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## Xcel Energy, UW-Eau Claire receive Board of Regents Business Partnership Award

(Eau Claire, WI) – The Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents presented the Regents Business Partnership Award to Xcel Energy and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire on Oct. 28 for the comprehensive collaboration that has been vital to western Wisconsin.

Regent Ed Manydeeds presented Xcel Regional Vice President Brian Elwood and UW-Eau Claire Interim Chancellor Michael Carney with the prestigious award, which was created in 2023 to recognize the critical partnerships that have formed between businesses and the Universities of Wisconsin.

Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman was in attendance for the presentation at Xcel Energy’s regional headquarters in Eau Claire’s Sky Park Industrial Center.

“I want to congratulate Xcel Energy and UW-Eau Claire, which have worked together to benefit students and our communities across western Wisconsin,” Regent Ed Manydeeds says. “This partnership is helping Eau Claire and the greater Chippewa Valley thrive, and the Board of Regents is proud to recognize this important collaboration.”

Elwood, a graduate of UW-Eau Claire, says he is proud to accept the award on behalf of Xcel’s leadership team, which came together shortly before the award presentation to talk about future opportunities.

“We are truly thankful to receive the Regents Business Partnership Award and value our longstanding collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire,” says Karl Hoesly, president, Xcel Energy-Wisconsin and Michigan. “It’s been a privilege to work together on initiatives like the workforce development programs and joint sustainability projects. This recognition highlights our shared commitment to strengthening the communities we serve by investing in education, workforce development and innovation. Over the years, hundreds of Bugolds have started careers at Xcel Energy thanks to your dedication in shaping the workforce of tomorrow.

“Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for the Chippewa Valley and beyond. We look forward to continuing this successful partnership.”

A shining example of the partnership between Xcel Energy and UW-Eau Claire can be found in The Sonnentag. The \$122 million recreational facility operated by UW-Eau Claire opened in 2025 to rave reviews and is a net energy-neutral

building that received gold-level certification in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) system. The Sonnentag is powered by Xcel's new Chippewa Sun solar array.

Xcel has worked extensively with UW-Eau Claire over the past decade to offer internships for students and career opportunities for graduates, and Xcel has supported career fairs and several STEM-related events through the UW-Eau Claire Foundation. Xcel has also sponsored the annual Blugold Breakfast, the university's fall-semester opening event.

"The leadership team at Xcel has worked with UW-Eau Claire to provide opportunities for students, faculty and staff to make a positive difference in the community," UW-Eau Claire Interim Chancellor Michael Carney says. "We are committed to working closely with Xcel into the future as we develop new career pathways for our students and discover the true power of strategic partnerships in our region."

Dozens of Xcel employees who are also UW-Eau Claire alumni gathered to celebrate the partnership and the recognition from the Board of Regents. President Rothman says the universities that comprise the Universities of Wisconsin are focused on helping partners like Xcel find the employees they need to succeed.

"UW-Eau Claire is fortunate to have an employer like Xcel as such a vital partner," Rothman says. "It is our goal to help businesses find the employees they need to be leaders in their respective industries, and this mutually beneficial partnership is moving UW-Eau Claire, Xcel and Wisconsin forward."

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is a leader for academic excellence, undergraduate research and high-impact practices in the University of Wisconsin System. About 9,500 students are drawn to this campus where innovation, leadership and collaboration are an integral part of the university. UWEC has ranked among the best public regional universities in the Midwest for more than 30 years.