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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LAKE MICHIGAN WATER AND WEATHER CONDITIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE
Innovative sensing buoy deployed near Cook Nuclear Plant provides real-time data**

BRIDGMAN, Mich., July 18, 2011 – Real-time lake conditions and weather data on Lake Michigan are now available to the public on the internet thanks to an innovative environmental sensing buoy located off-shore of the Cook Nuclear Plant. Indiana Michigan Power contracted LimnoTech, an Ann Arbor-based company specializing in Great Lakes monitoring and modeling to deploy and maintain the buoy.

The data is being generated for a multi-year environmental study of Lake Michigan and will be used by the Cook Plant for engineering studies on possible improvements to the plant's water intake system. The buoy is equipped with a range of high-tech instruments that can transmit air temperature, wind speed and direction, water current speed and direction, wave height and water temperature at several depths below the surface.

"We know the data we are collecting for our project could be useful for fishing, pleasure boating, search and rescue operations and weather-watchers," said Kirk Newell, project manager for Cook. "This was a great collaboration of Michigan companies and non-profit organizations that really benefits the public."

The buoy is located two and one half miles from the shore and will remain in operation through the fall. Implementation may be extended for subsequent years. Information about the buoy and a link to real-time data is available at <http://bit.ly/cookbuoy>

LimnoTech is currently working directly with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other federal agencies to increase the number of environmental sensors in the Great Lakes and to improve the availability of the data to water quality managers and the public. The data from the buoy will feed into the developing Great Lakes Observing

System (GLOS), the National Data Buoy Center (NDBC) operated by NOAA, and the University of Michigan's observing system.

Data is also being used by forecasters at the National Weather Service (NWS) offices in Northern Indiana and Grand Rapids to improve predictions of hazardous weather including high waves and rip currents along the shoreline. Rip currents are particularly dangerous for local swimmers who are often unaware of the hidden threats these currents pose. Together, both offices are responsible for monitoring weather conditions along 240 miles of shoreline from Manistee, MI to Michigan City, IN.

"Until recently, we've had to rely on data collected from buoys in the middle of the lake where conditions may be different," said Jeff Logsdon, Science and Operations Officer for NWS. "Buoys like this one will greatly improve our ability to predict dangerous rip currents at beaches in Berrien County."

Data from the buoy will also feed Coast Guard information systems used to respond to distress calls from local boaters, enabling them to quickly assess wind, wave, and current directions before leaving port. Local boaters, fishermen, and swimmers can access the same information to make the decision whether to go out on the water or not. Local fishermen can view the temperature profile in real time to better pinpoint fishing hot spots and temperature bands that lake trout and salmon follow. This will save on gas and improve the catch rate for recreational and commercial fishermen.

The calibration and testing of the buoy was performed by the Ocean Engineering Laboratory (OEL) at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, the same group that originally developed the buoy with S2 Yachts. "Our collaboration with S2 grew out of a mutual need for a long-lasting, relatively light-weight and less expensive buoy for the Great Lakes and to increase access to monitoring data," said Guy Meadows, OEL Laboratory Director.

The buoy itself was constructed in Holland, MI, by S2 Yachts, a luxury yacht maker with recent involvement in wind turbine manufacturing. Some of the sensors are made in Traverse City, MI, by the R.M. Young Company, which specializes in precision meteorological instruments. Deployment of the mooring system for the buoy was done by Andrie, Inc, a Muskegon-based marine construction and transportation company.

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