



Media contacts

Lori Buffington, Great River Energy | lbuffington@greenergy.com | 763-486-9266

Rod Pritchard, ITC Midwest | rpritchard@itctransco.com | 319-297-6840

Xcel Energy media relations hotline | mediainquiries@xcelenergy.com | 612-215-5300

Great River Energy, ITC Midwest and Xcel Energy move forward with Upper Midwest's first 765-kV electric transmission backbone

Project will bolster regional reliability and minimize environmental impact

February 10, 2025 – Several energy providers launched their plan to provide long-term electric reliability for customers by developing the Upper Midwest's first 765-kilovolt (kV) transmission project, which will meet the significant growth in electricity use projected in the coming decades and improve access to new energy sources needed to serve communities throughout the region.

Great River Energy, ITC Midwest and Xcel Energy have filed Notice of Intent to Construct, Own and Maintain the new 765- kV electric transmission line with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. This notice kicks off the permitting, public outreach and environmental review process overseen by the Commission and is the first step in project development. Similar notices will be filed in other states as part of the development process.

"This transmission line will provide significant benefits to our communities, ensuring we meet the unprecedented growth in their demand for electricity while keeping costs low for homes, farms and businesses," the companies said. "Some estimates project electric use to double over the coming decades in our region. The 765-kV line is key to maintaining reliability while maximizing the efficient use of land and reducing the overall impact to landowners."

Great River Energy, a wholesale electric power cooperative, ITC Midwest, an independent transmission developer, and Xcel Energy, an energy company serving 1.8 million electric customers in the Upper Midwest, will develop the 765-kV transmission project in several segments. The line will connect to the existing transmission grid in eastern South Dakota and travel approximately 410 miles across southern Minnesota to Wisconsin, also connecting into the regional grid in Wisconsin and Iowa. The line will connect the Lakefield, Pleasant Valley and North Rochester substations in Jackson, Mower and Olmstead counties.

The transmission line was one of several approved in December by the region's grid operator, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), as part of the second set of projects in its Long Range Transmission Plan. In this historic portfolio, MISO approved 24 projects totaling \$21.8 billion in transmission investment including several 345-kV projects in Minnesota, North Dakota and

South Dakota, as well as this 765-kV transmission backbone infrastructure. The companies worked with MISO and other stakeholders for several years to develop these transmission solutions as part of a multi-phase plan to bolster the reliability of the region's electric grid.

While this would be the first 765-kV transmission line in the Upper Midwest, this extra high voltage has been used in other parts of the United States for decades. A single 765-kV electric transmission line can deliver approximately the same amount of electricity as six 345-kV transmission lines with similar land impacts and structure heights as existing high-voltage transmission lines.

"This new 765-kV transmission line will ensure reliability every hour of every day for our member-owner cooperatives," said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. "By building this high-capacity line, we can minimize the environmental and community impact to cooperative members while strengthening our grid infrastructure. This is an important step for Minnesota's energy landscape and one that sets us up for the future."

"Modernizing the electric grid provides tremendous benefits for electricity consumers through improved reliability, increased capacity and greater access to diverse generation resources," said ITC Midwest President Dusky Terry. "We are committed to working with landowners, local communities and our utility partners throughout the process to meet the growing demands on the electric grid across Southern Minnesota."

"Xcel Energy is committed to meeting our customers' growing electricity needs while achieving the vision we share with the state for a clean energy future," said Ryan Long, president, Xcel Energy—Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. "This project will help us accelerate our clean energy goals by delivering more wind and solar energy to customers in a reliable way that keeps costs low."

Public review and opportunities for community participation

The regulatory process provides many opportunities for public participation and community input. Two permit approvals are required before a new transmission line of this type can be built: a Certificate of Need outlines the need for the project and the benefits the state and region will receive if approved, and a Route Permit determines where the transmission line will be located.

The companies expect to file a Certificate of Need application in Minnesota in early 2026 and will work closely with landowners and communities throughout the project area to help determine the best locations for the route to include in their future Route Permit application. Each application's review process takes approximately 12-18 months and includes public information meetings and hearings throughout the project area. The transmission line is anticipated to be in service by 2035.

Additional information on the 765-kV line and 345-kV lines approved by MISO in 2024 is available at gridnorthpartners.com.

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Great River Energy, Maple Grove, Minnesota, is a not-for-profit wholesale electric power cooperative which provides electricity to approximately 1.7 million people through its member-

owner cooperatives and customers. Through its member-owners, the cooperative serves two-thirds of Minnesota geographically and parts of Wisconsin. Great River Energy has more than 5,100 miles of high-voltage transmission lines. Learn more at greatriverenergy.com.

Xcel Energy (NASDAQ: XEL) provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company is an industry leader in responsibly reducing carbon emissions and producing and delivering clean energy solutions from a variety of renewable sources at competitive prices. For more information, visit xcelenergy.com or follow us on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

ITC Midwest LLC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of ITC Holdings Corp., the nation's largest independent electricity transmission company. ITC Midwest operates more than 6,600 circuit miles of transmission lines in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri and Wisconsin. ITC Midwest is headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and maintains regional operating facilities in Dubuque, Iowa City and Perry, Iowa; and Albert Lea and Lakefield, Minnesota. For further information visit www.itcmidwest.com. ITC is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., a leader in the North American regulated electric and gas utility industry. For further information visit www.fortisinc.com.