



Delivering electricity you can rely on

www.capx2020.com

Contact Information

Tim Carlsgaard, Xcel Energy

612-330-7697 (office)

612-201-7538 (cell)

timothy.s.carlsgaard@xcelenergy.com

Patti Nyutsen, Xcel Energy

612-215-5300 (media line)

CapX2020 projects receive first route approval in Minnesota

MN PUC grants Route Permit for Monticello-St. Cloud 345 kV transmission line project

Minneapolis—July 8, 2010—The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission granted a Route Permit for a 345 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line between Monticello and St. Cloud, Minn. The line is the first CapX2020 project to receive approval. The Monticello-St. Cloud project will alleviate electric reliability concerns in the St. Cloud area as well as meet the region's projected electric growth and provide an outlet for new generation, including for renewable energy.

The Commission approved a route that generally follows Interstate 94 from the existing Monticello Substation to a new Quarry Substation west of St. Cloud. Construction is expected to begin in fall 2010 and be complete by spring 2012.

"The state's process is detailed and comprehensive, and encourages significant input from landowners, agencies, and state and local officials," said Darrin Lahr, routing lead for the project. "The routing process seeks to balance many competing interests and provide the best possible location and least impact for this new infrastructure."

In addition to the state's process, the CapX2020 utilities held several rounds of open houses and routing work group meetings where landowners and local officials could learn about the project and provide information on land use considerations in the project area, such as agricultural impacts, local development plans, proximity to homes and environmental concerns.

"We'd like to thank the hundreds of landowners, local officials and other stakeholders who were involved in the process," Lahr said.

Comprehensive state review process

The state review process began in April 2009 when the Route Permit application was filed with the Commission; it included an Environmental Impact Statement developed by the Minnesota Office of Energy Security (OES). The Commission and OES processes included public meetings and hearings presided over by an administrative law judge from the state's Office of Administrative Hearings. The OES

also convened Citizens Advisory Task Forces for local governments and stakeholders to provide an additional level of review.

While the Commission voted to approve the Route Permit, a full written order detailing the decision will be published in the coming weeks. It will be posted to the Commission's website at www.puc.state.mn.us when available (search for eDocket 09-246).

Certificates of Need granted in 2009

The Commission unanimously granted a Certificate of Need for the 345 kV projects in 2009 following a rigorous state review process. The 230 kV line in north central Minnesota was granted a Certificate of Need in mid-2009. Route Permit applications are pending for the remaining projects and are expected to be ruled on in 2010 and 2011. Associated regulatory filings in neighboring states will begin in late 2010 and continue through 2011. Construction is expected to continue on the other transmission line projects through 2015.

About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 transmission-owning utilities in Minnesota and the surrounding region to upgrade and expand the electric transmission grid to ensure continued reliable and affordable service. The CapX2020 Group 1 projects include three proposed 345 kV transmission lines and a proposed 230 kV line. It is the largest development of new transmission in the upper Midwest in 30 years. The projects are projected to cost nearly \$2 billion and cover a distance of more than 700 miles. The new infrastructure will provide a foundation for the region's projected electric growth as well as connect into renewable energy sources proposed in southern and western Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Along with Great River Energy, Elk River, Minn., and Xcel Energy, Minneapolis, utilities that expect to participate in one or more of the CapX2020 projects are: Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Blue Earth, Minn.; Dairyland Power Cooperative, La Crosse, Wis.; Minnesota Power, Duluth, Minn.; Minnkota Power Cooperative, Grand Forks, N.D.; Missouri River Energy Services, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Otter Tail Power Company, Fergus Falls, Minn.; Rochester Public Utilities, Rochester, Minn.; Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Rochester, Minn.; and WPPI Energy, Sun Prairie, Wis.