



Building Electric Transmission We All Will Rely On

For more information, contact:

Therese LaCanne, Great River Energy
Office (763) 241-2280 Cell (612) 804-4532

Mary Sandok, Xcel Energy
Office (612) 215-5329 Media Line (612) 215-5300

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CapX 2020 utilities announce plans for new transmission lines to ensure reliable, low-cost electricity in the future

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- A group of regional utilities today launched an effort to ensure their customers in Minnesota and neighboring states will have access to reliable, low-cost electricity in the future.

The CapX 2020 utilities – an alliance of electric cooperatives, municipals and investor-owned utilities – took the first step in the regulatory process for three new 345-kilovolt transmission lines. A preliminary filing for one of the three lines, which lays out plans for notifying local governments, landowners and residents, was made today with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

“CapX 2020 is a collaborative effort that aims to support customers’ growing demand for electricity by upgrading and expanding the backbone transmission system in Minnesota and neighboring states,” said Terry Grove of Great River Energy, a co-leader of the CapX 2020 effort. CapX 2020 is short for Capacity Expansion needed by 2020.

The approximate lengths and general locations of the proposed lines are as follows:

- A 200-mile, 345-kilovolt line between Brookings, S.D., and the southeast Twin Cities, plus a related 30-mile, 345-kilovolt line between Marshall, Minn., and Granite Falls, Minn.;
- A 200-mile, 345-kilovolt line between Fargo, N.D., and the St. Cloud/Monticello, Minn., area;
- A 150-mile, 345-kilovolt line between the southeast Twin Cities, Rochester, Minn., and La Crosse, Wis.

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Great River Energy filed a proposed public notice plan for the CapX Brookings, S.D.-southeast Twin Cities transmission line with the Minnesota commission today. Xcel Energy plans to file similar notice plans for the CapX Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse line and the CapX Fargo-St. Cloud/Monticello area line in the next few weeks.

While Great River Energy and Xcel Energy are taking the lead on the three 345-kilovolt lines, other utilities also will be involved in permitting, building and financing them. A fourth line – a 230-kilovolt, 70-mile line in the Bemidji area of north central Minnesota – also is among the CapX 2020 Group 1 projects.

The first four projects represent a combined investment of approximately \$1.3 billion. Xcel Energy, Great River Energy and Otter Tail Power Company are committed to financing a majority of the cost. The balance will be covered by other project participants in various amounts. Group 2 and Group 3 project phases are planned through 2020.

“These transmission capacity upgrades are needed to deliver new electricity generation to support economic, job and population growth in the future,” Grove said. “Additionally, key sections of the proposed lines are needed to deliver the rapidly expanding wind energy from this region to our customers.”

The utilities expect to file a single request for a Certificate of Need for the three 345-kilovolt lines and associated system interconnections with the Minnesota commission late this year. Following a rigorous public process, the commission is expected to decide on the need for the lines sometime in 2008. If the commission certifies need, it then will determine routes for the new lines in subsequent separate proceedings. As soon as routing decisions are complete in 2009 or 2010, construction will get under way, and the lines are expected to be completed three or four years later.

“We are just beginning a lengthy journey and are committed to working with landowners, local officials and other interested parties at every step of the process,” said Laura McCarten of Xcel Energy, a co-leader of the CapX 2020 effort. “Anyone interested is invited to comment on our notice plans.”

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After Minnesota commission approval of the plans, Great River Energy and Xcel Energy will mail letters to potentially affected people in each of the broadly defined transmission line corridors to let them know how they can learn more and get involved in the state’s decision-making process, McCarten said.

“Public meetings will be held in the potentially affected communities to describe the projects and answer questions,” she said. “We will post information about the projects and updates on the CapX 2020 Web site at www.capx2020.com, and we will begin building mailing lists to keep people informed as the long regulatory process unfolds.”

Portions of the lines also will require approvals by federal officials and by regulators in North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Along with Great River Energy, Elk River, Minn.; Otter Tail Power Company, Fergus Falls, Minn.; and Xcel Energy, Minneapolis, utilities or groups that expect to participate in one or more of the CapX 2020 projects are: Dairyland Power Cooperative, La Crosse, Wis.; Midwest Municipal Transmission Group, Des Moines, Iowa; Minnesota Power, Duluth, Minn.; Minnkota Power Cooperative, Grand Forks, N.D.; Missouri River Energy Services, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Rochester Public Utilities, Rochester, Minn.; Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Rochester, Minn., and Wisconsin Public Power Inc., Sun Prairie, Wis.

The Minnesota Legislature adopted a new law in 2005 that encourages investment in strengthening power delivery systems by, among other things, allowing investor-owned utilities to recover costs as lines are being built.

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