

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF)	NOTICE OF APPLICATION;
XCEL ENERGY FOR A FACILITIES PERMIT TO)	ORDER FOR AND NOTICE
BUILD 9.65 MILES OF THE BUFFALO RIDGE)	OF PUBLIC INPUT
TO BROOKINGS COUNTY 115 KV.)	HEARING; NOTICE OF
TRANSMISSION LINE, TWO 0.4 MILE)	OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY
BROOKINGS COUNTY TO WHITE 345 KV)	FOR PARTY STATUS
TRANSMISSION LINES, THE BROOKINGS)	
COUNTY SUBSTATION AND TO ADD)	EL05-028
FACILITIES TO THE WHITE SUBSTATION)	

On December 2, 2005, Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota Corporation d/b/a Xcel Energy (Xcel) filed an application for a Construction Permit to build the following facilities: (i) 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; (ii) a new 345 kV/115 kV Brookings County Substation located approximately 0.4 miles east of the White Substation; (iii) a new 9.65 mile 115 kV transmission line from the Brookings County Substation to the Minnesota/South Dakota border; and, (iv) 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 Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-41B and ARSD Chapter 20:10:22.

Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15 and 49-41B-16, the Commission will hold a public hearing on Xcel's application on Wednesday, December 21, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. CST at the McKnight Community Center, 300 West Main Street, White, South Dakota. The purpose of the hearing will be to hear public comment regarding Xcel's application. At the public input hearing, Xcel will present a brief description of the project, following which interested persons may appear and present their views, comments and questions regarding the application. A copy of the application is on file with the Brookings County Auditor pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-15(5) and the Commission's office in Pierre and the application and all other documents in the case may be accessed on the Commission's web site at www.puc.sd.gov under "Commission Actions," "Commission Dockets," "2005 Electric Dockets," "EL05-028."

Pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, the parties to this proceeding are currently Xcel and the Commission. Further, each municipality, county, and governmental agency in the area where the facility is proposed to be sited; 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 sited; or any interested person, may be granted party status in this proceeding by making written application to the Commission. Applications for party status will be available at the public input hearing. Applications for party status must be received by the Commission on or before January 31, 2006.

Following the public input hearing, the Commission may schedule one or more subsequent formal evidentiary hearings conforming to SDCL Chapter 1-26 to consider any issues raised by any intervening party, Commission Staff or the Commission itself. At such 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 49-41B and ARSD 20:10:01 and 20:10:22. Absent a contested issue, the Commission will schedule the matter for decision at a regular or special meeting of the Commission.

For approval, Xcel 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 appropriate.

It is therefore

ORDERED, that the Commission will hold a public input hearing on Wednesday, December 21, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. CST, at the McKnight Community Center, 300 West Main Street, White, South Dakota; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40, applications for party status must be filed on or before January 31, 2006; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED, that pursuant to SDCL 49-41B-17.1, a party who wishes to receive personal service of all material filed in this matter shall make a specific request to the Commission for personal service, which may be included in the application for party status. Absent such a specific request, the County Auditor for Brookings County is designated by law as the agent for service of process upon all parties to this proceeding residing in Brookings County.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, this hearing is being held in a physically accessible location. Please contact the Public Utilities Commission at 1-800-332-1782 at least 48 hours prior to the hearing if you have special needs so arrangements can be made to accommodate you.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 9th day of December, 2005.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.
By: <u>Melaine Karbo</u>
Date: <u>12/9/05</u>
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

Gary Hanson
GARY HANSON, Chairman

Robert K. Sahr
ROBERT K. SAHR, Commissioner

Dustin M. Johnson
DUSTIN M. JOHNSON, Commissioner *dk*