



NEWS

1302 S. Broadway ■ De Pere, WI 54115
920-338-6500 ■ Fax:920-338-6502 ■ www.atcllc.com

From: Jackie Olson
920-338-6574 (office)
920-630-0966 (cell)

March 14, 2006

Rotating blackouts narrowly averted over weekend

Situation underscores need for electric transmission system improvements

DE PERE, Wis. -- Electrical service in portions of Marathon, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas counties was in jeopardy Saturday due to emergency conditions on the system that transmits power through the area.

"The situation that we experienced at the Weston Substation on Saturday demonstrates how little flexibility we have in operating our transmission system," explains Teresa Mogensen, director of operations for American Transmission Co. "Wisconsin Public Service Corp. had to enact a number of contingency plans, including a public appeal for conservation, to keep the lights on Saturday. The plan of last resort - rotating blackouts - was narrowly avoided."

On Friday night, ATC planned to make repairs to transmission equipment at the Weston Substation near Wausau. The transmission equipment needed to be removed from service, which required WPS to reconfigure its generation and distribution operations. The reconfiguration was made more complex because several other components of the transmission system were out of service for upgrades to address increased electricity usage and to prepare for new generation coming on line at the Weston Power Plant.

"Our system is operating at its limits, and there is very little margin when responding to unusual events," Mogensen said. "ATC has an ambitious plan to upgrade the transmission system, and situations such as this underscore the need for those improvements."

ATC projects that will strengthen reliability in north central Wisconsin include the following:

- **Arrowhead-Weston** - a 220-mile 345-kV line under construction between Wausau and Duluth, Minn.

- **Venus-Metonga** - a 13-mile 138-kV line in Oneida and Forest counties to begin construction later this year
- **Gardner Park-Central Wisconsin** - a proposed 50-mile 345-kV line between Wausau and the Shawano area
- **Morgan-Werner West** - a proposed 50-mile 345-kV line linking substations near Oconto Falls, Shawano and New London
- **Cranberry-Conover** - a 13- to 15-mile 138-kV line between Eagle River and Conover that will link the systems serving northern Wisconsin and the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

ATC owns, plans, constructs, operates, maintains and will expand its transmission facilities to provide adequate and reliable transmission of power. ATC provides nondiscriminatory service to all customers, supporting effective competition in energy markets without favoring any market participant. A member of the Midwest ISO, ATC owns approximately 8,900 miles of transmission lines and 460 substations with a total investment of \$1.3 billion in facilities in portions of Wisconsin, Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Illinois. For more information, visit our Web site at www.atcllc.com.

###

Note to editors: A sequence of events describing Saturday's emergency follows.

