

# Open house materials

**Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** (representing *Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency*) are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) will connect Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City, South Dakota, to the Alexandria Substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services near Alexandria, Minnesota.

**This project is needed to ensure electric reliability, increase resiliency to extreme weather events, reduce transmission congestion, and increase access to low-cost energy in the region.**

### MONOPOLE

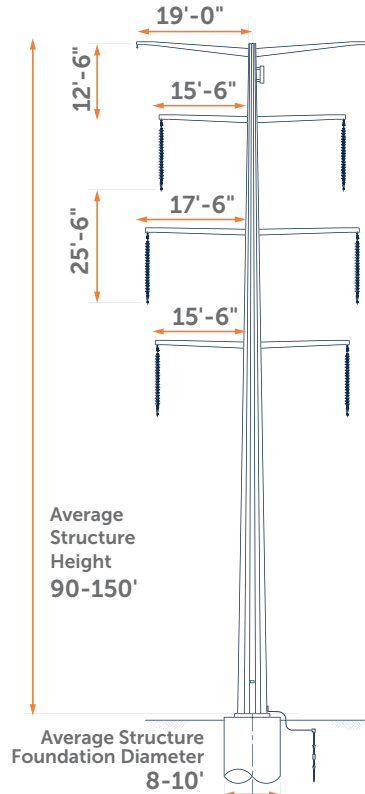


Image shown is an example of a similar double-circuit structure.

## ROUTING PROCESS

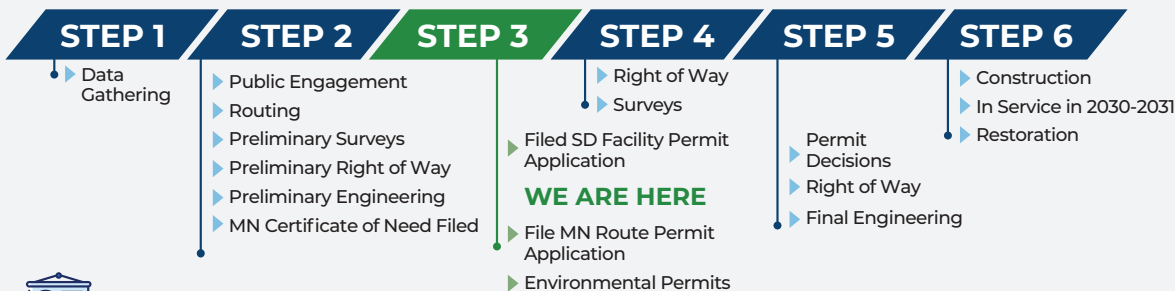
- DEFINE STUDY AREA**
- BEGIN AGENCY & LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH**
- HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**
- IDENTIFY PROJECT CORRIDORS**
- HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**
- DEVELOP ROUTE CORRIDORS**
- HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**
- DEVELOP PROPOSED ROUTE SEGMENTS**
- WE ARE HERE HOST PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES**
- FILE PROPOSED ROUTES IN MN**

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Developing and constructing a transmission line is a multi-year effort. We are gathering public feedback on the route corridors to help us develop a proposed route. We'll continue coordinating with landowners, local governments, agencies, and other stakeholders throughout the development process. The new line is tentatively scheduled to be complete in 2030 or 2031.



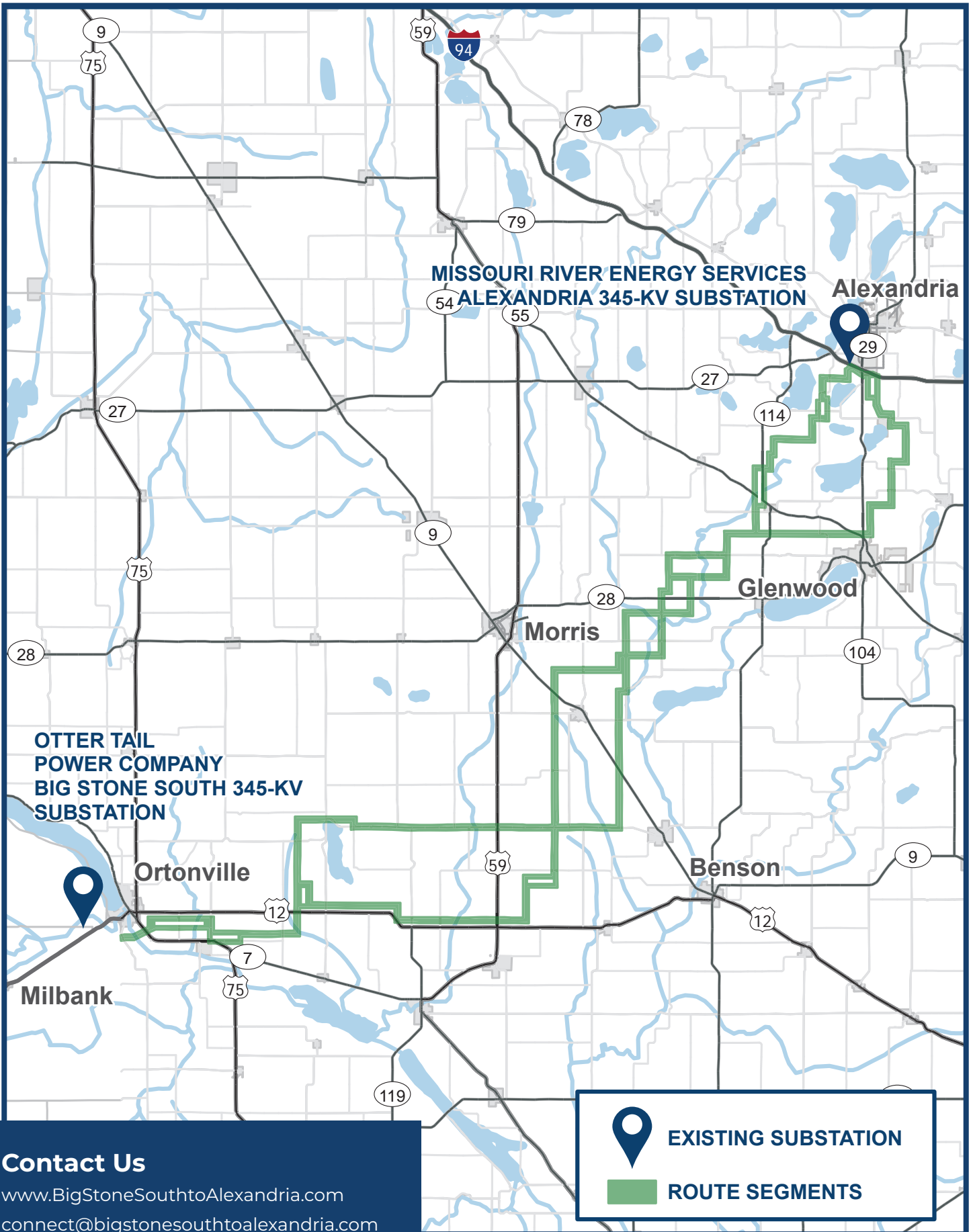
### Engagement Opportunities



Communicate Project Updates Throughout Construction

Scan the QR code to visit the project website.







## Contact Us

www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com  
 connect@bigstonesouthtoalexandria.com  
 (800) 598-5587

 **EXISTING SUBSTATION**

 **ROUTE SEGMENTS**

 Route segments are marked in green on the map above and are subject to change.

Project boards



# WELCOME

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

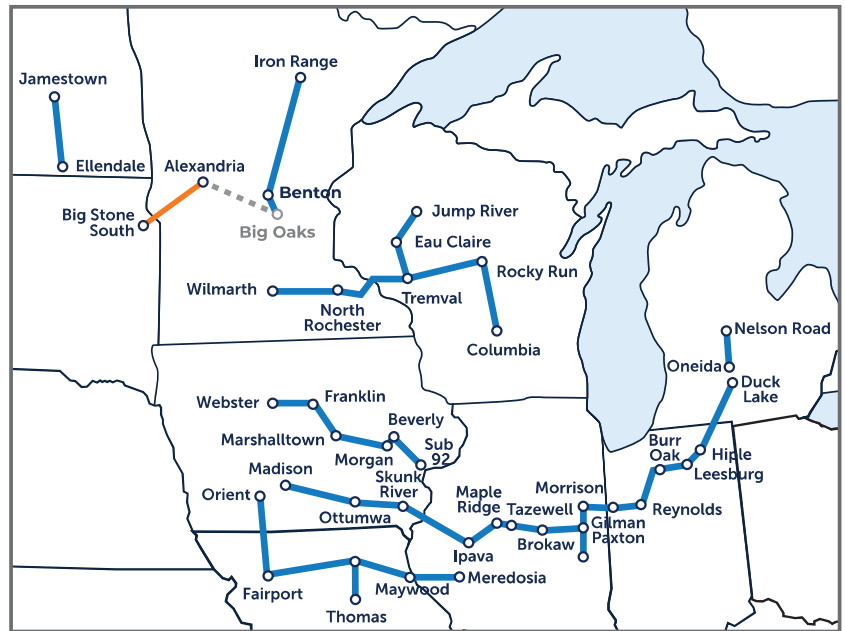




Both **Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** are members of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, also referred to as **MISO**.

MISO is a non-profit, member-based regional transmission organization that provides reliable, cost-effective electric systems and operations; dependable and transparent prices; open access to markets; and planning for long-term efficiency.

**MISO** has approved 18 new transmission projects throughout the Midwest that are needed to ensure a **reliable** and **resilient** transmission system in the future.



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**The project will benefit the region by helping to:**



Ensure electric reliability



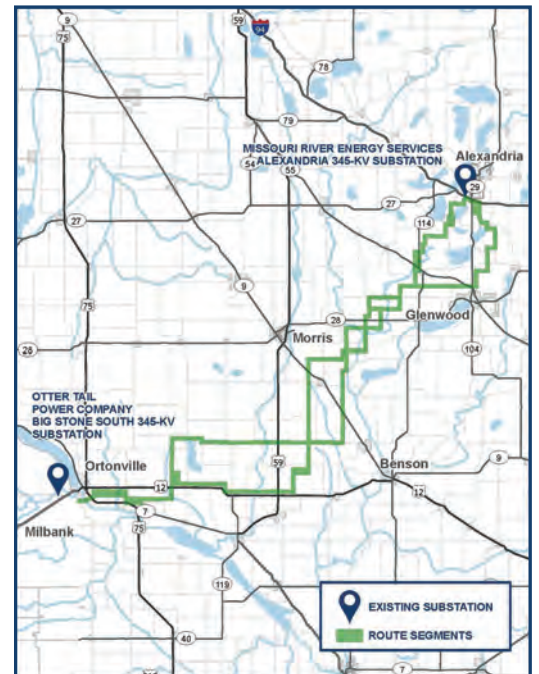
Reduce transmission congestion



Increase access to low-cost energy

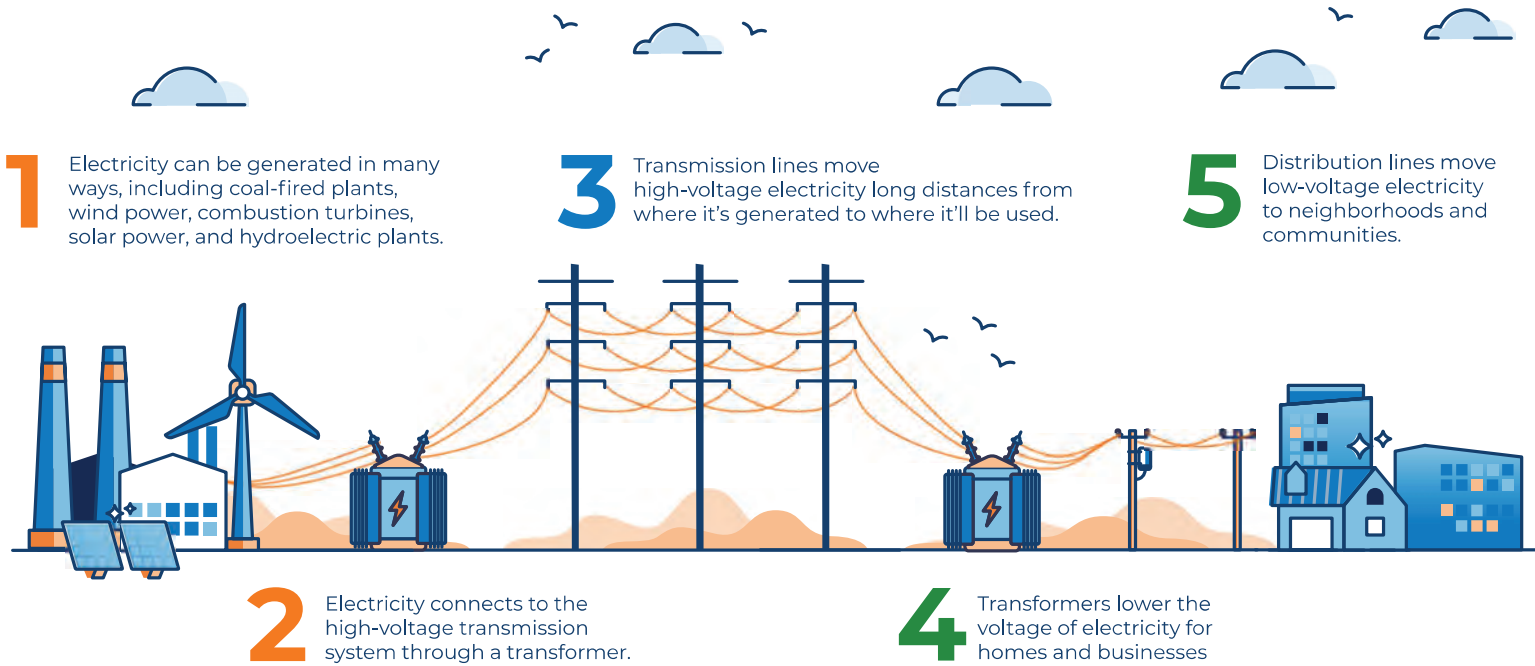


Increase resiliency to extreme weather events



▲ Route segments are marked in green on the map above and are subject to change.





**1** Electricity can be generated in many ways, including coal-fired plants, wind power, combustion turbines, solar power, and hydroelectric plants.

**3** Transmission lines move high-voltage electricity long distances from where it's generated to where it'll be used.

**5** Distribution lines move low-voltage electricity to neighborhoods and communities.

**2** Electricity connects to the high-voltage transmission system through a transformer.

**4** Transformers lower the voltage of electricity for homes and businesses

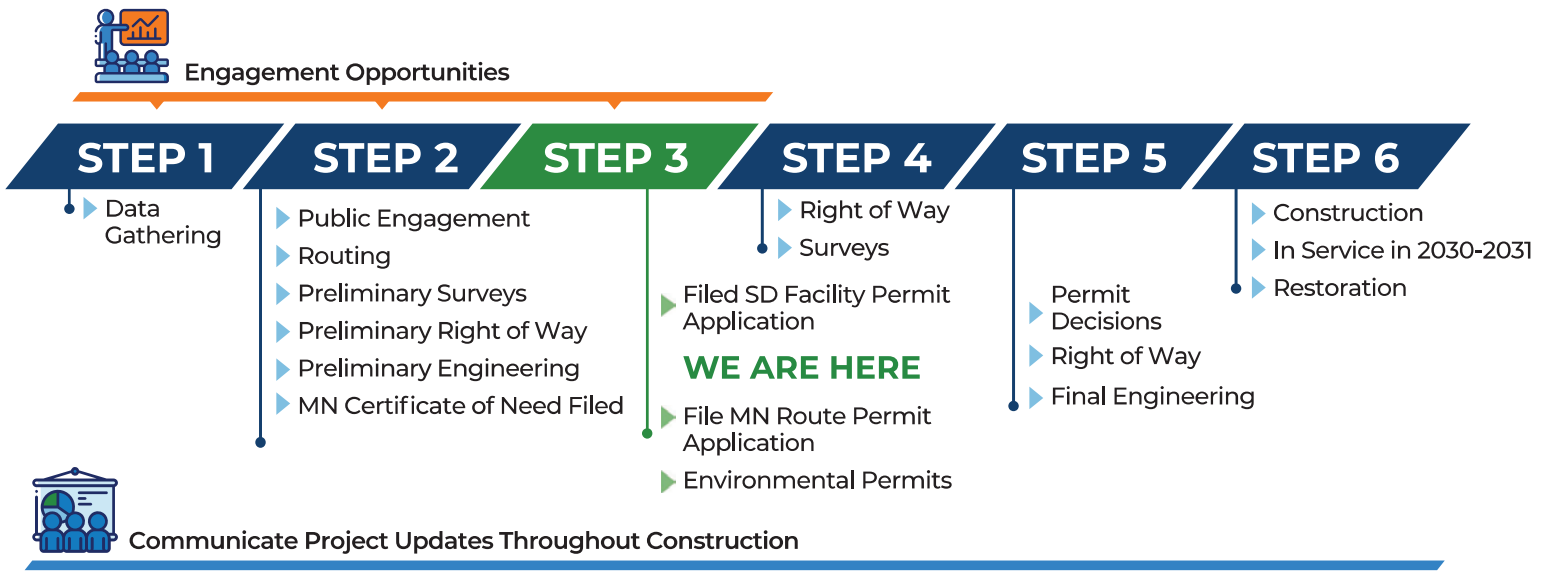
## Generation

## Transmission

## Distribution



# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT STEPS



Processes and timing may vary from Minnesota to South Dakota. Our project team will refine the timing of these steps to comply with each respective state's requirements.





The BSSA transmission line will be constructed in both **Minnesota** and **South Dakota**, and the two states have different processes and timelines. Both state processes are compliant with relevant laws and rules, and consider potential impacts on the environment, residents in the routing area, and orderly development of the region. After we've filed, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in each state will provide opportunities for additional feedback through public hearings.



## MINNESOTA

Two major approvals must be obtained from the **Minnesota (MN) PUC** before a high-voltage transmission line can be built: a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit. The Certificate of Need proceeding examines whether the proposed facilities are necessary and what the appropriate size, configuration, and timing of the project should be. In a separate Route Permit proceeding, the MN PUC determines the route of the line.



### Certificate of Need

› Public hearings



### Route Permit

› Public hearings

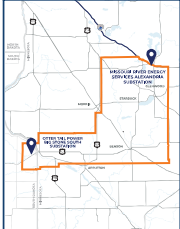

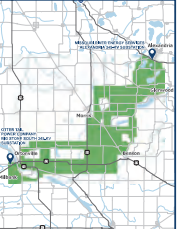







### Route Permit Application Decision

› Estimated timeline is 18-24 months from time of Route Permit application filing. We plan to file in Q4 of 2024.

**We filed our facility permit in South Dakota!**

WE ARE HERE

<p><b>1. STUDY AREA</b></p> 	<p><b>2. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE</b></p> 	<p><b>3. PROJECT CORRIDORS</b></p> 	<p><b>4. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE</b></p> 	<p><b>5. ROUTE CORRIDORS</b></p> 	<p><b>6. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE</b></p> 	<p><b>7. ROUTE SEGMENTS</b></p> 	<p><b>8. PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE</b></p> 
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With an established project need from MISO, we identified a large study area that contained both substations.

We held open houses to introduce the project and provide stakeholders an opportunity to ask questions and provide input.

The team utilized the input gathered to identify project corridors where construction may be possible.

We held another series of open houses to gather input from stakeholders to help the team identify opportunities and constraints within the project corridors.

The project team used the feedback received to continue narrowing the project corridors into route corridors.

We held another series of open houses to gather feedback on the route corridors to help us develop route segments.

The project team used the feedback received to continue narrowing the route corridors into route segments.

We're holding another series of open houses to share the route segments that will make up the two proposed routes we'll include in our route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC). The MN PUC will review and hold public hearings before determining the route.



**BEGIN AGENCY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH**



**MONOPOLE**

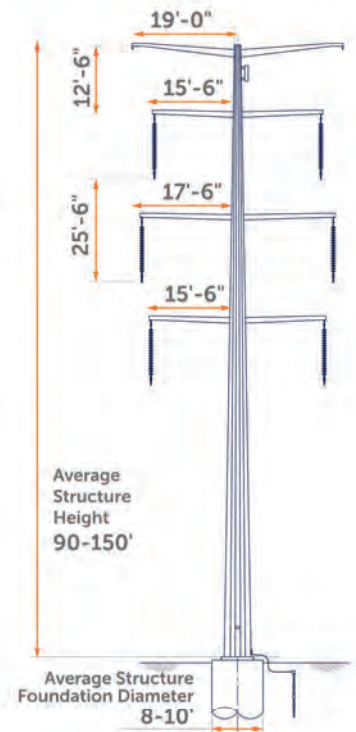


Image shown is an example of a similar double-circuit structure.

The typical structure will be 150 feet tall.

The structure type may vary across the project but primarily will be comprised of single pole, self-weathering steel with double-circuit capability. **Otter Tail Power Company** and **Missouri River Energy Services** expect to only install one circuit at this time.

There will be three phases of conductors and two overhead shield wires — one will be an optical ground wire (OPGW) and the other stranded steel (overhead ground wire).



## ONGOING OUTREACH

Long before construction begins, right-of-way agents will be coordinating with landowners, local government officials, and other stakeholders. You will be involved throughout the process, and if you have any questions or concerns, our project team will work with you!

1.



**Surveying**

2.



**Temporary Access**

3.



**Foundation Drilling & Pouring**

4.



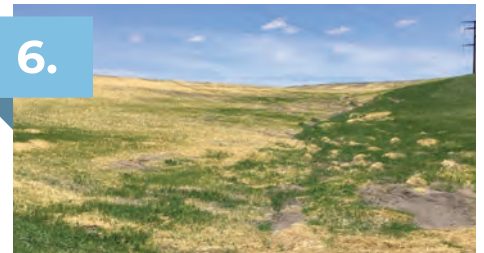
**Structure Setting**

5.



**Conductor Stringing**

6.



**Restoration**

## ? What is Right of Way?

Right of way is a portion of land needed for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the transmission line. Typically a width of 150 feet is needed for a 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. Right of way is typically secured through negotiation and acquisition of an easement agreement.

## ? What is Right of Entry?

To assess potential routes and conduct the necessary environmental and engineering studies/surveys, right-of-way agents will work with landowners and residents to acquire a temporary right-of-entry agreement. This agreement does not give permission for construction.


## ? What is an Easement?

An easement is the legal document that allows Otter Tail Power Company and Missouri River Energy Services to construct, operate, and maintain transmission structures and lines on your property.

A **150-foot-wide easement** will be necessary to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed 345-kV transmission line.




**?** Right of way agents will reach out to landowners to begin the right of entry process

**1**  We'll notify landowners in the project area, and right-of-way agents will reach out to request right of entry.

**3**  We'll work with landowners to resolve any questions or concerns.

**2**  Once the project receives the final approval with a determined route, a right-of-way agent will present the landowner with an easement offer based on fair market value.

**4**  The utilities will construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line.

You will be involved throughout the process, and if you have any questions or concerns, our project team will work with you!

## Stay Informed

To stay up-to-date on the project, visit our website at:



[www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

Use your phone's  
camera to scan  
the QR code.



## Get Connected

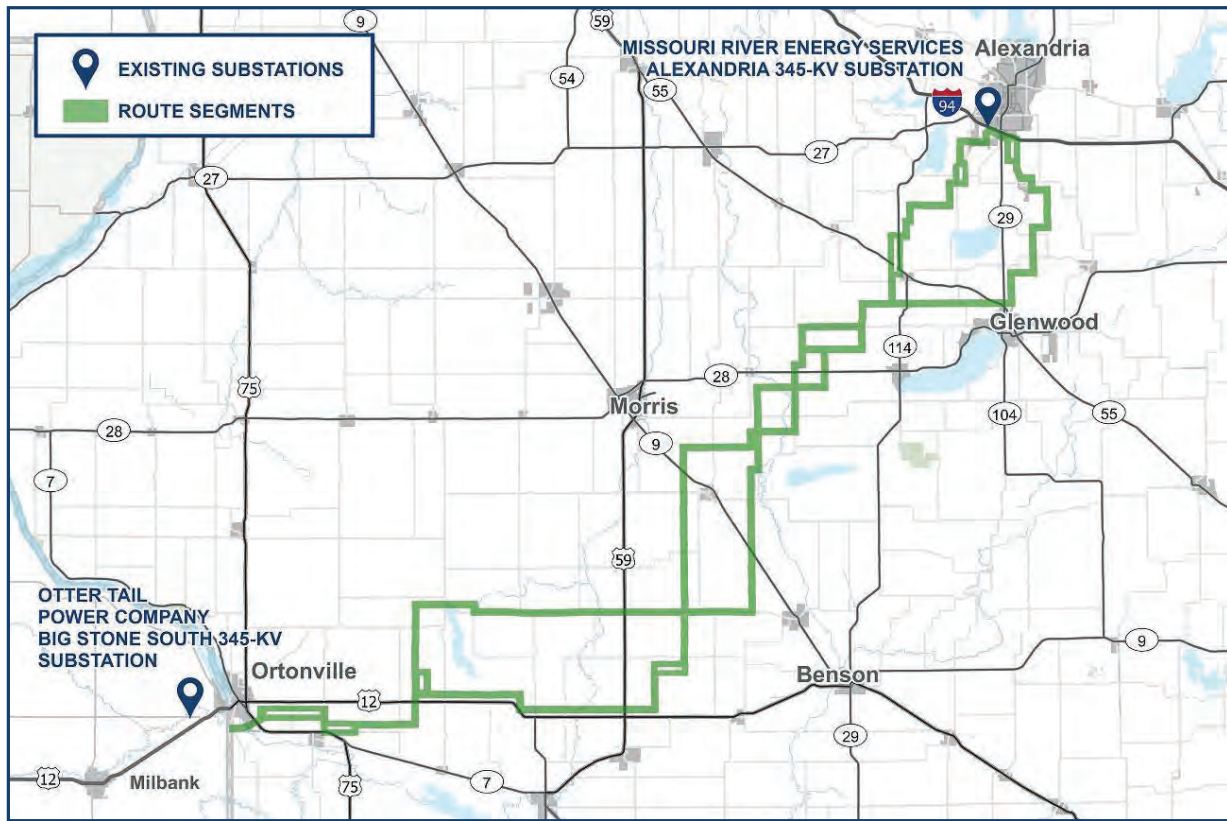
There will be opportunities to participate throughout the project development and permitting process. You can submit feedback, attend public meetings, ask questions, or request an information packet to learn more!



## Questions or comments about the project?

[connect@BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](mailto:connect@BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

(800) 598-5587



Route segments are marked in green on the map above and are subject to change.





# Media coverage

## MEDIA COVERAGE

### Pope County Tribune

#### Powerline open house is June 25 in Glenwood

Otter Tail Power Company (Otter Tail Power) and Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), (on behalf of Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency), invite the public to attend upcoming open houses for the Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) project. At the Open Houses the public can review route segments that will make up the two proposed routes to be included in a route permit application to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

The open house schedule includes one at Central Square in Glenwood on Tuesday, June 25 from 3 to 6 p.m. and in Benson

from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Benson High School on Wednesday, June 26.

Otter Tail Power and MRES are partnering to develop, construct, and co-own a new 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The Big Stone South to Alexandria transmission line (BSSA) will connect Otter Tail Power Company's Big Stone South Substation near Big Stone City in South Dakota to the Alexandria Substation owned by Missouri River Energy Services near Alexandria.

Developing and constructing transmission lines takes many

years, and this is currently proposing for an in-service date in 2030 or 2031.

Otter Tail Power and MRES began coordinating with landowners and residents, local governments, agencies, and other interested stakeholders in spring 2023 and will continue to seek input from stakeholders throughout the development process. More information can be found at [www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com](http://www.BigStoneSouthtoAlexandria.com)

Full article can be found: <https://pctribune.com/2024/06/powerline-open-house-is-june-25-in-glenwood>

## Swift County Times

### Landowners can now see detailed maps of BSSA routes

By Reed Afinson

Landowners in Swift, Stevens, Pope, Otter Tail, Douglas and Big Stone counties now have a detailed map of two potential routes for the Big Stone South to Alexandria 345Kv transmission line.

An interactive online map allows property owners to zoom into the area within the proposed corridor with enough detail to see the buildings on their farm site in relation to the transmission line's path.

While the corridor routes started out very wide, they have now been narrowed to 1,000 feet.

Last week, Missouri River Energy Services and Otter Tail Power Company conducted a series of open houses to meet with landowners whose property could be within the transmission line's final corridor through western Minnesota.

It was also an opportunity for citizens with an interest in or concerns about the powerline to ask questions of the Missouri River and Otter Tail staff.

The meetings were conducted in Benson, Glenwood, Alexandria and Ortonville. Large maps of property parcels and potential powerline route were available with staff ready to explain the details. Computer presentations were also available with staff showing how residents could access the maps and find their parcels on it in relation to the proposed routes.

There are currently two routes from Big Stone City, S.D., to Alexandria under study by Missouri River and Otter Tail. There are a few segments along the route where there is a single path proposed. In these very

short stretches, the options were logistically limited for routing the powerline.

Two routes are required by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC), which will give final approval for the path of the transmission line. Now that the public meeting phase of the project has been completed, the companies will be finalizing their proposal for PUC review.

Otter Tail and Missouri River are expecting to hear from the PUC in 2026 on the routing permits with construction starting in 2027-2028. The power could be energized by 2030.

The Big Stone South to Alexandria line will be 95 to 105 miles long with 4 to 5 miles in South Dakota and between 90 and 100 in Minnesota.

From Big Stone City, the proposed route follows closely along U.S. Highway 12 as it passes just south of Ortonville and continues east. It will turn north on the west side of Correll with one potential route turning east again south of Artichoke Lake before turning north from the U.S. 12 corridor just east of U.S. Highway 59.

The other option is for the powerline to continue north before heading east on the north side of Artichoke Lake.

The two routes intersect west of Clontarf and then head north with one going on the west side of Hancock and the other north on the east side of Hancock.

They intersect northeast of Hancock again and then the two follow a fairly similar route northeast passing by Starbuck to the west before making their way to Alexandria.

The poles will be able to hold two lines, but the current project only involves one.

Otter Tail says the new power line will allow more low-cost renewable energy to flow from the generation resources to customers and reduce congestion on the existing transmission system created by an increasing amount of renewable energy trying to access the power grid.

Evidence of the construction of the 345kV power line spurring interesting renewable energy projects has already proven true.

Unofficially at the Benson meeting last Thursday were representatives of Apex Clean Energy, the company proposing to construct an estimated 40 5 megawatt to 6-megawatt wind turbines, producing 200 megawatts of power, in western Swift County.

Landowners have been meeting with Apex representatives as the company looks to sign leases for the sites where their windmills will be constructed.

Solar energy companies are also looking at western Swift County.

There were a wide variety of factors taken into consideration for placement of the routes, Joshua Humberg, who will be the project manager for the power line construction, told the Swift County Board of Commissioners in late May. Many of those factors involved agriculture.

"We are trying to avoid areas with a large number of center pivot irrigators. Where we do interact with land involving irrigators, we are working with the landowners to make sure we are outside the radiuses of them, so we don't

interfere with their field irrigation,” he said.

An Environmental Assessment Public Hearing hosted by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) took place in Benson June 13 as it gathers public testimony on the proposed routes.

Otter Tail and Missouri River will be signing leases with landowners on whose property the power poles will be placed and the along with the powerlines will be strung.

“What we plan on doing is going out and engaging landowners, more than likely, on both of these routes just to make sure we are hearing their interests and desires before we have the route permits,” Humberg explained to commissioners in May.

“What we typically do with easements is give a one-time payment for the full value of the land underneath the 150-foot-wide swath for the entire route of the transmission line,” he said.

Crop damage payments are also part of the payment package.

“The landowner retains the land, so it is almost like us buying it and giving it back at appraised value,” Humberg said.

If the powerline follows a highway right of way, Otter Tail has to make sure that it sits back away from any future construction projects, Humberg said.

In the easement area, which will be 150-feet wide, there is an area 75 feet on either side of the centerline of the pole structure and the powerline, Jason Weiers, manager of transmission project development at Otter Tail Power Company told commissioners in March.

“That 150-foot easement is intended to provide that safety buffer. When you look at the impacts of the magnetic fields, the electric fields, coming off a

transmission line, by the time you get out to that 75-foot distance to the edge of the right of way, that strength has dissipated to the point where it is no longer a problem,” he explained.

There is a minimum clearance requirement for safety of 30 feet between the lowest part of a wire and the ground, he said.

“Do you have to adjust the route any worry about stray voltage for livestock,” Commissioner Larry Mahoney, District 4-Fairfield Township, asked Weiers at a March meeting.

“We get that question quite a bit from landowners,” Weiers said. “That is something we are mindful of. We do see the potential for inducing voltage on fence lines, waterers, especially when we see the powerline paralleling fences. It is not such a big deal if we cross (one) at a 90-degree angle.

“Those are things we would certainly be willing to do testing on with local landowners to make sure that we don’t have any potential issues with livestock,” he said.

What kind of voltage can occur off of a fence under a power line like that? Mahoney asked.

“Generally, we shouldn’t have any safety concerns,” Weiers told him. “This is going to come down the landowner’s judgement on it. If the cattle are acting a little weird, give us a call and we will come out and do some testing. If the levels are above acceptable limits, then we definitely want to do some mitigation, which will involve some grounding to dissipate that stray voltage to the ground without harming the animals.”

U.S. Highway 12 is one of the linear features that offers a path that could minimize landowner impacts. Part of the corridor could also follow U.S. Highway 59. At the same time, he added, these major highways can have a lot of houses

built along them. “We want to be mindful of staying away from houses,” he said.

Full article can be found: <https://stevenscountytimes.com/landowners-can-now-see-detailed-maps-of-bssa-routes/>

## Ortonville Independent

### Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I attended a meeting with Otter Tail Power and Missouri River Energy about the proposed power line going east out of Ortonville. I was told their normal procedure is to follow the right of way, which will be along Hwy 12. They do that until the line gets to land owned by the M.S. Fish and Wildlife, then the Fish and Wildlife stopped the line from going on the right of way by their land. So the power company turned the line south for about one and a half miles, and then again turned east going across private land for a number of miles to get past wildlife land and then going back north to the original route. All of this at extra cost.

We as private land owners have no right like our tyrannical Fish and Wildlife to say no if approved. This power line would go right through not only my tillable acres, but also the people east of me. This disrupts how we can farm and our income, and this is a forever disruption for us. It also goes through two of my 40 acre parcels of native prairie that they claim to want. These prairie lands have never seen anything except to be hayed or grazed, and now will be torn up by the equipment installing the power line, plus the power line will be there forever. Hypocrisy!

What makes the right of way along Fish and Wildlife more valuable than our land and livelihood and also my native prairie? They don't need to give a reason to say no. If they say the powerline would disturb wildlife, well I also have wildlife on my land. There is a major powerline going through the refuge from Ortonville south and it was there before the refuge and is still there, so there is a precedent of power lines on or near wildlife land and

having no impact on wildlife.

Unlike the Fish and Wildlife, we as private landowners actually pay taxes on owned land, not a small percentage. It not only affects this power line, so ask your township, county, and even state and federal people how this tyrannical agency affects how our roads are built and repaired. Highway 12 rebuilt a couple of years ago is another prime example of Fish and Wildlife control.

To everyone, you might not think this affects you, but when a government agency can have this kind of control, we are not living in a country with freedoms. If anyone has one or more of these towers on their land and offers to sell the land to Fish and Wildlife, does anyone believe that they would refuse to buy the land because of a power line on it?

A little bit of history between me and the Fish and Wildlife. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, I was just starting farming on my parents farm west of Odessa. My parents who both passed away in 1969 and 1970 made it through the depression and bought their farm. The not only farmed, but worked extra jobs to pay for it and raise us three children. I was out in the field working one afternoon when a car came driving across the field to me. He was from the government and gave an offer, and I could accept it or they, through eminent domain, take it and get paid nothing. That was freedom back even then, and not for a road or anything like that, but a wildlife refuge. We were told many lies in the process. Then to see the beautiful brick house I was raised in demolished and for what? Now this power line is destroying our land and hurting our livelihood because Fish and Wildlife have unlimited power.

So if anyone thinks they can give me a reason to like and get along with Fish and Wildlife, Don't Even Try! So none of this affects you so why care. If you love freedom, You Will Care!

Marlow Klepel  
Odessa

Full article can be found: <https://www.ortonvilleindependent.com/Letters.html>

# Comment Summary



Public comments were collected in a variety of ways, both in-person and virtually. The tables below indicate the number of comments, regarding any topic, received during all phases of public engagement and through which channel; or the number of comments by category.

Number of Comments

Number of Comments

Channel	Number of Comments
Agency email	1
Comment Form	26
Comment Map (Phase 4 Open Houses)	53
Email	29
Field Staff	10
Hotline	61
Mailed Letter	12
One-on-One Meeting	1
Phone Call	2
Project Email	4
Webform Comment	33
Webform Comment from Map Page	85
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>317</b>

Public comments were coded to various topics depending on their content, with no rank preference given. Because of this, some comments had multiple topics coded to them. Listed below are all the topics mentioned across all public comments received and the number of comments they appeared in.

### Total Categories in all Comments

Topic	Number of Comments
Aerial Spraying	6
Air Quality	1
Airfield	2
Aviation	2
Cell phone signal blockage	1
Communication	16
Community Impact	4
Construction	9
Cost	6
Cultural Resources	3
Drain Tiles	16
Easement Payment	13
EMF	12
Energy Transition	2
Environmental Impacts (General)	14
Future Development (Planning/Operations/Domestic)	4
General Project	35
Hunting/Fishing	1
Information Request	60
Land Use	82
Mailing List Request	7
Construction Materials	1
Mapping Request	5
Meeting Request	3
Noise	1
Permitting	1
Pivot Irrigation	15
Property Access	4
Property Damage	2
Property Values	30
Proximity to Homes	69
Recreation	9
Reliability	1
Renewable Energy	6
Routing	110
ROW	23
Safety	13



Stray Voltage	3
Trees	3
Utilities	3
Visual Impacts	18
Visual/Aesthetic	3
Water	1
Wetlands and Water Resources	12
Wildlife	21
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>653</b>

Note: The topics listed in this table reflect all the points mentioned in the comments. For instance, 10 comments may cover 23 distinct topics.