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January 2015

R-Project 345,000-Volt



# Transmission Line PROJECT

## NPPD announces final line route for R-Project

After seeking comments from landowners and interested parties the past two years, NPPD has selected a final line route for its R-Project transmission line. The 345,000-volt line will improve reliability and reduce congestion on the state's electric grid system. It will also provide additional capacity for future renewable generation projects.

Landowners who will be located along the final route were notified recently via letter.

"Property information we received from landowners was extremely helpful in determining the final route as we made modifications to address specific issues," said Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Tom Kent.

Some of the suggestions resulted in adjusting the route to avoid a private airstrip, reducing the number of homes in proximity to the line, improving access for construction, fewer shelterbelts in the right-of-way, and avoiding new

Wetland Reserve Program properties. NPPD made additional slight changes to the route based on input received following state-required public hearings held in November.

The map on the next two pages shows the line route, which will run north from NPPD's Gerald Gentleman Station near Sutherland to the existing Thedford substation. This substation will be expanded to support the new transmission line and transformer that will interconnect with the underlying 115,000-volt system at Thedford. The line will then run east toward Holt County to a new substation connecting to an existing Western Area Power Administration 345,000-volt transmission line.

### Next Steps

The District will begin contacting landowners to gain right-of-entry onto private property.

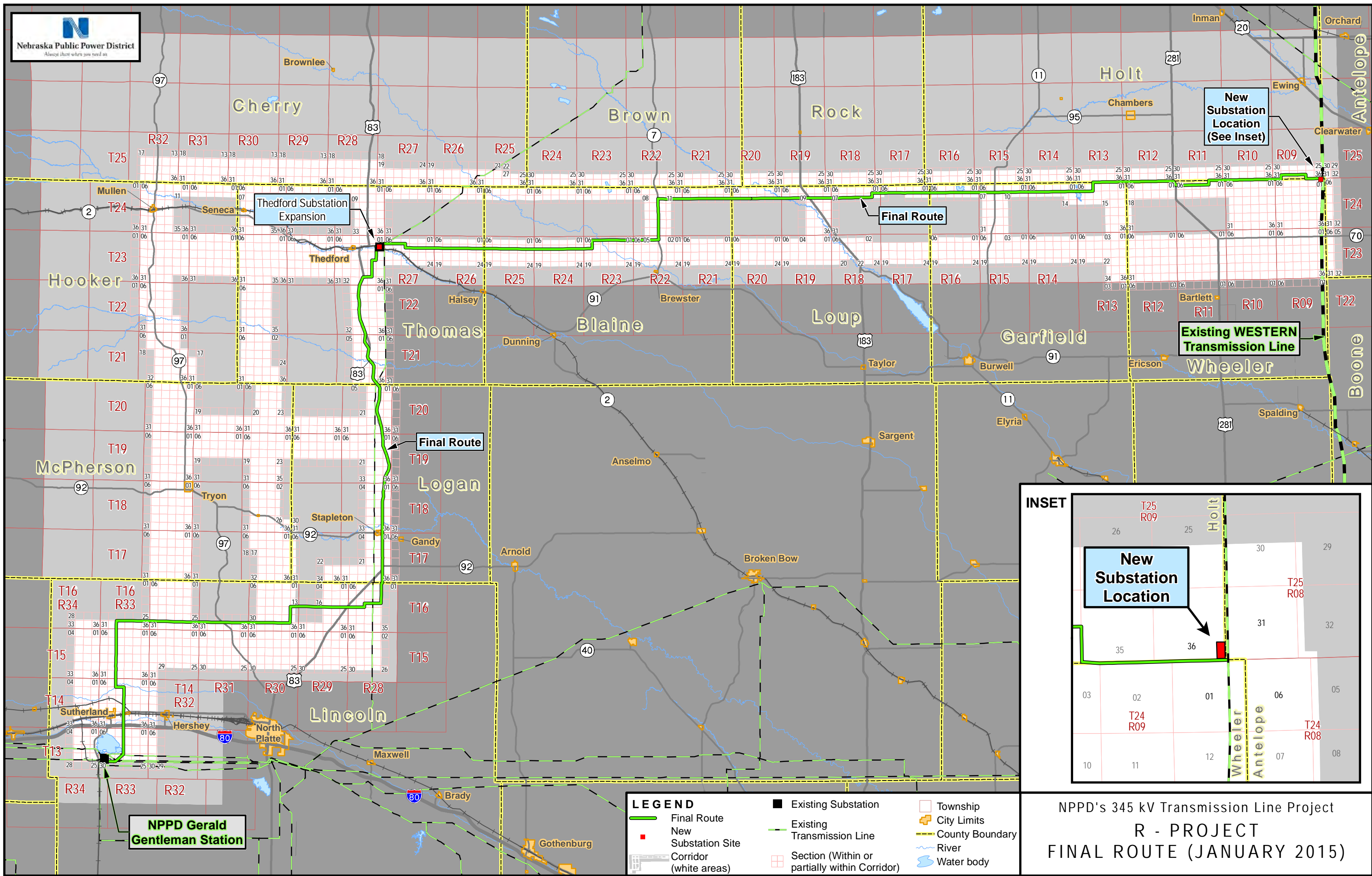
"Right-of-entry is very important for the project and landowners," said Kent. "This gives NPPD an opportunity to gain access to property and work closely with landowners in determining very specific issues regarding siting of structures and access routes. Without that access, we will have to determine locations for structures based on aerial photography, and once we have this engineered, there may be lost opportunity to make changes to further improve structure locations specific to a landowner's issues."

The District plans to use a combination of steel poles and lattice towers. The steel poles will typically be used on sections of the project that have relatively good access, or are near established roads and cultivated fields. The lattice towers will be installed on sections of the project that have limited access. Lattice towers were selected because they minimize impacts to fragile soils due to options they provide for construction. For example, lattice towers can be erected with helicopters, which negate the need to have a

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**THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR INPUT**

To help develop the final line route, nearly 1,800 individuals attended one of NPPD's 26 public open houses and public meetings and eight public hearings providing NPPD with more than 2,500 comments. The District reviewed these comments against established line routing criteria that included proximity to occupied residences, towns and villages and other amenities, plus land use, environmental, engineering and construction criteria.



**New Substation Location (See Inset)**

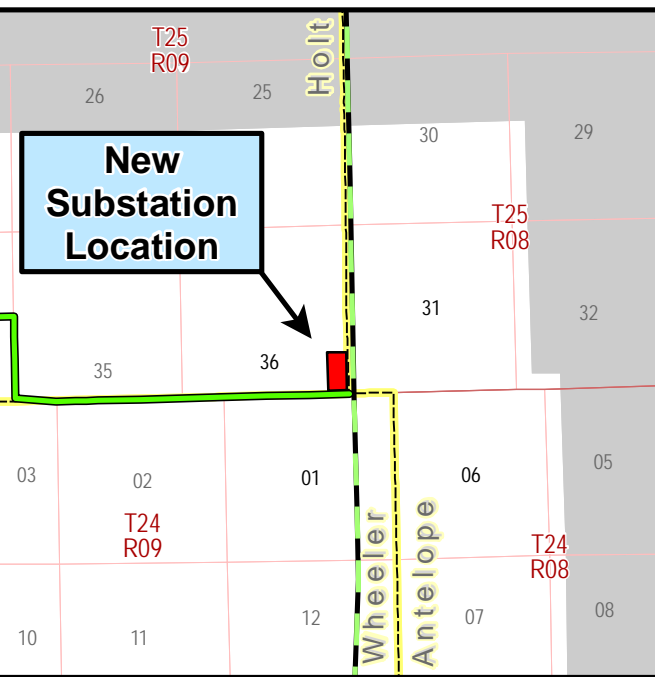
**Final Route**

**Existing WESTERN Transmission Line**

**Final Route**

**NPPD Gerald Gentleman Station**

**INSET**



**LEGEND**

- Final Route
- Existing Transmission Line
- New Substation Site
- Corridor (white areas)
- Existing Substation
- Township
- County Boundary
- ~ River
- Water body
- City Limits
- Section (Within or partially within Corridor)

NPPD's 345 kV Transmission Line Project  
**R - PROJECT**  
 FINAL ROUTE (JANUARY 2015)

... continued from page 1

large crane at each site and helical pier foundations can be used instead of foundations which require the use of concrete.

“We understand the concerns over restoring the Sandhills after construction,” said Kent, who noted that NPPD has hired a grasslands expert to consult on restoration work. “NPPD has built transmission lines through the Sandhills over the years and has successfully constructed and conducted maintenance on these lines many times. Our approach to restoration is first to avoid and minimize damage during construction, do the necessary mitigation, and gather input from stakeholders on the restoration work.

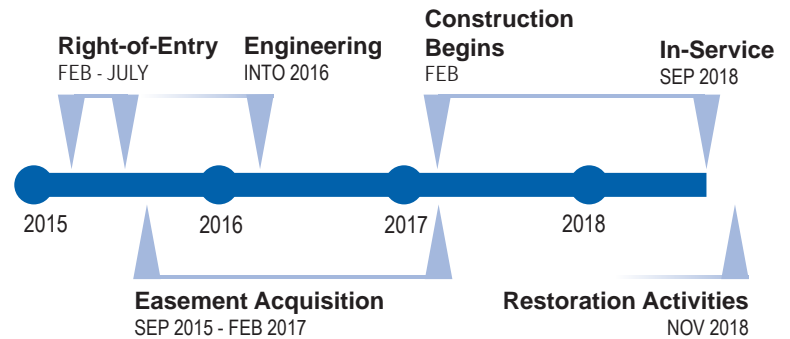
“Besides subject matter experts who will advise us on restoration, we are counting on landowners to tell us what they have faced and done in the past in restoring blowouts in this area. We do understand that it will take some time to restore damages resulting from construction of the line, but we intend to continue working with landowners to restore the land as best as we can.”

An easement compensation plan with landowners has been established using payments based on 80 percent of the appraised land value plus structure payments. “We

intend to have good faith negotiations on compensation with landowners,” Kent added.

Acquiring right-of-entry is expected to begin in February and continue through July 2015 while engineering design for the project is expected to last into 2016. Easement acquisition is expected to run from September 2015 through February 2017. Line construction will follow starting in February of 2017 with initial restoration activities running through November 2018. The line is planned to be in-service by September 2018.

## PROJECT TIMELINE



**The R-Project 345 kV Transmission Line Newsletter** is published by NPPD's transmission project team. It is intended to provide a project overview and communicate project developments.

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