

GARDNER PARK-CENTRAL WISCONSIN ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION PROJECT

OVERVIEW

A 500-megawatt addition is under construction at Wisconsin Public Service Corp.'s Weston Power Plant south of Wausau. The transmission system that carries electricity from the existing power plant was built in the 1950s and is inadequate to deliver the increased output from the new generator.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ATC is proposing a new 345,000-volt (345-kilovolt, or 345-kV) transmission line to provide needed capacity. The line would link a new substation, Gardner Park, located just south of the existing Weston Power Plant, to a proposed new substation, called Central Wisconsin, to be located in central Shawano County. This approximately 50-mile line will interconnect with a proposed 345-kV line planned to link the existing Morgan Substation, southwest of Oconto Falls, to a new substation called Werner West under construction northeast of New London. Together, these two lines will significantly improve the 345-kV network in northeastern Wisconsin, allowing the output of the new WPS generator to be delivered to customers while substantially improving electric reliability in the area.

ROUTE SELECTION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

In late 2003, ATC representatives began meeting with local officials to describe the need for the projects and the public involvement process. Forty open house sessions were conducted between January 2004 and March 2005 to keep landowners, officials and interested residents informed as ATC's routing, siting and evaluation process progressed.

A broad study area within which the lines might be located was presented at the first set of open houses. Then guided by state law, ATC identified opportunities to co-locate the new lines with existing utility, transportation and recreation corridors. These and several other opportunities were presented to the public in Spring 2004.

These corridors were evaluated by using a variety of information sources, including state, county and local land use data, public comments submitted by property owners, aerial photographs, mapping data and in some cases, field verification. ATC must consider and balance environmental, engineering and cost criteria when evaluating transmission line routes.

Many corridors were eliminated during the evaluation, and preliminary routes were the topic for open houses conducted in November 2004. Further analysis was performed and preferred and alternate routes were presented to landowners at a final set of open houses in February and March 2005.

Attendance at the four rounds of open houses totaled 4,806 persons and more than 2,000 written comments were submitted.

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REGULATORY REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

ATC filed its regulatory application in March 2005 and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin conducted scoping meetings in the project area in August. Scoping meetings provide an opportunity for the regulatory agency staff to describe the regulatory review requirements and process, and to gather additional information from local residents regarding issues that should be addressed in the preparation of an environmental impact statement, or EIS.

A draft EIS is published and public comments are accepted for 45 days. Public hearings are then held in the local area.

It is important for landowners to participate in the regulatory review, because the PSCW determines the final route, if the project is approved.

TIMELINE

Identify potential routes with public involvement	2004 & 2005
Environmental & engineering analysis	2004
CPCN application filed	March 2005
Regulatory review & public comment	Mid-2005 into early 2006
PSCW public hearings	Spring 2006
Anticipated decision from PSCW	Mid-2006
Construction start	Fall 2006
In-service	Late 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lee Meyerhofer

Local Relations Representative
1302 S. Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
920-338-6572 or toll-free at
899-3204, Ext. 6572
lmeyerhofer@atcllc.com

Jackie Olson

Media Relations Representative
1302 S. Broadway
De Pere, WI 54115
920-338-6574 or toll-free at
866-899-3204, ext. 6572
jolson@atcllc.com

