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NORTHWESTERN ENERGY

POWER COMPANIES SET TO MERGE



JOSEPH SCHELLER, MONTANA STANDARD

The NorthWestern Energy headquarters in Butte on Aug. 19.

South Dakota energy company plans to merge with MT monopoly utility

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NorthWestern Energy, Montana's monopoly utility that has been making headlines lately, is set to merge with another utility, South Dakota-based Black Hills Corp.

The companies announced Tuesday that the boards of directors for both companies unanimously approved an all-stock merger that will create a singular electric and natural gas utility company spanning eight contiguous states — Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming — and serving roughly 2.1 million customers, who mostly use natural gas.

Based on the proposed merger, Black Hills shareholders will own approximately 56% of the combined company, while



CHUCK THOMPSON

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Black Hills Energy headquarters in Rapid City.

MT settles lawsuit for students with disabilities

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Montana students with disabilities will be able to continue their education up to age 22 under individualized education programs after the state of Montana settled a federal lawsuit from two students and a Montana disability rights organization last week.

The settlement agreement, ordered by a judge on Aug. 13, means that Montana is no longer the only state in the country that cuts off education services for most students with disabilities at age 18, according to the organization that sued the

state, Disability Rights Montana.

Under the agreement, Montana will no longer use the exception that allowed the state to stop providing those services and will let students with disabilities continue going to school either until they earn a "regular" high school diploma or turn 22 years old.

Disability Rights Montana and two Montana students with disabilities who were forced out of school when they turned 18 and 19 last year sued Superintendent of Public Instruction Susie

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Trump says US troops won't be sent to Ukraine

DARLENE SUPERVILLE AND AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump offered assurances Tuesday that U.S. troops would not be sent to help defend Ukraine against Russia after seeming to leave open the possibility the day before.

Trump also said in a morning TV interview that Ukraine's hopes of joining NATO and regaining the Crimean Peninsula from Russia are "impossible."

The Republican president, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other European leaders held hours of

talks at the White House on Monday aimed at bringing an end to Russia's war against Ukraine. While answering questions from journalists, Trump did not rule out sending U.S. troops to participate in a European-led effort to defend Ukraine as part of security guarantees sought by Zelenskyy.

Trump said after his meeting in Alaska last week with Russian President Vladimir Putin that Putin was open to the idea of security guarantees for Ukraine.

But asked Tuesday on Fox News

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