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Contact: Tim Carlsgaard
(612) 330-7697 (office)
(612) 201-7538 (cell)

timothy.s.carlsgaard@xcelenergy.com

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CapX2020 utilities file Wisconsin regulatory permit application for Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV transmission line project

EAU CLAIRE, WIS.— The CapX2020 utilities announced today they filed a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin for the Wisconsin portion of the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV transmission line. The proposed 40-55 mile segment will begin at the Mississippi River crossing location near Alma, Wis., where it connects with the 80-90 mile Minnesota segment of the line.

Once the Commission completes a technical review and determines the CPCN application complete, landowners and interested stakeholders will be notified by letter that the review process is starting. Public meetings and hearings to gather input and take comments on the project will follow.

“The project will improve reliability in the La Crosse and surrounding rural areas as well as improve access to generation,” said Priti Patel, CapX2020 co-director. “It will also ensure that local communities and customers continue to enjoy reliable access to affordable electricity.”

The 345 kV line will be constructed with single-pole steel structures spaced approximately 800 to 1,000 feet apart. Project construction is expected to begin in 2013; the line will be energized in 2015.

“Filing a CPCN kicks off a very comprehensive state process that provides many opportunities for landowners and others to be involved,” said Tom Hillstrom, project routing lead. “The Commission won’t determine the final route for more than a year.”

The CPCN application, project maps and additional information are located at www.CapX2020.com.

The CapX2020 utilities filed a Route Permit application for the Minnesota portion of the project with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission on Jan. 19, 2010. A decision on the route is expected from the Commission in 2011. The total cost of the Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project is an estimated \$450 million. The project is expected to be owned by five of the CapX2020 utilities including Dairyland Power Cooperative, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, WPPI Energy and Xcel Energy.

Before the transmission line can be built, permits and approvals are also required from several state and federal agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Rural Utilities Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 transmission-owning utilities in Minnesota and the surrounding region to upgrade and expand the electric transmission grid to ensure continued reliable and affordable service. The CapX2020 Group 1 projects include three proposed 345 kV transmission lines and a proposed 230 kV line. It is the largest development of new transmission in the upper Midwest in 30 years. The projects are projected to cost nearly \$2 billion and cover more than 700 miles. The new infrastructure will provide a foundation for the region's projected electric growth as well as connect into renewable energy sources in southern and western Minnesota and the Dakotas. The CapX2020 utilities recently started construction on a 30-mile, 345 kV line segment between Monticello and St. Cloud, Minn.