

PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINES

We will now begin the public input hearing for Docket No. EL05-028 entitled In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Facilities Permit to Build 9.65 miles of the Buffalo Ridge to Brookings County 115 kV Transmission Line, two 0.4 mile Brookings County to White 345 kV Transmission Lines, the Brookings County Substation and to Add Facilities to the White Substation. The date is December 21, 2005, the time is 7:00 p.m., and the place of this hearing is White, South Dakota. This hearing concerns an application for a Construction Permit to build the following facilities: First - Two new 0.4 mile 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission lines connecting the Western Area Power Administration White Substation located southeast of White, South Dakota, and a new Xcel Energy Brookings County Substation; Second - A new 345 kV/115kV Brookings County Substation located approximately 0.4 miles east of the White Substation; Third - A new 9.65 mile 115 kV transmission line from the Brookings County Substation to the Minnesota/South Dakota border; and Fourth - Improvements to the White Substation to accommodate the new 345 kV lines. The application comprises the western portion of the Buffalo Ridge - White transmission project which connects the White Substation to the Buffalo Ridge Substation southeast of Lake Benton, Minnesota.

The purpose of this hearing is to provide information to the public about Xcel's proposed project and to hear public comments regarding the proposed project. Interested persons have the right to present their views and comments regarding the application, and we want to encourage you to do so. A copy of the application is on file with the Brookings County Auditor. The public may also access the application and all other non-confidential

documents in the file on the Commission's web site at www.puc.sd.gov under "Commission Actions," "Commission Dockets," "2005 Electric Dockets," and scroll down to EL05-028.

The parties to this proceeding at this time are Xcel and the Commission. Under South Dakota law, each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the area where the facility is proposed to be constructed; any non-profit organization, formed in whole or in part to promote conservation or natural beauty, to protect the environment, personal health or other biological values, to preserve historical sites, to promote consumer interests, to represent commercial and industrial groups, or to promote the orderly development of the area in which the facility is to be constructed; or any interested person, may be granted party status in this proceeding by making written application to the Commission on or before January 31, 2006. We have applications available here this evening if you would like to apply for party status.

For its permit to be approved, Xcel must show that the proposed transmission lines will comply with all applicable laws and rules; that the transmission lines will not pose a threat of serious injury to the environment or to the social and economic condition of inhabitants or expected inhabitants in the siting area; that the transmission lines will not substantially impair the health, safety or welfare of the inhabitants; and that the transmission lines will not unduly interfere with the orderly development of the region, with due consideration having been given to the views of governing bodies of affected local units of government. Based on these factors, the Commission will decide whether the permit for the project should be granted, denied, or granted upon such terms, conditions or modifications of the construction, operation or maintenance of the facilities as the Commission finds appropriate.

We will begin the hearing by having Xcel make a presentation to explain its proposed project. Following that presentation, we will take comments from any interested persons, and we want to strongly encourage members of the public to present your views.

Jim Wilcox will be the spokesman here tonight for Xcel. Jim, would you please introduce the others with you tonight, and then you may begin your presentation.