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Press Release

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Citations and \$882,000 in Fines Issued for Safety Violations by Universal Energy, Price Gregory International, and Quanta Power Generation

JUNEAU, Alaska— The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has issued a total of 24 citations between three different companies representing a multi-employer construction site. Universal Energy received 13 willful citations with associated fines of \$182,000 relating to the department's inspection at the Municipal Light and Power Plant 2A Expansion project, located in Anchorage. Price Gregory International, Inc. received five willful citations with associated fines of \$280,000, and Quanta Power Generation, Inc. received six willful citations with associated fines of \$420,000. Municipal Light and Power was not cited due to their prompt evacuation of the site when unsafe conditions were identified.

On September 17, 2016, a pressure relief valve was removed from a steam piping system and the system was placed into service without any other safeguards present. Two days later, an event occurred that caused sudden high pressures and violent shaking of the system. Municipal Light and Power asked Universal Energy operators to shut down the system to prevent a catastrophic failure, which could have resulted in injuries or fatalities and hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage. However, operators delayed shut-down, causing Municipal Light and Power to evacuate their employees until the area could be deemed safe.

“Jeopardizing worker safety with hazardous work environments will be met with strong enforcement action,” said Labor Commissioner Heidi Drygas. “Lives could have been lost in this incident, and these employers must be held to the safety standards our laws demand.”

The citations, which carry the maximum penalty allowed under the law, were issued as “willful” due to the indifference the employers displayed towards occupational safety and health standards and the suppression of employee concerns regarding an unsafe work environment. Each employer has the right to formally contest their respective citations.

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