

After Construction

Construction crews will work to minimize potential damage to property during construction. After construction, work areas and access roads not required for line maintenance will be restored to their previous condition, as possible. Construction refuse and scrap material will also be removed.

Landowners will be compensated for crop and property damage that occurs as a result of construction or maintenance of the transmission line. If a landowner believes that damage has occurred and has not been remediated, they should contact their assigned right-of-way agent.

Maintenance

After the line is energized, maintenance crews will periodically inspect, repair, and maintain its components. Transmission lines are inspected from the air and on the ground. Aerial inspections are routinely performed, particularly after wind, ice, or lightning storms. Ground inspections are usually performed annually to detect items needing repair or replacement that are not found by aerial inspections.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like a map showing the line route in your area, please contact:

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Project information for landowners along the proposed Tande-to-Saskatchewan and Wheelock-to-Saskatchewan 230-kilovolt Transmission Line Project

Tande-to-Saskatchewan and Wheelock-to-Saskatchewan 230-kilovolt Transmission Line Project





About Basin Electric Power Cooperative

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is an electric power generation and transmission cooperative, headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota. Basin Electric generates and transmits wholesale electricity to 131-member rural electric cooperatives located in a nine-state service area, and serves 3 million customers.

Project Purpose & Overview

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is the regional transmission organization that administers bulk electric transmission system reliability upgrades and generation interconnections. SPP identified deficiencies in the transmission capability between the United States and Canada based on a request for additional transmission services from SaskPower, a generation and transmission provider in Saskatchewan.

The project was approved by the SPP Aggregate Transmission Service Study in 2022. SPP provided Basin Electric an Approved Reliability Network Upgrade notice. Basin Electric is the designated transmission owner for the upgrade in the United States, and SaskPower will complete the circuit within Canada. The project will provide export and import capabilities of up to 650 megawatts, strengthening the local and regional electric system.

The project includes approximately 110 miles of new 230-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission lines from existing Basin Electric substations to the Canadian border. One circuit will be routed from the Wheelock substation (near Ray, ND), and the second circuit from the Tande substation (near Tioga, ND). Pending permit and easement acquisition, construction is scheduled to begin in 2026. It is anticipated that construction will take approximately 12-18 months.

Permitting

Per the North Dakota Public Service Commission (NDPSC), the project requires evaluation of environmental, engineering, land use, economics, reliability, existing electric transmission facilities, biological, cultural resources, and land survey to help determine the final transmission line route.

Transmission lines that cross an international border require a Presidential permit from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Before issuing a Presidential permit, DOE must determine that the permit is consistent with the public interest and must obtain favorable recommendations from the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. In addition, the issuance of a Presidential permit is considered a major federal action that requires DOE to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Accordingly, DOE must take into account potential environmental impacts of the proposed facility and will likely prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project.

Permitting-associated work is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2023.

Once the preferred transmission line route is determined, structure locations and configurations are selected to satisfy structural design and electrical clearance criteria and to minimize impacts to the property.

Landowner Outreach & Engagement

A right-of-way agent will be assigned to work with landowners potentially impacted by the project. The agent will explain the steps involved in route and pole location selection, land rights acquisition, and construction, and work to answer any questions landowners may have. Landowner input is encouraged and welcomed throughout the process.

As a first step for landowners along the preliminary routes, a right-of-way agent will request permission for crews to enter a portion of the property to conduct surveys and studies. This work may be performed by Basin Electric employees or by those under contract with Basin Electric. The work will be conducted in a manner that minimizes disturbances to the landowner or tenant. Should damage to crops, fences, or other property occur because of these surveys and studies, the landowner will be fairly compensated, or the damage will be repaired.

The right-of-way agent will then work with landowners along the preferred route to acquire a 125-foot-wide easement for the transmission line. In addition, easements for access roads, typically 30-feet wide, may be acquired in certain areas. Easements are needed to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line and will be purchased through negotiations with landowners. The landowner retains title to the land and only easement rights would be granted to Basin Electric. If proposed construction activities interfere with land use, the right-of-way agent will discuss those concerns

with the landowner and the project team, and work to accommodate the landowner's concerns as possible.

Landowners will be presented with a written offer based on a market analysis of similar land types and use of property in the project area. The right-of-way agent will work with landowners to explain the easement agreement and offer of compensation as the basis for payment. Every effort is made to obtain an agreement that is fair and reasonable to both parties. Once the conditions of the agreement are met, the transactions are processed as efficiently as possible. Basin Electric will make full payment or annual installments for up to five years for easements to landowners, and will pay fees for recording the easement, including title insurance.

Landowners may continue to use the portion of the property encumbered by an easement in ways that are compatible with the transmission line as long as care is taken to prevent damage and maintain access to transmission line structures. No buildings or structures may be erected within the easement area, as they may impede the safe operation of the line or interfere with access needed for line maintenance. For safety reasons, pumps, wells, swimming pools, and flammables must not be placed in the easement area. Basin Electric has other requirements for transmission rights-of-way to maintain system reliability, such as federal regulations on vegetation management intended to prevent trees on the right-of-way from causing fires or transmission line outages.

Design & Construction

Basin Electric designs, constructs, operates, and maintains transmission lines and substation facilities to meet or exceed the requirements of the National Electric Safety Code. These standards provide for the safety and protection of landowners and their property, the public, and utility employees.

Basin Electric will keep landowners apprised of the construction schedule. Reasonable attempts will be made to account for the use and condition of the land, such as planting, irrigation, and harvest schedules, to minimize inconvenience to landowners. Preparing the right-of-way for construction may require gates and culverts be installed, vegetation cleared, trees trimmed or removed, and structures removed that reduce adequate ground clearance for the conductors or access to the right-of-way. It may also be necessary to build access roads in hilly or rough terrain.

Where required, foundations are constructed by digging or drilling holes, which are filled with steel-reinforced concrete. Steel structure components are then transferred to the site and assembled. Completed structures are raised by a crane and set on foundations or directly embedded in the ground. Finally, conductor wires are installed.