



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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 Environmental Assessment (EA) required for the above project has been completed. The EA addresses the potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed high voltage transmission line (HVTL) project.

Project Description. Xcel Energy has proposed to construct a double-circuit 115 kV HTVL 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.

Regulatory Framework. The Minnesota Legislature transferred the authority to permit high voltage transmission lines from the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) on July 1, 2005. EQB Energy Facility Permitting staff was transferred to the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC), where they continue to coordinate the routing process through to the PUC final decision.

The DOC released the EA on October 17, 2005. Copies of the permit application and the EA are available for public review at the Mankato City Center. The EA and other project-related documents may also be found on the web at:

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

More Information. Questions about the EA or the permitting process can be directed to David Birkholz at the Department of Commerce, 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. Any person may add his or her name to a mailing list maintained for mailings regarding this project. Names can be added to the list by contacting Mr. Birkholz or Mr. Johnson or by visiting the webpage cited above.

Public Hearing. A Public Hearing will be held on this matter in November. A separate notice will be sent out to the mailing list when the time and place for the Hearing have been established.

Dated: October 17, 2005