

# **Notice of Proposed Transmission Line And Public Information Meeting**

## **In the Matter of the Application for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for a 115 Kilovolt High Voltage Transmission Line from Appleton to Canby, Minnesota**

**MPUC Docket Number E017/CN-06-677(CN) & E017/TL-06-1265(Route)**

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that Otter Tail Power Company has applied to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for a 115 kilovolt transmission line approximately 42 miles long between a substation in Appleton, Minnesota, and a substation in Canby, Minnesota. The line will follow the same route as an existing 41.6 kilovolt line and will lie entirely in Minnesota in the counties of Swift, Lac qui Parle, and Yellow Medicine. A copy of the Executive Summary of the Application is included with this notice.

**PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE** that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) will conduct a public information meeting at the time and location listed below on the proposed project. The purpose of the meeting is to provide information to the public about the proposed transmission line project and to identify issues and route alternatives to study in an Environmental Assessment (EA) to be prepared by the Department. The EA will consider issues relating both to the need for the Project, including size, type, timing, voltage and system configurations, and also to issues related to routing, such as construction impacts, environmental features, use of existing rights-of-way, and impacts on homeowners.

### **Public Information Meeting Date**

Date	Place	Conduct
October 4, 2006	Dawson City Hall 675 Chestnut Dawson, Minnesota	An open house will start at 4:30 pm A brief presentation will begin at 5:30 pm.

The public information meeting will follow an open-house format, with a brief presentation commencing at 5:30 pm. The public is invited to review the application and proposed route, learn more about the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) process and ask questions. The public may propose additional routes to be considered for the new transmission line and propose issues to be addressed in the EA. The DOC will accept written comments on the project and the scope of the EA until October 13, 2006.

Comments should be mailed or e-mailed to Sharon Ferguson, Docket Manager, at 85 7th Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55101-2198 or [sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us](mailto:sharon.ferguson@state.mn.us).

Upon completion of the Environmental Assessment the PUC will conduct a public hearing on the project. Separate notice will be given regarding the time and place of that hearing.

### **Project Description**

Otter Tail Power Company is proposing to construct a 115 kV transmission line along the same route that is presently occupied by a 41.6 kV line. A map showing the proposed route for the line is included with the enclosed Executive Summary. The project involves replacing the power poles between the Dawson substation and the Appleton substation, a distance of approximately 21 miles, replacing one mile of poles west of Dawson near the intersection of highways 212 and 75, routing the line into the Canby substation, and energizing the line to 115 kilovolt operation. The Dawson substation will be expanded slightly, and while work will be required at other substations, these substations will not be expanded in size.

The need for this new line is to address the increasing demand for electricity in the area. Certain equipment is already operating at or near its capacity under peak summertime conditions and voltage could drop below safe operating levels as the load continues to grow in the area. Otter Tail Power Company reported this situation in the 2003 and 2005 Biennial Transmission Projects Reports filed with the Public Utilities Commission. A copy of these reports can be found at: [www.minnelectrans.com](http://www.minnelectrans.com) The Appleton-Canby situation is described in the 2005 Biennial Report at tracking number 2003-WC-N10.

The company will require a right-of-way of 40 feet where the line parallels a road or highway and 80 feet where the line does not. Otter Tail Power already has easements with landowners along the existing route, but the company intends to negotiate new easements where new poles have to be installed.

### **PUC Review Process**

On September 7, 2006, Otter Tail Power Company submitted an Application to the PUC for a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit for the proposed transmission line.

Requests for certification of high voltage transmission lines are governed by Minnesota law, including Minnesota Rules chapters 7849 and 4410. The applicable statute is Minnesota Statutes § 216B.243. Because this line is intended to address a local load-serving concern, the Commission exempted the company from the obligation to provide certain information required under the certificate of need rules. Specifically, the Commission exempted the company from

- Filing information about other utilities with facilities in the service area (part 7849.0220).
- Information about the peak demand and energy consumption for the company's entire three-state service area for various consumer groups (part 7849.0270). The

Commission did require the company to submit similar information about the area to be served by this project.

- Information about generating facilities (part 7849.0280) because this project is a transmission line.
- Information about the company's conservation programs (part 7849.0290) throughout its entire service area. The Commission did require the company to submit information related to conservation efforts in the service area for this project.

The rules applicable to the processing of the Route Permit Application are found in Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400. The applicable statute is Minnesota Statutes § 116C.575. Because the proposed project is a short, 115 kilovolt line, the company has requested that the PUC consider the application under what is called the alternative review process, which is a shorter process than that required for larger, more controversial projects. Minnesota Rules parts 4400.2000 – 2950. The alternative process has a six month timeline for the PUC to complete its review.

The DOC will prepare an EA prior to the PUC's determination of the need for the project and consideration of a specific route for the transmission line. After completion of the EA, the PUC will hold a public hearing presided over by an Administrative Law Judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings. Notice of the hearing will be published in local newspapers and mailed to persons who register their names on the project mailing list with the Department. Persons interested in adding their names to this mailing list should contact the DOC project manager or public advisor or register on the webpage cited below.

If issued a Certificate of Need and Route Permit by the PUC, and in accordance with their authority under Minnesota Statutes chapter 117, Ottertail Power Company may exercise the power of eminent domain in this matter.

### **Project Contacts and Information**

For more information about the process, the project or to place your name on the project mailing list, contact the DOC project manager, Jeffrey Haase (Tel: 651-297-5648 or [jeffrey.haase@state.mn.us](mailto:jeffrey.haase@state.mn.us)) or Deborah Pile, (Tel: 651-297-2375 or [deborah.pile@state.mn.us](mailto:deborah.pile@state.mn.us)) Department of Commerce, 85 7<sup>th</sup> Place East, Suite 500, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-2198. Other contact information: Toll-Free Tel: 1-800-657-3794, Fax: 651-297-7891 or TTY: Minnesota Relay Service, 800-627-3529, and ask for the DOC.

Persons interested in receiving notices and other announcements about the project should contact Mr. Haase at the above address and phone number or register their names and addresses with the Commission electronically through the Project Docket webpage at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=18663>

Copies of the Application and other relevant documents, including Minnesota Rules governing the process, are available through the Project Docket webpage listed above and at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/TransmissionLines.html>

General project information may also be obtained by writing to Mr. Al Koeckeritz, Project Manager, at Otter Tail Power Company, 215 South Cascade Street, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 56538, or by emailing [akoeckeritz@otpc.com](mailto:akoeckeritz@otpc.com).

The Application is also available on the Otter Tail Power Company webpage at: [www.otpc.com](http://www.otpc.com)

A paper copy of the Application is also available at the city halls in Canby, Dawson, and Appleton.