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PSC deems Badger Coulee Transmission Line Project application complete

Extensive regulatory review process officially begins

MADISON, Wis. – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin has determined complete the joint application of American Transmission Co. and Xcel Energy to build an approximately 160- to 180-mile, 345,000-volt transmission line from the La Crosse area to northern Dane County, Wisconsin. The next step is an extensive regulatory review by the PSC, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture, including public notification, scoping meetings, an Environmental Impact Statement, and public and technical hearings.

The project partners in October 2013 filed an application with the PSC. The PSC requires applicants to propose two route options for a new 345-kV transmission line. More than 90 percent of the approximately 182-mile northern route uses existing utility and Interstate or U.S. Highway corridors, and about 60 percent of the approximately 159-mile southern route uses shared corridors. Both route options have the same end points: 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. If the project is approved, the PSC will select the final route. The estimated cost is \$540 million to \$580 million, depending on the route.

"We appreciate the public's active involvement over the past several years in helping us evaluate possible routes," said ATC Manager of Environmental and Local Relations Greg Levesque. "The PSC's regulatory review phase allows further opportunity for stakeholders to submit comments directly to the PSC and be part of the process."

The Badger Coulee Transmission Line 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. Studies indicate that a new transmission line will offset the need for about \$160 million to \$180 million in lower voltage transmission system upgrades in western Wisconsin, provide local utilities with increased access to the wholesale energy market and could provide \$118 million to \$700 million in net economic benefits to electric consumers over the life of the line. The new transmission line also would establish another pathway for renewable energy into Wisconsin with a connection to key load centers.

“Today’s decision is another step forward in a very comprehensive and inclusive regulatory process,” said Xcel Energy Project Manager Dave Rockwell. “We strongly encourage all interested stakeholders to stay involved as the review process may take up to 12 months.”

If the project is approved, construction of the new transmission line would begin in 2016 to meet an in-service date of 2018.

Note to editors:

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

ATC and Xcel Energy’s application with the PSC can be found by visiting www.psc.wi.gov and entering Docket No. 5-CE-142 (current docket number) or 137-CE-160 (previous docket number).

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About ATC

ATC is a Wisconsin-based utility that owns, operates, builds and maintains the high-voltage electric transmission system serving portions of the Upper Midwest. Formed in 2001 as the nation’s first multi-state transmission-only utility, ATC has invested \$3.2 billion to improve the adequacy and reliability of its infrastructure. ATC now is a \$3.6 billion company with 9,480 miles of transmission lines and 529 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 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, Wisconsin. For more information about Xcel Energy visit www.xcelenergy.com.