



Upper Peninsula Power Company

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

December 29, 2014

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## UPPCO Hydro Reservoir Water Levels to Be Lowered

Ishpeming, MI - Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) is preparing for spring runoff by lowering the water levels at its hydro reservoirs in the Western portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Because of license requirements with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) who regulate all U.S. hydro operations, the annual draw downs and operations at lower levels are starting in January.

This winter, UPPCO's Victoria Dam and Bond Falls reservoir drawdowns will begin in January and the Prickett Hydro Dam Reservoir drawdown will begin in February. The Lake Gogebic reservoir is expected to be lowered slightly between now and the end of February.

Bond Falls and Victoria are located on the Ontonagon River in Ontonagon County and Lake Gogebic is located in Gogebic County in the Western U.P. Prickett is located on the Sturgeon River in Baraga County in the central U.P.

"It's an annual operating practice," said Jim Melchiori, supervisor of regional generation for UPPCO. "We lower the reservoir to make room for the anticipated melting snow and spring precipitation."

Melchiori also warned that lowering the reservoir water may cause "bridging," a condition in which the lower water level leaves a gap or space under the ice. Melchiori said that increased water flows in the rivers associated with these facilities may deteriorate the ice from the underside and result in unstable and unsafe ice conditions. These areas may not be that easy to identify, so Melchiori urges the public to be extremely careful around all reservoirs, lakes and associated rivers this time of year.

UPPCO expects the reservoirs to begin returning to their normal water levels in April, depending on the rate of snow melt and spring precipitation conditions.

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