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PSC signals approval for Badger Coulee Transmission Line Project

PSC commissioners verbally approve Northern Route at open meeting; final order will be issued by April 24, 2015

MADISON, Wis. – Following more than four years of public involvement and regulatory review, the merits of the 345,000-volt Badger Coulee Transmission Line Project were discussed today by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. At an open meeting, the PSC commissioners agreed with the project's need and benefits outlined by American Transmission Co. and Xcel Energy for the approximately 180-mile line, which will electrically connect the La Crosse area to northern Dane County. The next step is for the Commissioners' discussion to be documented in a written order and then approved by the Commissioners at an open meeting before April 24, 2015.

"We appreciate the public's active involvement throughout our public outreach and the regulatory review process," said ATC Manager of Environmental and Local Relations Greg Levesque. "Public input helps identify ways to avoid and minimize environmental and community impacts. We will continue to communicate with affected property owners and communities in the years to come to ensure the safe construction of the line."

During the meeting, PSC commissioners selected the Northern Route, which was one of the two options submitted by the applicants. More than 90 percent of the Northern Route uses existing utility and Interstate or U.S. highway corridors. The project's end points are Xcel Energy's new Briggs Road Substation near Holmen and ATC's North Madison Substation in the Town of Vienna, continuing to ATC's Cardinal Substation in the Town of Middleton. The PSC's order for the project, including any minor route adjustments or conditions ATC and Xcel Energy must meet to construct the project, will be issued by April 24, 2015.

This project has been designated a Multi-Value Project by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator because it will enable the delivery of energy in support of reliability, economic and public

policy benefits. The \$580 million estimated project cost will be shared among all electric users in MISO's footprint, which includes 15 Midwestern states and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

"We are pleased that the PSC has recognized the need for and benefits of this project." said Xcel Energy Manager, Regional Transmission Initiatives Kyle Neidermire. "This project will help ensure electric reliability and provide access to lower-cost power and renewable energy for all electric users in the region."

ATC and Xcel Energy will begin reaching out to impacted property owners along the selected route this year. Project construction is expected to begin in 2016 to meet an in-service date of 2018.

Note to editors:

A map of the proposed route options and additional project information are available at www.BadgerCoulee.com.

ATC and Xcel Energy's application and documents associated with the regulatory review process are available at www.psc.wi.gov under Docket No. 5-CE-142.

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About ATC

American Transmission Co. is a Wisconsin-based company that owns and operates the electric transmission system in portions of the Upper Midwest. Formed in 2001 as the nation's first multi-state transmission-only utility, ATC has invested \$3.5 billion to improve the adequacy and reliability of its infrastructure. ATC now has \$3.8 billion in assets, including more than 9,530 miles of transmission lines and 530 substations. The company is a member of the MISO 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 website at www.atcllc.com.

About Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company, with retail operations in eight Western and Midwestern states, including Wisconsin. Xcel Energy provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.4 million electricity customers and 1.9 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies. Company headquarters are located in Minneapolis, and Wisconsin-Michigan operating company headquarters are located in Eau Claire, Wis. For more information about Xcel Energy visit www.xcelenergy.com.