



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

November 17, 2005 ♦ 6:30 pm
Minnesota River Room
Located on the 1st Floor of the Intergovernmental Center
10 Civic Center Plaza
Mankato, MN 56001

**In the Matter of an Xcel Energy Application for a Route Permit for the Eastwood 115 kV/115 kV Transmission Line Project in Blue Earth County.
PUC Docket No. E002/TR-05-1192; EQB Docket No. 05-95-TR-Eastwood.**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) will hold a Public Hearing on the above matter on November 17, 2005, at the Intergovernmental Center in Mankato, Minnesota. The hearing will convene at 6:30 p.m.

Hearing Examiner. Administrative Law Judge Steve M. Mihalchick of the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings will conduct the hearing.

Project Description. Xcel Energy has proposed to construct a double-circuit 115 kV high voltage transmission line about 3.5 miles long in Lime and Mankato Townships in Blue Earth County. The line taps into the Loon Lake-Summit 115 kV transmission line just south of Mankato Airport and terminates on its south end at the Eastwood Substation. The project is part of a series of transmission projects that will allow the electrical system to support the interconnection of the Mankato Energy Center into the Wilmarth Substation.

Environmental Assessment. The DOC released an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the proposed project on October 17, 2005. The EA addresses the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project. Copies of the permit application and the EA are available for public review at the city of Mankato offices. These and other project-related documents may also be found on the web at:

<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=17001>

Conduct of Hearing. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Power Plant Siting Act, Minnesota Statutes 116C.51 to 116C.69, and the rules of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Minnesota Rules 4400.2000 to 4400.2950, for projects of the size and type proposed here.

DOC staff will be present at the hearing and make a brief presentation about the project and introduce into the record a number of documents relating to the project, including the application, the Environmental Assessment, and certain procedural documents. Representatives of the applicant, Xcel Energy, will be present to offer evidence and to answer questions. Members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions of DOC staff and the applicants, to make statements, and to offer written comments and material into the record. Members of the public are not required to file any papers in advance of the hearing in order to participate. There is no advance sign-up process. The Hearing Examiner will call on those who want to speak.

The record will remain open for at least ten days after the close of the hearing for interested persons to submit written comments.

Purpose of Hearing. The purpose of the public hearing is to compile the record for the PUC to consider in making a final decision on the route to approve. Upon closure of the public comment period, DOC Staff will write a report and make a recommendation to the PUC on which route to authorize and any appropriate permit conditions. The PUC will make a final decision on the permit at a subsequent Commission meeting.

Additional Information. Questions about the process can be directed to David Birkholz of the DOC staff at 85 7th Place East, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101, phone 651.296.2878, e-mail at David.Birkholz@state.mn.us or to the public advisor, George Johnson, at the same address, phone 651.296.2888, e-mail at George.Johnson@state.mn.us.

Mailing List. Any person may add his or her name to the mailing list maintained by the DOC for future mailings regarding this project, including notice of when this matter is scheduled for a PUC final decision and, afterward, notice of the PUC's decision in this matter. Names can be added to the list by contacting Mr. Birkholz or Mr. Johnson or electronically by visiting the web page cited above.

Dated: November 01, 2005