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Contact:
Tim Carlsgaard
timothy.s.carlsgaard@xcelenergy.com
Office: (612) 330-7697
Cell: (612) 201-7538

North Dakota permits approved for CapX2020 Fargo-St. Cloud 345 kilovolt line

Public Service Commission approves a 35-mile route in the Fargo area

FARGO – September 12, 2012 – The North Dakota Public Service Commission today granted a joint Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit for a 345 kilovolt electric transmission line in North Dakota.

Following a thorough and comprehensive review process, the commission approved a 35-mile route from the Bison Substation, located eight miles northwest of Fargo, to the Minnesota border, crossing the Red River north of Oxbow in Pleasant Township.

“The Fargo-St. Cloud project will serve North Dakota customers with affordable, reliable electricity for years to come,” said Priti Patel, CapX2020 co-executive director and director of strategic transmission initiatives at Xcel Energy. “It will increase reliability in the growing Fargo area and surrounding rural areas and improve access to renewable generation in North Dakota.”

Action on the North Dakota permits concludes the state regulatory process required for the four CapX2020 Group 1 projects. Regulators in Minnesota, Wisconsin and South Dakota acted on CapX2020 permits previously.

The CapX2020 utilities began engaging the public in 2007, hosting several rounds of open houses 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.

“The CapX2020 utilities appreciate the time and effort of all landowners, local and state officials, and the many other stakeholders who participated in this process,” said Darrin Lahr, project routing lead.

Construction is expected to start in early 2013 near the Bison Substation near Mapleton and head south. Erection of 180 structures and line stringing will take place in 2014-2015.

Foundation construction continues on the Minnesota portion of the line between Alexandria and St. Cloud. Xcel Energy expects to start erecting structures in late fall, with completion in early 2013. The project in-service date, including the North Dakota segment, is 2015.

About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 investor-owned, cooperative and municipal utilities in North Dakota and the surrounding region to upgrade and expand the electric transmission grid to

ensure continued reliable and affordable service. The CapX2020 projects include three 345 kilovolt transmission lines and a 230 kilovolt line and represent the largest development of new transmission in the Upper Midwest in 30 years. They are projected to cost nearly \$2 billion and cover a distance of more than 700 miles.