Print or Type *Print Form*

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

*This form is **only** for persons who wish to be an active party in this docket. You do NOT need to be a party to submit comments.*

In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy and Otter Tail Power Company for an Energy Facility Permit to Construct the PowerOn Midwest Project Consisting of a 765-kV Transmission Line, a 345-kV Transmission Line, and Associated Facilities

APPLICATION FOR PARTY STATUS

EL26-026

BlackFork, LLC, petitions the Public Utilities Commission to be granted party status in this proceeding.
(Name of Applicant. This will be the person or entity named as a party.)

Place a check mark next to each item below that applies to you, adding a mileage number where requested.

☐ I am a person or organization that received official notification of the project via U.S. mail from the siting permit applicant.

☐ I reside within _____ miles of the proposed project.

Residential address if different from your mailing address:

_____

☑ I own land within 0 miles of the proposed project.

Legal description: NE ¼, Section 31, Township 115 North, Range 47 West.

SE ¼, Section 30, Township 115 North, Range 47 West

☐ I officially represent a municipal, city, township, county or other affected governmental agency within _____ miles of the proposed project.

☐ I represent a utility company with facilities within _____ miles of the proposed project.

Explain your interest in applying for party status below.

The proposed power lines would cross my land. Detailed information sent as cover letter to email.

Deadline: This application must be filed with the Public Utilities Commission on or before **5:00 p.m. CT, Nov. 3, 2026**, File this completed form electronically at puc.sd.gov/EFilingOptions.aspx

This section is to be completed by the person requesting party status. **All fields are required.**

BlackFork, LLC
Applicant's Printed/Typed Name

Gordon W Fonner
Signature of Applicant — Date Signed

CEO / Owner, BlackFork, LLC / BlackFork Land & Cattle Company
Name of Applicant's Organization (if Applicable)

Applicant's Address (PO Box/St/Ave/Road)

111 Main Avenue, Brookings, SD 57006
Applicant's Address (City, State, ZIP Code)

605-696-3101
Applicant's Phone Number or, if represented, Applicant's Attorney's Phone Number

gordon@blackforkfarms.com
Applicant's E-mail Address* or, if represented, Applicant's Attorney's E-mail Address*

The section below is to be completed by the Applicant's attorney, if represented. All fields are required.

Attorney's Printed/Typed Name

Signature of Attorney — Date Signed

Attorney's Address (PO Box/St/Ave/Road)

Attorney's Address (City, State, ZIP Code)

*The Commission processes its dockets electronically for time and cost efficiencies. Communication on the docket will be done via email to parties to this docket. Failure to provide an email address may result in documents being served upon the county auditor rather than sent directly to the party, pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17.1.

If your submitted form is incomplete, you risk not being granted party status.

For approval, party status applications must meet the requirements of SDCL 49-41B-17.

BLACK FORK

111 Main Ave

Brookings, SD 57006

Spring Hill & Spring Lake Farms
Statement of Property Impacts and Request for Route Modification
Docket EL26-026 — PowerOn Midwest Project

Affected property:

- **Spring Hill:** SE ¼, Section 30, Township 115 North, Range 47 West.
- **Spring Lake:** NE ¼, Section 31, Township 115 North, Range 47 West.

BlackFork, LLC, formerly BlackFork Land & Cattle Company, owns the Spring Hill and Spring Lake farms. BlackFork is the Ommen family's 3,000-acre farming business, established in 1889. Over the years, we have expanded the operation to include BlackFork Farms Distillery and BlackFork Game Lodge.

Spring Hill and Spring Lake are integral to our family and our businesses. The proposed transmission route would cut diagonally through Spring Hill and directly affect land with deep personal significance, established recreational uses, and planned residential use.

1. Spring Hill — Our Family's Final Resting Place

At the heart of Spring Hill is a native prairie hill with grasses and trees. A year-round spring flows from its side, forming a small creek that runs northwest into a large wetland, with the Blue Bell Hills in the distance. To the southwest sits a 1938 barrel-nose Ford like the one driven by my grandfather, Henry Ommen.

This is a special and sacred place for our family. We gather here after the loss of loved ones and scatter ashes. We are in the process of formally establishing Spring Hill as a natural family cemetery.

As currently depicted, the proposed transmission line cuts diagonally across Spring Hill, directly over the native prairie hill and flowing spring. A transmission line through this location would fundamentally alter the beauty, quiet, and serenity that make it meaningful as our family's final resting place.

2. Spring Hill and Spring Lake — Essential to BlackFork Game Lodge

Together, these farms serve as the primary hunting grounds for guests staying at BlackFork Game Lodge. We have spent years developing food plots and wildlife habitat. Their natural beauty, sweeping views, and peaceful rural setting are central to the experience we offer.

We have made a significant investment in the Game Lodge, and these farms are essential to its success. A transmission corridor through the property would compromise that setting and could materially harm the guest experience and the value of our investment.

3. Spring Lake — Planned Family Homesite

Spring Lake also holds long-term importance for our family. We have spent years developing a largemouth bass population in this spring-fed lake and plan to build a home overlooking it for a family member.

The proposed transmission route would adversely affect the setting and desirability of this planned homesite and diminish the benefits of the improvements we have made.

Prior Discussions and Requested Route Change

Last summer, I met with representatives of the project developer and explained the importance of these properties to our family and businesses. I described why transmission lines would be incompatible with these uses, and we discussed moving the proposed route off our property.

We request that the applicants revise the route to avoid both the Spring Hill and Spring Lake farms. We also request a detailed review of alternative alignments that would protect our family's resting place, the hunting grounds supporting BlackFork Game Lodge, and the planned family homesite.

These concerns involve existing family practices, years of habitat improvements, substantial business investment, and specific plans for the property's future. We ask that these uses receive meaningful consideration before the transmission route is approved.



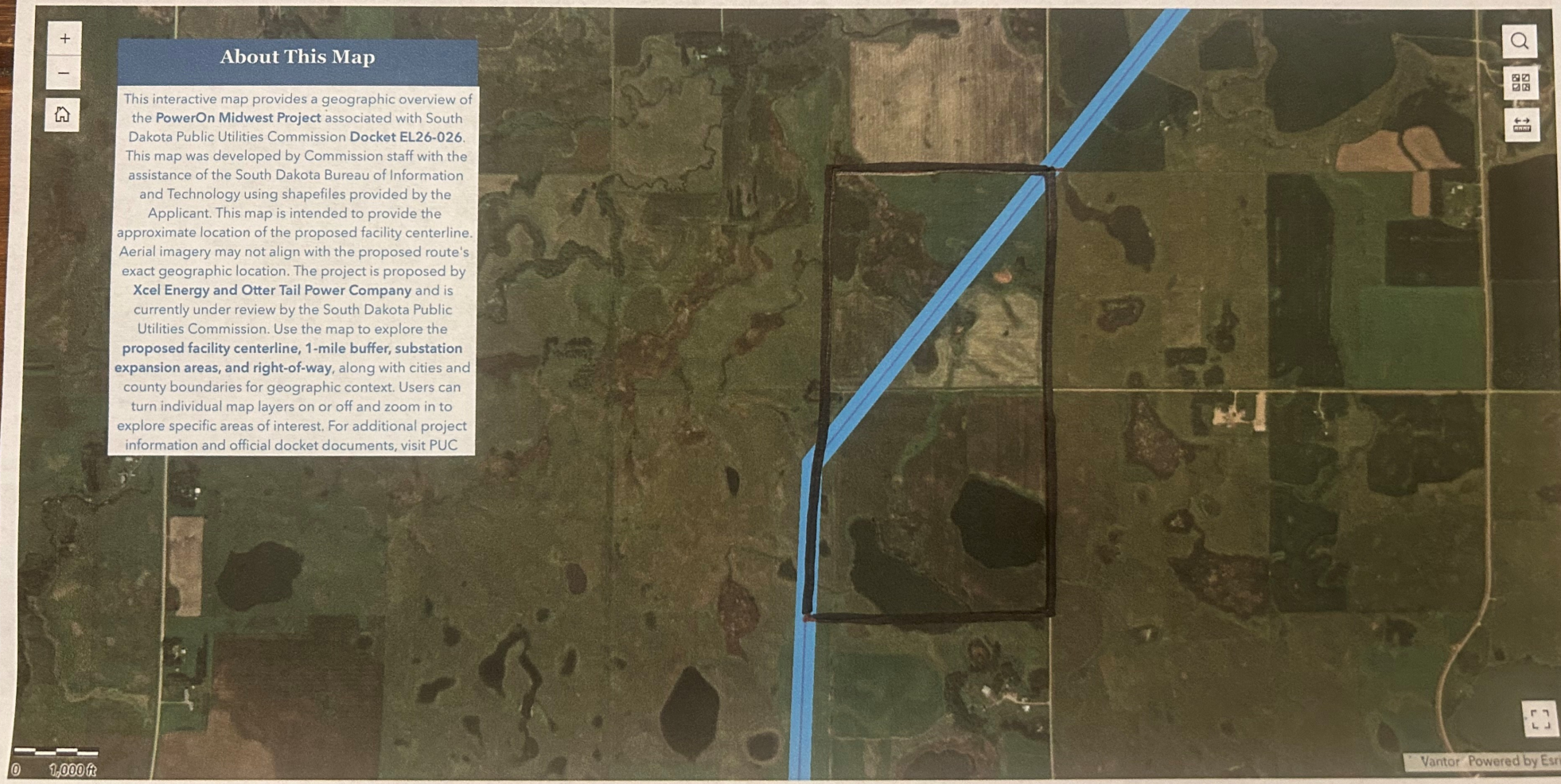
Gordon W. Ommen
CEO & Owner

BlackFork, LLC / BlackFork Land & Cattle Company

Docket Number: EL26-026
Last Name: Ommen First Name: Gordon Company: BlackFork, LLC Address: 111 Main Ave City: Brookings State: SD Zip: 57006 Phone: 605-696-3101 Email: gordono@capitaline.net

Comments: BlackFork, LLC requests party status as the owner of the Spring Hill and Spring Lake farms in Deuel County, South Dakota: the SE ¼ of Section 30 and the NE ¼ of Section 31, Township 115 North, Range 47 West. As currently depicted, the proposed transmission route crosses Spring Hill, directly affecting BlackFork's property and its existing and planned uses. Spring Hill contains native prairie, a year-round spring, and a family gathering and memorial site where ashes of loved ones have been scattered. The family is in the process of formally establishing a natural family cemetery at this location. Spring Hill and Spring Lake also provide the primary hunting grounds for BlackFork Game Lodge. Years of investment in wildlife habitat and food plots, together with the properties' natural beauty and rural setting, support that business. Spring Lake contains a spring-fed lake where we have developed a largemouth bass population and plan a future family residence. I previously met with project representatives, explained these interests, and discussed relocating the route off the property. BlackFork seeks party status to protect its direct property and economic interests, present evidence concerning these impacts, evaluate alternative alignments, and request a route modification avoiding the Spring Hill and Spring Lake farms. See the attached Statement of Property Impacts and Request for Route Modification for additional detail.

Attachment: A 2



Attachment: A1

