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Wisconsin regulatory permit approved for CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV line
PSCW selects Q1-Galesville route with a modification near Holmen

Minneapolis – May 10, 2012 – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin voted to grant a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for an approximate 48-mile 345 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line between Alma, Wis., and Holmen, Wis. The CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project will provide local reliability benefits to the La Crosse and Winona areas as well as to the rural Wisconsin areas of Buffalo, Trempealeau and La Crosse counties. It will also enhance regional reliability and increase access to lower cost renewable energy by providing a 345 kV link between Wisconsin and Minnesota.

“We appreciate the time and effort of the Commission and staff as well as the many agencies and other stakeholders. The Wisconsin regulatory process is thorough, comprehensive and provides many opportunities for public and agency involvement,” said Priti Patel, CapX2020 co-director. “The project expands the electric infrastructure to support the area’s long-term economic development and job growth.”

The Commission approved a modified Q1-Galesville route, which follows about 27 miles of the existing 60-year-old Dairyland Power Cooperative 161 kV line near Highway 35. The Q1-Galesville route was modified in the Holmen area. The approved route connects the Q1-Galesville route to the Q1-Highway 35 route with a new half-mile segment along a property line just north of the Highway 35 and Highway 53 interchange. The route modification generally avoids a future Holmen development area and would parallel Highway 53 for three miles into the new Briggs Road substation near Holmen. Detailed route maps will be posted by May 14 at www.capx2020.com/lacrosse.

“The Commissioners considered the route’s impacts and approved the route they saw as having the fewest impacts,” said Tom Hillstrom, project routing lead. “We look forward to working with each agency to issue the final permits so that the line can be built and energized by 2015.”

The CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV project has been identified in numerous state and regional planning studies. Experts testifying at the Commission’s technical hearings in March agreed that a transmission deficit exists in the La Crosse area and that transmission line construction is necessary. The project will address regional deficiencies identified by the Midwest ISO, which concluded that if the project isn’t constructed, substantial overloading of existing transmission in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota will occur.

Rural Utilities Service is expected to issue the federal Environmental Impact Statement, which covers the entire project, in June, with federal approval this fall. Construction is expected to start in Minnesota in early 2013 and in Wisconsin in late 2013. The Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project is scheduled to be

energized in 2015. With the modified Galesville route, the estimated project cost in Wisconsin is \$210 million, and the overall project cost is approximately \$500 million.

Partners in the CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse 345 kV project include Dairyland Power Cooperative, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, WPPI Energy and Xcel Energy.

About CapX2020

CapX2020 is a joint initiative of 11 investor-owned, cooperative and municipal utilities in Minnesota and the surrounding region to upgrade and expand the electricity transmission grid to ensure continued reliable and affordable service. The CapX2020 projects include three 345 kV transmission lines and a 230 kV line and represent the largest development of new transmission in the Upper Midwest in 30 years. They are projected to cost nearly \$2 billion and cover a distance of more than 700 miles.