



## Energy Facility Permitting 2009 Year in Review

### Permitted Energy Facilities

In 2009, Office of Energy Security, Energy Facility Permitting (OES EFP) staff assisted the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) in permitting 16 energy facilities:

- 1 power plant (164 megawatts (MW))
- 5 transmission lines
- 1 petroleum pipeline
- 9 wind farms (598.5 MW)

### Energy Projects Under Review

OES EFP staff is currently engaged (as of December 2009) in permitting 20 energy facilities:

- 1 power plant (1,200 MW)
- 10 transmission lines
- 9 wind farms (1,088.5 MW). Among states, Minnesota currently ranks 4<sup>th</sup> nationally with an installed wind generation capacity of 1,085 MW.

### Issues, Challenges, Areas of Work

In 2009, OES EFP staff has been focused on a variety of issues; however, three areas are noteworthy for the resources expended upon them:

- 1) Wind Farm Siting.** The number of wind farms (large wind energy conversion systems, LWECS) permitted by the Commission continues to increase, both in number of projects and generation capacity. Areas of work related to wind farms include:
  - Collaborating with Commission and Department of Natural Resources staff to determine next steps in bird and bat monitoring for wind farms.
  - Working with the Minnesota Department of Health to develop a white paper on the potential health impacts of wind turbines.
- 2) Transmission Line Routing.** Staff is engaged in permitting several large transmission projects, including the CapX 2020 Phase I transmission lines. Areas of work related to transmission line routing include:
  - Collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to clarify the co-locating of transmission lines with highways, including interstate highways.
- 3) Public Participation.** Staff has used new and existing public participation tools to aid participation in the permitting process. These tools include:
  - The ability for citizens to submit comments electronically and directly from the Commission's energy facilities permitting website.
  - Developing a public comment period following application acceptance for wind farms. Citizens have a new opportunity to suggest topics for consideration in a draft site permit for proposed wind farms.