organized and managed



labour and resources from Manitoba, across Canada, and even internationally, to reach the milestone where Manitobans can turn on a light switch and some of that electricity is coming from Keeyask.

This milestone was achieved ahead of schedule (current schedule for 1st unit in service was for August of 2021) despite the challenges presented in the last year by the global COVID-19

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pandemic. For example, in March 2020 travel in and out of site was suspended for around eight weeks. Approximately 700 workers (half of the 1,400 workers at the time) volunteered to remain at Keeyask for the duration and continue the work. By the time the travel suspension ended, some individuals had been working at Keeyask - 7 days a week - for 3 months or more.

In order to truly grasp the scale of constructing a mega-project like Keeyask, and to put the milestone into perspective, it took approximately 32,600,000 person-hours of labour to reach this point in the construction. Imagine if

Keeyask could have been built in a week – working from the Monday to the Friday, 8 hours each day (which is several hours less than a typical Keeyask work shift). It would have taken over 800,000 people working all at once, the whole time to get the job done in that imaginary week. That would be the entire population of Winnipeg, Brandon, and Portage La Prairie – every person, plus you'd still need a few thousand people to pitch in.

We also acknowledge that this milestone has come with profound changes to the lands and waters near the Keeyask site, and has affected those who have traditionally used this area.

The Keeyask Generation Project is located 30 km west of Gillam on the Nelson River in Northern Manitoba. When complete, the generation station will deliver 695 megawatts and 4.4 terawatt-hours into the Manitoba Hydro System. This will make it the fourth largest generating station in Manitoba.

Keeyask is a collaborative effort between Manitoba Hydro and four partner First Nations: Tataskweyak Cree Nation, War Lake First Nation, York Factory First Nation, and Fox Lake Cree Nation - known collectively as the Keeyask Hydro-power Limited Partnership.

Ceremony to Acknowledge Milestone

On February 12, Alex Beardy of Keeyask's ERS held a ceremony to mark Keeyask's 1st unit coming into service.

"Waciye ... welcome," said Alex. "To all my relations: minerals, plants, animals, and humans - who have offered and sacrificed so we can enjoy this momentous occasion - we say, 'I am sorry, please forgive us, we love you and we thank you.'"

For those who call the land around Keeyask their home, ceremonies are of the utmost importance as they will forever feel the effects of this project. "It is important to note that past Manitoba Hydro

projects were built with no ceremonies involved," said Alex.

"This time the ceremonies are an important component of the project so we can ask Creator for forgiveness of the damage to the land and water caused,"

"Water must be shared respectfully - the use of water for sacred purposes, hunting & fishing, transportation, and consumption is a shared responsibility. The use of water is governed by natural law, aboriginal peoples see themselves as caretakers with responsibilities to preserve water and life. This is why it is essential to have ceremonies

to keep peace with and show our respect for the water and land."

"To our brothers and sisters who can not be here physically for the ceremony - yet are with us spiritually and mentally - we say, 'COVID too shall pass, we love you and we thank you. We will see you again.'"



TO SEE A VIDEO OF THE FIRST UNIT STARTING UP AND A THANK YOU TO ALL THE KEEYASK WORKERS AND FAMILIES, PLEASE VISIT:

Keeyask.com