



# NEWS

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## **ATC's Dane County power line proposal now ready for independent study** *PSC declares application complete; formal regulatory analysis begins*

MADISON, Wis. – ATC's application to construct a 345-kilovolt transmission line between the towns of Middleton and Christiana in Dane County has been deemed "complete" by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. This decision marks the formal start to the PSC's independent study, which could last up to 360 days. The PSC will evaluate the need for the project, conduct engineering and environmental impact analyses, hold technical and public hearings, and conduct a thorough evaluation of ATC's two proposed route options.

ATC submitted its 2000-page application in October 2007 asking the PSC to review and authorize the Rockdale – West Middleton project. Since then, the company has responded to requests from the PSC for additional information and data to fully complete the application. "The completeness determination we received from the PSC means we have provided the necessary information and documentation to enable the PSC staff to begin its formal study of the project proposal," said Sarah Justus, ATC local relations manager. "This is an important milestone because it puts a timeframe around the review period."

Under state law, the PSC has 180 days to render a decision on the project—or petition the courts for an additional 180 days. According to Justus, it would not be unusual for the formal analysis to extend beyond 180 days given the scope of the project. "It's in the best interest of the public that the PSC staff takes the necessary time to thoroughly study this project," she said.

According to Justus, the PSC holds two types of hearings: a technical hearing and a public hearing. The Commission uses the technical hearing to receive factual data and expert opinions in support of or in opposition to the project. The expert witnesses generally include engineers, planners, economists, environmental specialists and accountants who have professional expertise on the issues, who testify before an administrative law judge, and are subject to cross examination. Public hearings provide a forum for members of the public to bring their suggestions and concerns to the attention of the Commission. This testimony is not subject to cross examination, but is transcribed by a court reporter and made a part of the official record that the Commission reviews in making a decision.

“Both types of hearings are beneficial to the decision-making process,” Justus explained. In addition to providing notification to local government officials, local libraries, the media and other agencies, the PSC will notify all property owners on or near the proposed route options of its public hearing schedule. “We encourage interested people to continue their involvement by participating in the PSC’s public hearings,” she said.

In the three years since the project was first introduced to the public, ATC has worked with local residents, community representatives, elected officials and others to gather input and answer questions. “We believe we have been successful in demonstrating to the public the critical need for this infrastructure project,” explained Justus. “The Rockdale – West Middleton project will reinforce the transmission network in Dane County, reduce the threat of future system outages, and provide reliable power to support Dane County’s economic development and growing population.”

Dane County has experienced in recent years some of the highest growth rates in the state, both in population and electricity usage. The existing transmission system in and around Dane County brings power in from outside the county to meet the needs for electricity. However, the system is operating at its limits and the Rockdale – West Middleton transmission line will help accommodate the growth in demand, and strengthen the efficiency and reliability of existing lower-voltage lines.

ATC estimates the project cost between \$213 million and \$250 million and the length between 35 and 55 miles depending on the route. If the project is approved by the PSC, construction of the new power line would start in 2010, and the line would be energized in 2013. ATC’s application, Docket No. 137-CE-147, is available for viewing in the Case Management section of the PSC’s web site at <http://psc.wi.gov>.

*ATC owns, operates, builds and maintains the high-voltage electric transmission system serving portions of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Illinois. Formed in 2001 as the nation’s first multi-state transmission-only utility, ATC has invested \$1.7 billion to improve the adequacy and reliability of its infrastructure. ATC now is a \$2.2 billion company with 9,350 miles of transmission lines and 500 substations. The company is a member of the Midwest ISO regional transmission organization, and provides nondiscriminatory service to all customers, supporting effective competition in energy markets without favoring any market participant. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.atcllc.com](http://www.atcllc.com).*

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