

February 2013

Routing Open House Meetings

Summary

Otter Tail Power Company and Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. hosted a series of five open house meetings from Monday, February 25 through Wednesday, February 27, 2013, to gather input from local stakeholders, agency representatives, and landowners within the study corridors located near the preliminary routes of the Big Stone South to Ellendale Transmission Line.

Meeting Attendance

A total of 336 individuals attended the five open house meetings. The Meeting Overview section of this report provides the number of attendees at each meeting.

Meeting Resources

- Display boards
 - Project benefits
 - Project overview
 - Preliminary routes (2)
 - Routing process (3)
 - State permitting processes
 - Engineering design considerations (2)
 - Easement process
 - General construction process
 - Outreach program
- Overview handout
- Reference handouts
 - MISO
 - EMF
 - South Dakota regulatory process
 - North Dakota regulatory process
 - Otter Tail Power Company overview
 - Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. overview
- GIS station
- Project presentation

Outreach

Mailings

Prior to the open house meetings, 757 project notification letters and corridor maps were sent to agencies, non-government organizations, county officials, township supervisors, and city representatives. An open house notification postcard was sent to 5,533 landowners within the study corridors. This postcard was also sent to previous open house meeting attendees and those who had commented on the website or signed up for the mailing list.

Media

Advertisements identifying the open house meeting locations and dates were placed in 6 publications corresponding with meeting locations. Press releases were sent to 21 publications notifying them of the project and scheduled open houses. Below is a table listing these publications and the type of outreach they received.

	Outlet	Paid Ad	Press Release
ND	Dickey County Leader	Thurs Feb 21	✓
	Oakes Times		✓
	Richland County News-Monitor		✓
	Milnor Teller		✓
	The Daily News		✓
SD	Clark County Courier		✓
	Waubay Clipper		✓
	Webster Reporter & Farmer	Mon Feb 18	✓
	Clear Lake Courier		✓
	Grant County Review	Wed Feb 20	✓
	Groton Independent	Tues Feb 19	✓
	Rosholt Review		✓
	Sisseton Courier		✓
	Sota Iya Ye Yapi		✓
	Wilmot Enterprise		✓
	Redfield Press		✓
	Hamlin County Publishing		✓
	Marshall County Journal	Wed Feb 20	✓
	East Area Publishing		✓
	The Aberdeen American News	Thurs Feb 21 Fri Feb 22	✓
	Watertown Public Opinion		✓

Meetings

Table 2: Number of Attendees by Meeting Location

Date	Time	Location	Number of Attendees
Monday, February 25	5:30-7pm	Groton, SD	65
Tuesday, February 26	11:30am-1pm	Ellendale, ND	54
	5:30-7pm	Britton, SD	72
Wednesday, February 27	11:30am-1pm	Webster, SD	78
	5:30-7pm	Milbank, SD	67
Total			336

Key Themes/Questions

MISO:

- **How did MISO determine a need for this project?**

The [Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator](#) (MISO) conducts transmission planning to ensure reliability across its footprint. The studies through this planning process result in recommendations for transmission upgrades. Several studies have been conducted including the Regional Generator Outlet Study, which started in 2008 and ended in late 2010. This study led to additional analysis to identify the projects that could provide benefits beyond meeting local energy and reliability needs.

These projects, including the Big Stone South to Ellendale (BSSE) transmission line, are called multi-value projects (MVPs) and will allow the grid to deliver reliability, public policy and economic benefits across the system. BSSE was approved as an MVP by the MISO Board of Directors in December 2011. The MVP projects will provide regional economic benefits by displacing higher-cost generation, reducing transmission losses and supporting regional wind integration while enabling access to low-cost energy in the MISO footprint.

Structures:

- **What kind of structures will the project use?**

Open house attendees expressed preference for monopole structures due to farming feasibility and perceived smaller impact. The BSSE team is leaning toward single pole, but may need to use H-frame under certain circumstances.

Routing / Notification:

- **When will landowners be notified of the route selection?**

A mailing will be sent to landowners within the preferred route during the summer of 2013.

- **Will the final route include segments outside the preliminary routes?**

Through review of public and agency input along with environmental and engineering considerations, the preliminary routes and route segments will be reviewed and considered when determining a preferred route. If a new route segment is determined during the review, those landowners along the new route segment will be notified.

- **Will the new line interfere with GPS signals?**

GPS signal interference should generally not occur. GPS devices continually pull signal from several satellites, not just one. If farming equipment has a GPS unit, the equipment should work properly with a high degree of accuracy underneath the transmission line. There is a potential for a signal to temporarily be blocked and will come back within a few seconds as the farm equipment continues to move.

Easement Process:

- **Will eminent domain be exercised on this project?**

We will make a reasonable and diligent effort to reach settlement with landowners. If an agreement cannot be reached, the utility may pursue a legal process called “condemnation” to obtain an easement through the authority called “eminent domain” granted to the utility. If the process demonstrates reasonableness and diligence to the court’s satisfaction, the utility may be granted the necessary easement. If awarded, the utility must pay full compensation of the fair market value established by the courts for the land rights acquired.

*Additional questions and comments were discussed at the open house meetings. The BSSE team is working to address those question and comments and will be updating the project FAQs and will provide additional project information as it becomes available.