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CapX 2020 utilities schedule open houses to provide information about transmission line proposals

MINNEAPOLIS (Sept. 5, 2007) - The CapX 2020 utilities have scheduled open houses in six communities to provide information to local residents and landowners who may be affected by a proposed high-voltage transmission line between the Southeast Twin Cities, Rochester and La Crosse, Wis.

Utility representatives will answer questions about the need for the new 345-kilovolt line and related facilities, advise attendees about how the public process works and answer questions area residents may have. The utilities also will use the meetings to begin collecting information for a route permit application that will be filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and a certificate of public convenience and necessity that will be filed with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in the fall of 2008.

"These open houses are our first opportunity to explain why the line is needed and to begin working directly with local government officials and landowners to help determine the best location for the line," said Pam Rasmussen of Xcel Energy, routing lead for the Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse line. "The process for building new transmission lines is an open and inclusive one, and this is just the beginning of our efforts to give people the opportunity to provide input."

The Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse line is one of three 345-kilovolt lines CapX 2020 utilities are proposing to meet future demand for electricity. Utility projections show that electricity use in Minnesota and the surrounding region will increase between 4,000 and 6,000 megawatts by 2020. The proposed lines also would significantly expand the ability to deliver renewable energy to electricity customers.

"The 345-kilovolt lines proposed by the CapX 2020 utilities will help ensure continued reliable electricity service in Minnesota and the surrounding region by upgrading and expanding the high voltage transmission network that is the backbone of the region's electricity system," said Terry Grove of Great River Energy, a co-leader of the CapX 2020 effort. "Additionally, the lines will strengthen the network so that more wind energy resources can be developed in southern and western Minnesota and eastern North Dakota and South Dakota."



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The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission must approve two main applications before the lines can be built. The first application, filed on Aug. 16 and available at www.capx2020.com, asks the commission to determine the lines are needed. The second, a route permit application, will be filed in mid-2008. Both applications require a rigorous public regulatory process and each takes approximately 18 months to complete. In addition, the Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse project requires approval of the Wisconsin commission and will undergo a national Environmental Policy Act review with federal agencies.

Utilities involved in the CapX 2020 proposals will work with landowners, local, state and federal government officials and interested parties to determine the best locations for the lines and use that information in developing the applications to Minnesota and Wisconsin commissions. Opportunities for significant public input are built into the state and federal regulatory processes, including public meetings and hearings, on both need and routing decisions.

Along with Great River Energy, Elk River, Minn., and Xcel Energy, Minneapolis, utilities or groups that expect to participate in one or more of the CapX 2020 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 Wisconsin Public Power Inc., Sun Prairie, Wis.

Here are the dates and locations for open houses in the Southeast Twin Cities-Rochester-La Crosse study corridor:

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 3-7 p.m., Riverport Inn, 900 Bruski Dr., Winona, Minn.

Wednesday, Sept. 12, 9 a.m.-noon and 3-7 p.m., International Event Center, 7333 Airport View Dr. SW, Rochester, Minn., coordinated with Biennial Transmission Planning meeting (www.minnelectrans.com)

Thursday, Sept. 13, 3-7 p.m., Coffee Mill Golf Course and Country Club, 180 Coffee Mill Dr., Wabasha, Minn.

Tuesday, Sept. 25, 3-7 p.m., Red Wing Community Library, Foot Room, 225 East Ave., Red Wing, Minn.

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 9 a.m.-noon and 3-7 p.m., Archer House, 212 Division St., Northfield, Minn.



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Thursday, Sept. 27, 3-7 p.m., Holiday Inn, 20800 Kendrick Ave., Lakeville, MN 55044.

The open house schedules in other CapX 2020 study corridors and more information about the CapX 2020 proposals are posted on the CapX 2020 Web site at www.capx2020.com.

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