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**CapX2020 utilities file Route Permit application
for Fargo-St. Cloud transmission line**
12-15 month state process will determine final route

MINNEAPOLIS – CapX2020 utilities today filed a Route Permit application for the Fargo-St. Cloud 345-kilovolt transmission line, one of several lines the group is proposing in the Upper Midwest to preserve system reliability, serve increasing community electricity needs and increase capacity to accommodate renewable energy.

The application was filed with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. It is the third Route Permit application filed for the three proposed CapX2020 345-kilovolt transmission line projects. A separate Route Permit application was filed April 8, 2009 for the Monticello-St. Cloud 345-kilovolt transmission line project. A Route Permit application was previously filed for the line between Brookings County, S.D. and Hampton, Minn., and work continues on an application for a route between Hampton and Rochester, Minn., and La Crosse, Wis.

The process began in 2004 with planning studies. The Commission granted the three 345-kilovolt transmission lines a Certificate of Need on April 16, 2009. Need and Route Permit applications were filed in March 2008 and June 2008, respectively, for a 230-kilovolt transmission line between Bemidji and Grand Rapids, which is also part of the CapX2020 Group I projects.

“The St. Cloud, Alexandria and Red River Valley communities have experienced significant growth in electricity use in the past 30 years,” said Terry Grove, CapX2020 co-executive director. “This line will ensure that local communities and customers continue to enjoy reliable access to affordable electricity.”

The Fargo-St. Cloud Route Permit application contains two main route options with a third alternative provided in certain areas for the commission to review. The application process also requires significant route option review by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Office of Energy Security. The process provides numerous opportunities for public comment and input before the commission decides on a final route.

In developing the route options over an 18-month period, CapX2020 hosted or participated in numerous meetings where landowners, local government officials, state and federal agencies, and other stakeholders along a broad corridor expressed opinions on important criteria to be evaluated. This input was critically important to the utilities in making an informed recommendation on possible routes.

“Although we have filed a Route Permit, the public utilities commission will not determine the line’s final route for more than a year,” said Darrin Lahr, routing lead for the project. “The state process is very thorough and includes an opportunity for landowners and others to provide alternative route options for consideration.”

The public process on the Route Permit application formally begins when the Office of Energy Security hosts public scoping meetings to develop a draft Environmental Impact Statement. Local governments, organizations, landowners and other stakeholders will be able to comment on the project’s environmental and routing aspects during the scoping meetings, while the impact statement is being drafted and again after it is published. The commission also will schedule public hearings where stakeholders can formally comment on the proposed route options. These comments will be included in the official record. A final commission decision on the route is expected in 2010.

Additional information on the regulatory process is available at:
http://www.capx2020.com/Images/MN_Regulatory_Process_Fact_sheet.pdf.

About CapX2020

Utilities or groups 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.; Great River Energy, Maple Grove, Minn.; 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.; WPPI Energy, Sun Prairie, Wis.; and Xcel Energy, Minneapolis. Additional information is available at www.capx2020.com.

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