



**AFFIDAVIT  
OF PUBLICATION**

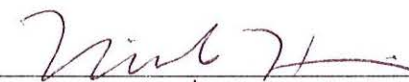
**RECEIVED**

JUN 03 2024

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

I hereby certify that the public notice detailed below was published on the run date(s) indicated in the publication identified below, a legal newspaper as defined by SDCL 17-2-2.1, in the city of Watertown, county of Codington, South Dakota.

Signed:   
Print Name: Sandy DeBeer, Advertising Placement Coordinator

Notary Public:   
My commission expires: May 9, 2027



**Advertiser Name: Public Utilities Commission**

**Order #: 24054PP1**

**Watertown Public Opinion (Watertown, SD)**

Run Date	Ad Size	Caption / Position / Special Instructions	Section and Page information
Wed 04/24/24	3.00 X 7.40	<b>Caption:</b> Public Meeting: Otter Tail Power & W. MN Municipal Power transmission line	
Wed 05/08/24	3.00 X 7.40	<b>Caption:</b> Public Meeting: Otter Tail Power & W. MN Municipal Power transmission line	
Wed 05/22/24	3.00 X 7.40	<b>Caption:</b> Public Meeting: Otter Tail Power & W. MN Municipal Power transmission line	

**South Dakota NewsMedia Association**

South Dakota Newspaper Services, Inc.  
1125 32nd Avenue  
Brookings, South Dakota 57006  
Phone: 800-658-3697

# Group talks up all-terrain wheelchairs

Access Ability Wisconsin aims to put one in every county across the state

Paul A. Smith  
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
USA TODAY NETWORK - WISCONSIN

Twelve years have passed, but Monica Spaeni of Mineral Point, Wisconsin, remembers the moment as clearly as any in her life.

"Wow," said Spaeni, 59, recalling the 2012 experience of using an all-terrain wheelchair. "It was eye-opening and afforded me a freedom I thought I might never have again. I knew I wasn't going to let that go, either."

Spaeni, who was paralyzed from the waist down in a 2001 skiing accident, had been restricted to paved or other relatively flat surfaces in her traditional wheelchair.

But the all-terrain wheelchair was powered by an electric motor and equipped with tracks similar to a tank. It allowed Spaeni to travel independently that day across a grassy and stubble-filled field on a pheasant hunt as her husband, Steve, walked nearby.

And for the first time in years on an outdoor excursion, Monica Spaeni said, her husband wasn't worried about her safety.

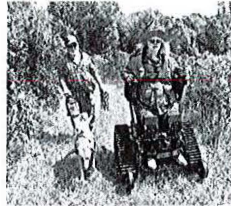
"It was like I found a new pair of hiking boots," Spaeni said. "It opened a door for me."

Others, too. In 2013, Spaeni was one of the founding members and is current board president of Access Ability Wisconsin, a nonprofit formed to provide opportunities for individuals with mobility challenges to enjoy nature and outdoor recreational experiences. Its motto is "Outdoors Access 4 All."

The group is working with partners to purchase and place all-terrain wheelchairs in each county of Wisconsin. As of this spring, it had reached 32.

Under AAW's typical arrangement, the all-terrain wheelchair and a trailer are hosted by a local organization or facility. People will borrow it for an outing. The use of the all-terrain wheelchair and trailer is free.

AAW is holding a 10th anniversary



Monica Spaeni traverses a marsh area with her husband, Steve, and their dog Ragnar. Spaeni, president of Access Ability Wisconsin, has a fleet of all-terrain wheelchairs available to borrow for free or a donation around the state.

MIKE DE SISI/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

celebration June 1 in Madison to help raise awareness for all-terrain wheelchairs, promote opportunities for people to use them and attract more partners in its quest to have the equipment statewide.

Traditional wheelchairs aren't often stable enough for safe movement across rugged or uneven ground and aren't suited to travel over sand, gravel or long grass.

But the right piece of equipment can make a world of difference for those with physical challenges.

"Think of the all-terrain wheelchair as the off-road alternative among wheelchairs."

"It opens up so many possibilities," Spaeni said. "It allows people to focus on what's possible instead of what's not."

The all-terrain wheelchairs have five speeds and can travel as fast as 5 mph. Standard models feature a joystick and push buttons for controls but can also be fitted with a "puffer" for people without the use of their hands.

The ability to adjust the seat position — from tilted slightly forward to a deep recline — adds a measure of comfort and safety. When going uphill, the user can tilt forward. If going downhill, it can be adjusted backward. The chair can also turn in a tight radius.

Critical to those who spend their day in a chair, the movements also allow the user to change positions and alleviate pressure points on the tailbone, back and thighs.

With an electric power source, the chair runs quiet as a whisper. When fully charged, the batteries can run the chair constantly for many hours.

Spaeni said the chairs aren't only for those unable to walk. They can be used by anyone, perhaps through age, injury or disease, who has difficulty navigating trails or other outdoor terrain.

"The uses of an all-terrain wheelchair are virtually unlimited."

Spaeni, for example, recently used one on an outing to find and pick morel mushrooms and prune trees. The equipment was used in April by Justin Niesendorf as he tagged a wild turkey near Oseo.

And last September Randall Sonnenberg of Watertown used an all-terrain wheelchair to learn fly casting.

At a July 2022 event to mark the placement of an all-terrain wheelchair at Wehr Nature Center in Franklin, Darrin Malsack, then 45, and his daughter Sofia, 5, both of Milwaukee, drove on the grounds on Darrin's camouflage-colored all-terrain wheelchair.

Darrin, who is paralyzed from the chest down, said he had a plow attachment for his all-terrain wheelchair which he used to clear snow from his driveway.

The benefits of the all-terrain wheelchair extended to his daughter, Darrin said.

"It really helps her get outdoors with me," he said. "I'd say it's as much for her

as it is for me."

Other adaptive features for the all-terrain wheelchairs include mounts for cameras and extensions for tools.

Spaeni said the value of the equipment is multiplied many times through the mental and physical health benefits it provides to users and their families.

"When we started, we said helping people with physical challenges get outdoors was very important," Spaeni said. "And of course that's true. But we also now know it increases independence and decreases depression. It's a mental health solution, too."

Spaeni said AAW has helped more families get out together and helped increase social connections in communities.

"If you are stuck inside for any reason, it's no fun," Spaeni said. "These all-terrain wheelchairs can be a life changer."

AAW has grown substantially in all aspects over the last decade. It has gone from one all-terrain wheelchair in Dane County to at least one in 32 counties. By the end of 2024, Spaeni expects to add two more counties to the list. In 2023 AAW was at 44 events, Spaeni said. And the organization now has two full-time employees, including a certified recreational therapist.

The biggest challenge in scaling up is cost. Spaeni said an all-terrain wheelchair and trailer runs about \$25,000.

"We're working on new partnerships and grant programs," Spaeni said. "It's a challenge but you know that never stopped us before. Our goal is to get them in all 72 counties in Wisconsin and we're not changing."

## Nothing ever changes. Until you change it.

Access our easy-to-use election guides to help you vote for the progress you want to see.

Vote informed at [thepublicopinion.com/elections/voter-guide](http://thepublicopinion.com/elections/voter-guide)



Public Opinion

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING**  
**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**WHAT:** Permit for Otter Tail Power Company and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency to Construct a 345kV transmission line from the Big Stone South Substation to the Minnesota border in Big Stone Township, Grant County, South Dakota

**WHEN AND WHERE:** Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., CDT, at the Big Stone American Legion, 14521 485th Ave., Big Stone City, South Dakota.

Pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-18, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) will hold a public input meeting at the above time and place on an Application filed by Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail) and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (Western Minnesota) (collectively, Applicants) to construct a 3.5-mile 345 kV transmission line and associated facilities including substation upgrades (Project) in Big Stone Township, Grant County, SD. The Project originates at Otter Tail's existing Big Stone South Substation, located approximately 2 miles west of Big Stone City, South Dakota in Big Stone Township and connects to a substation near Alexandria, Minnesota.

The purpose of the public input meeting will be to hear public comments regarding the Application and the Project. At the meeting, Applicants will present a brief description of the Project, after which interested persons may appear and present their views, concerns, and questions regarding the Application. A copy of the Application is on file with the Grant County Auditor and at the Commission's office in Pierre. The Application and all other documents in the docket, including detailed maps of the Project, may be accessed on the Commission's website at [puc.sd.gov](http://puc.sd.gov) under Commission Actions, Commission Dockets, Electric Dockets, 2024 Electric Dockets, EL24-015 or by contacting the Commission in person at the Capitol Building, 500 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD.

Pursuant to SDCL 49-18B-17 and ARSD 20:10-22.40, the parties to this proceeding are currently the Applicant and the Commission Staff. Each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the area where the facility is proposed to be sited, or any person residing in the area where the facility is proposed to be sited, or any directly interested person, may be granted party status in this proceeding by making timely written application to the Commission. Applications for party status will be available at the public input meeting or may be obtained from the Commission's web site or by contacting the Commission. Applications for party status must be filed with the Commission on or before 5:00 p.m., CDT, June 14, 2024. The Commission will also accept comments in writing from anyone, either by mail, personal delivery, or e-mail until the time of the decision. You only need to apply for party status if you want to participate formally in the case by putting on actual testimony or other factual evidence, conducting discovery, cross-examining witnesses, making legal arguments, and to preserve your right to appeal to the courts if you do not believe the Commission's decision is legally correct. You do not need to have party status in order to submit written comments.

Following the public input meeting, the Commission may schedule a formal evidentiary hearing conforming to SDCL Chapter 1-26 to consider issues raised by any party or the Commission itself. At such a formal hearing, all parties will have the opportunity to appear, present evidence, and cross-examine the other parties' witnesses and exercise all other rights afforded by SDCL Chapters 1-26, 49-1 and 49-18B and ARSD Chapters 20:10-01 and 20:10-22, including rights of appeal to the courts.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the input meeting will be held in a physically accessible location. Please contact the Public Utilities Commission at (605) 733-3201 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing if you have special needs so arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

Published three times by the South Dakota PUC at a total approximate cost of \$88815.

**LocalIQ**

**Smart Solutions reach both passive and active job seekers!**

Let LocalIQ help you create a Smart Recruitment Solution for all your hire needs.

**Smart Solutions Include:**

- Targeting the right candidates through the right channels, using our local and dedicated networks
- Leveraging the most current local job market data
- A multi-media approach where needed, like targeted banner ads, social media, job boards and much more
- Working with you to reach your goals