

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OTTER TAIL POWER COMPANY ON BEHALF OF SEVEN REGIONAL
UTILITIES TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT IN
GRANT AND DEUEL COUNTIES, SOUTH DAKOTA
DOCKET EL06-002**

WHEN: Thursday, March 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. CST
WHERE: Reville City Auditorium - Basement, Reville, SD

Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15 and 49-41B-16, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold a public input hearing at the above time and place on an application filed by Otter Tail Power Company on behalf of seven regional utilities (Applicants) - Otter Tail Power Company, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Great River Energy, Heartland Consumers Power District, Montana-Dakota Utilities Co., Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (as represented by Missouri River Energy Services) for a permit to construct transmission lines and associated facilities in Grant and Deuel Counties in South Dakota. The applicants seek a Construction Permit designating a route and authorizing construction of three new transmission lines in South Dakota. Two lines would be constructed to 230 kV standards and would run from the existing Big Stone 230 kV Substation next to the Big Stone I power plant to a new Big Stone 345 kV Substation, which is proposed to be located southwest of the intersection of Grant County Road #4 (145th Street) and 484th Avenue. One of these 230 kV lines will continue on to the east for one mile and then turn and run diagonally to a point on the west side of the existing Highway 12 Substation, which is approximately two miles west of Big Stone City. From that point the line will go east a short distance where it will be double circuited with an existing 115 kV line and follow the existing route of the 115 kV line to the South Dakota/Minnesota border. Approximately 5.45 miles of new 230 kV line would be built in South Dakota.

The third line would be constructed for future 345 kV operation but initially be operated at 230 kV and would start from the new Big Stone 345 kV Substation, go slightly southeasterly until it crosses U.S. Hwy 12, where it turns and goes directly south along the Quarter Section line between 484th and 485th Avenue to 148th Street. The proposed route then goes at a diagonal southwest to 484th Avenue and parallels 484th Avenue south to 149th Street. The proposed route then turns southeasterly again to a point approximately one-half mile south of 149th Street to 485th Avenue, where it again turns south and parallels 485th Avenue until it crosses 155th Street (Grant County Road #26). The proposed route then turns and runs diagonally to the southwest to a point approximately one-third of a mile north of 158th Street, where it again turns south and follows the Quarter-Section line between 484th and 485th Avenue to 172A Street. The route then turns and runs diagonally to the southeast to a point on the South Dakota/Minnesota border approximately one-quarter of a mile south of 170th Street or two miles north of the City of Gary, South Dakota. The line then continues south approximately one-quarter mile before it turns and enters Minnesota and continues on to the Granite Falls Substation near Granite Falls, Minnesota. Approximately 33 miles of 345 kV line will be built in South Dakota. In addition, modification of the existing Big Stone 230 kV Substation and existing transmission facilities and construction of a new Big Stone 345 kV Substation will also be required as part of the project.

An alternative route for the proposed 345 kV line would follow the same proposed route from the new Big Stone 345 kV Substation to the intersection of 160th Street and 485th Avenue where it would turn and go straight east along 160th Street to the South Dakota/ Minnesota border.

At the hearing, interested persons may appear and present their questions, views and comments regarding the application. The application is on file in the Grant County Auditor's office and Deuel County Auditor's office and in the Commission's office in Pierre. The application and all other documents in the case may also be accessed on the Commission's web site at www.puc.sd.gov under "Commission Actions," "Commission Dockets," "2006 Electric Dockets," "EL06-002."

The parties to this proceeding are currently the Applicants and the Commission. Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17, any person residing in the area of the project, each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the project area, 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 project area, or any interested person, may be granted formal party status in this proceeding by making written application to the Commission as provided in ARSD 20:10:22:40 on or before March 20, 2006. Application forms for party status will be available at the public input hearing on March 2, 2006.

For approval, the Applicants must show that the proposed transmission line project will comply with all applicable laws and rules, will not pose a threat of serious injury to the environment nor to the social and economic condition of inhabitants or expected inhabitants in the siting area, will not substantially impair the health, safety or welfare of the inhabitants, and 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 upon these factors, the Commission will decide whether the permit should be granted, denied or granted upon such terms, conditions or modifications of the construction, operation or maintenance as the Commission finds are appropriate.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, this hearing is being held in a physically accessible location. Please contact the Commission at least 48 hours prior to the hearing if you have special needs so arrangements can be made to accommodate you. The Commission's contact information is: ph (800) 332-1782; fax (605) 773-3809; www.puc.sd.gov; 500 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501.