



Prairie Wind Transmission

A joint venture between  Westar Energy® and ETA

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KCC APPROVES PRAIRIE WIND TRANSMISSION LINE ROUTE

Commission accepts route recommended by Prairie Wind with minor changes.

TOPEKA, Kan., June 29, 2011 — The Kansas Corporation Commission on Tuesday approved the transmission line route as filed by Prairie Wind Transmission with modifications based on proposals by some landowners along and near the route. Prairie Wind proposed its route to the KCC after extensive consultation with landowners, state and federal environmental and wildlife agencies and environmental groups. The KCC approved a route that incorporated the best suggestions proposed by area landowners, some of which lower the estimated cost of the project.

The 110-mile double-circuit 345 kilovolt high-capacity transmission line, part of the project commonly referred to as the Y-plan, will begin near Colwich connecting to Medicine Lodge and then continuing south to the Kansas-Oklahoma border.

The approved route, as recommended by Prairie Wind, avoids the Red Hills with its ecosystem inhabited by sensitive species, including the lesser prairie chicken and a number of bat species. Early in the planning stages Prairie Wind briefly considered a route through the Red Hills but soon rejected it due to concerns expressed by environmental groups, state and federal wildlife agencies, and landowners about potential adverse impact on sensitive species and substantial additional costs for environmental remediation.

“We are pleased the Commission approved our route and continued its practice of accepting landowner route modifications that benefit those directly impacted by construction of the line and maintain the goals of the project,” Kelly Harrison, president, Prairie Wind Transmission, said.

Beginning last year, Prairie Wind commissioned an engineering study and conducted a series of public meetings to establish the best route for the line. Public feedback received through surveys and at the meetings was a key piece in determining the route submitted to the KCC for consideration.

“We are building a line that will provide service for decades,” said Harrison. “It is important to us to involve the communities and residents and receive their input.”

Prairie Wind will begin working with landowners along the route this summer and fall to obtain rights of way. Construction will begin mid-2012. The line is scheduled to be in service by the end of 2014.

The project will provide economic benefits to communities along the route through good paying jobs for craftspeople needed for construction, increased sales tax revenue associated with materials and services used to construct the line and payments to landowners for right-of-way easements. This improvement to the regional transmission system will create economic

development opportunities.

“Locally, we can expect a boost in tax revenue from this line. First from construction and later through property taxes,” said the Barber County Economic Development Group. “Barber County residents and businesses benefit from a more robust electric grid. This project will enhance the infrastructure we use to attract businesses and wind farms to our area to grow our local economy.”

The preliminary estimate for the Prairie Wind line is about \$225 million before adjusting for changes adopted by the KCC in its approval. The project benefits the regional transmission system so the costs will be shared among customers throughout the nine states included in the Southwest Power Pool. Kansas electric customers are expected to incur an initial cost increase of about 25 cents per month for an average residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month. The amount will decrease over time.

“This investment will provide better reliability and access to power markets as well as supporting development of renewable energy,” Bill Moore, chief executive officer of Westar Energy, said.

Prairie Wind Transmission is a joint venture between Westar Energy and Electric Transmission America, which is joint venture between subsidiaries of American Electric Power and MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company. For more information about Prairie Wind Transmission, please visit the website at <http://www.prairiewindtransmission.com/>.

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