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CapX2020 utilities file regulatory application for high voltage transmission line

North Dakota permit is second of three required before transmission line can be built

FARGO --The CapX2020 utilities filed an application for a Certificate of Corridor Compatibility (CCC) with the North Dakota Public Service Commission (NDPSC). The application is required as part of the regulatory process to establish a corridor through which the proposed CapX2020 Fargo-St. Cloud 345 kV transmission line may be routed.

The CCC application includes four potential corridor options where the transmission line could be located in North Dakota. Within these corridors, the following river crossings are being evaluated:

- Near 112th Avenue South in Cass County
- Near 50th Street SE in Cass County
- Near County Road 16 in Richland County (south of Wahpeton)

Consideration is also being given to co-locating the project with the Red River Diversion project. The line will connect to a new substation north of Mapleton.

Only one river crossing and eventual route will be certified by regulatory agencies. Depending on the corridor ultimately certified by the regulatory agencies, the total length of the transmission line in North Dakota will be between 25 and 80 miles.

The CapX2020 utilities must receive two other regulatory permit approvals from the NDPSC before the project can be built. An application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was filed in October 2010, and an application for a Route Permit is expected to be filed in 2011.

“This filing demonstrates CapX2020’s commitment to building transmission infrastructure that will help meet our customers’ needs for reliable electric service as well as meet the needs of growing areas such as the Fargo metro area, the southern Red River Valley and the entire

Interstate 94 corridor,” said Priti Patel, co-executive director, CapX2020. “This transmission line will also help to ensure economic development and job growth in the region.”

The 345 kV line is proposed to be constructed with single-pole, double circuit capable steel structures spaced approximately 800 to 1,000 feet apart, minimizing impact to landowners.

After the CCC is found complete, the NDPSC will notify landowners and agencies as well as publish a newspaper notice in each county where corridors are located. The NDPSC sets a hearing schedule and addresses any other deadlines and procedural matters.

“The CapX2020 utilities worked closely with landowners and county, city and township officials to develop the options presented in the CCC application; more than 15 public meetings have taken place since 2008,” said Rod Scheel, vice president of asset management, Otter Tail Power Company. “We encourage everyone to continue to provide input for this important project.”

Five of the CapX2020 utilities will likely own the project, including Xcel Energy, Otter Tail Power Company, Great River Energy, Missouri River Energy Services and Minnesota Power.

The Minnesota portion of the project will extend approximately 175 miles between the North Dakota/Minnesota border and the new Quarry Substation west of St. Cloud. A decision on the final route in Minnesota is expected from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in mid 2011.

The CCC application and maps of the corridors are available at www.CapX2020.com. The Fargo-St. Cloud project has a proposed in-service date of 2015.

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 four 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 a distance of more than 700 miles. The new infrastructure will provide a foundation for the region’s projected electricity 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, Minnesota.