Dear Reader,

In July and August we reached milestones in the Big Stone South to Ellendale project: the North Dakota Public Service Commission and the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission issued their final route approvals.

We appreciate the input we’ve received throughout the routing process, the participation at our open house meetings, and your continued engagement through this newsletter, project mailings, and our website at BSSETransmissionLine.com.

As the project moves forward, we will provide landowners along the final route with specific information regarding the construction process and schedule. We also will continue to send interested community members this newsletter to provide periodic communication through construction.

Take a look inside to learn more about the final route approval, our easement process, and about upcoming field surveys in your area.

Project Basics

- New 345 kV transmission line
- End points: Ellendale, ND, substation and Big Stone South, SD, substation
- Project owners: Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. and Otter Tail Power Company
- In service by the end of 2019
- Approximate cost: $293 million - $370 million
Another Milestone Reached: Final Route Approval

After reviewing the applications, testimonies, and comments shared at the public hearings, the North Dakota Public Service Commission and the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission both issued their final approvals for the BSSE project and the route on July 10 and August 22, respectively.

“We are building infrastructure that is very important to our region. Our electrical grid doesn’t have state lines. It goes across our nation.”

–SDPUC Commissioner Kristie Fiegen

With these final route approvals, the BSSE project team will finalize engineering design, continue option and easement discussions, obtain construction-related permits, conduct field surveys, and begin construction.

Real Estate Update

Over the next several months our right-of-way efforts will transition from an option to an easement acquisition process. After December 1, 2014, option acquisition negotiations will conclude and option payments no longer will be offered.

We anticipate that in early 2015 the project will contact landowners as it transitions to exercising options and securing easements. We anticipate this process will span several months.

Upcoming Field Surveys

This fall the BSSE project team will conduct field surveys along the route to identify resources prior to construction. Affected landowners will be contacted by phone before field staff conduct surveys on private property. Surveys to be conducted along the route include:

- **Wetland Surveys**
  Locate the boundaries of wetland areas.

- **Geotechnical Surveys**
  Identify soil types and structures using soil borings.

- **Cultural Resource Surveys**
  Identify location of cultural or historic resources.

- **Natural Resource Surveys**
  Locate habitat, nesting sites, and soil resources. Per SDPUC order, we will conduct a soil assessment on cultivated fields for soybean cyst nematode.

Project Schedule

- **2012-2013**
  BSSE team developed corridors and routes

- **August 2013**
  BSSE team filed a Facility Permit Application with SDPUC

- **Fall 2013**
  BSSE team began design and right-of-way process

- **October 2013**
  BSSE team filed a Corridor Certificate and Route Permit Application with NDPSC

- **Summer 2014**
  NDPSC and SDPUC approved BSSE project and route

- **2013-2016**
  BSSE team continues design and right-of-way process

- **2016-2019**
  Construction

- **2019**
  Project in service

For more information:

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