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June 2017

R-Project 345,000-Volt



# Transmission Line PROJECT

## Work progresses on the R-Project; Environmental surveys to begin this month

Work is progressing on the R-Project as right-of-way agents continue to work with landowners on signing easements and addressing individual concerns. Across the 225-mile line route, more than 60 percent of landowners have signed easements to date.

### Environmental Surveys

Environmental surveys are scheduled to begin near the end of June and continue at times through September and possibly October. Surveys for the Blowout Penstemon are scheduled for June 22, depending upon weather, using a helicopter to view from the air specific blowout areas identified to potentially provide suitable habitat for the species. For this survey, a Blowout Penstemon expert will be on board the helicopter to survey specific blowouts identified on the final project line route that may contain the flowers. Surveys for the Western Prairie Fringed Orchid and the Small White Lady Slipper (another orchid species) are scheduled June 23-30 by personnel on the ground where right-of-entry has been obtained.

Additional ground surveys will be scheduled at times throughout the summer and into the fall to more

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accurately identify wetland areas and potential cultural resource areas. Cultural resource survey activities may begin in mid-July and continue through the summer as field conditions permit. Cultural survey efforts in areas where crops are grown would be scheduled to occur after crops have been harvested. Wetland surveys will begin later in the summer.

### Construction Contract and Agreements

The project team is currently drafting the material and construction contract for the project. The team is also working on temporary work space agreements for pulling and tensioning sites and material fly yards. Pulling and tensioning sites are locations necessary to string conductor. The right-of-way agents are in the process of contacting landowners regarding those agreements.

**Q. Land values have plateaued and even decreased according to some reports. Will NPPD reduce the easement offer for my property based on these reports?**

**A.** NPPD realizes that land values in some areas of the state have been declining. NPPD continues to offer easements based on the higher land values from a few years ago.

**Q. How will you get by the access problem, construct a line and maintain it in an area where roads do not currently exist?**

**A.** We will use existing access as much as possible. To minimize disturbances, a combination of steel poles and lattice towers will be used. 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. Lattice towers will be installed on sections of the project that have limited access. Lattice towers minimize impacts to fragile soils due to construction options. For example, lattice towers can be erected with helicopters, which negate the need to have a large crane at each site, and use helical pier foundations to eliminate the need for pouring concrete foundations.

NPPD will use matting, minimize traffic, and use flotation vehicles to minimize impact, and will provide full, long-term restoration of access paths/ overland travel that are used. Annual inspection and maintenance are done by helicopter or ATV and light pickups. Actual maintenance at any given location should be little to none.

**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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