



Bemidji-Grand Rapids 230-kV transmission line
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Power line construction to include helicopter and implosives

Highway 2 travelers and area residents may see these activities from January to April

CASS LAKE – January 10, 2012 – Travelers along U.S. Highway 2 and local residents should be aware of two new construction activities on the Bemidji-Grand Rapids 230 kV transmission line between Cass Lake and Grand Rapids. Utilities constructing the CapX2020 line expect to begin using a helicopter and implosive devices the week of January 16, depending on weather.

The helicopter will fly close to new transmission structures near Highway 2 in Cass and Itasca counties. Using a helicopter to install conductor (wire) allows the utilities to minimize impacts to the land around the structures and to work in areas too wet to access by land.

Construction crews also will use implosive connectors to splice transmission conductor joints. The split-second detonation creates a flash and a loud boom. During daylight hours Monday through Saturday area residents may hear the implosions, which sound similar to the report of a shotgun, depending on your proximity to the implosion.

Project Safety Manager Eric Hamm urges travelers to keep your eyes on the road. Don't stop and don't gawk. "Please don't allow this work to become a distraction that leads to inattentive driving and an accident," said Hamm. "Keep other travelers in mind and stay focused on driving safely while these construction activities are taking place. Stopping along the road or work area increases the likelihood of vehicle accidents and may distract the workers, making their jobs more dangerous as well."

Project Manager Al Koeckeritz reports that road closures are not anticipated at this time. "If it becomes necessary to temporarily close a road we will work with the appropriate law enforcement and with the news media to get the word out. Motorists may see signs for reduced speeds in certain areas to allow for construction activities and the movement of some of our larger equipment," said Koeckeritz. "We appreciate how well people have responded to the increased traffic so far and ask for continued care as we install conductor on the first part of the project through April or May and then pick it up again between Wilton and Cass Lake in June."

The Bemidji-Grand Rapids CapX2020 project is owned by Minnkota Power Cooperative, Minnesota Power, Xcel Energy, Great River Energy, and project lead Otter Tail Power Company. These utilities have a responsibility to safely provide affordable and reliable electricity to communities, businesses, and industries in northern Minnesota, including the Bemidji, Cass Lake, and Grand Rapids areas.

This 230 kV transmission line will improve reliability, is needed to support growth in the area, and will serve renewable energy generation being developed to the west. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission confirmed the need for this project when it granted the project a Certificate of Need on July 9, 2009, and a Route Permit on October 28, 2010.