Appendix H

Outreach Materials

Tribal Outreach

Tribal project introduction letter

Month xx, 20xx

«Prefix» «First_Name» «Last_Name» «Suffix»
«Title»
«Tribe»
«Mailing_Address»
«City», «State» «Zip»

Subject: Development of Gopher to Badger Link Transmission Project

Dairyland Power Cooperative (Dairyland) and Northern States Power Company, doing business as Xcel Energy (together, the Applicants) are proposing the Gopher to Badger Link 765-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project (Project). The Project extends from an existing substation near Pine Island, Minnesota, to the Minnesota/Wisconsin border along the Mississippi River in Houston County, Minnesota. Xcel Energy is developing the first segment of the Project between North Rochester, Minnesota, and Marion, Minnesota. Dairyland is developing the remaining segment between Marion, Minnesota, and the Minnesota-Wisconsin border, which will be a double-circuit 765-/161-kV transmission line (see enclosed Project Area Map). This letter provides information about the Project in Minnesota and the state of Minnesota's permitting process.

We are initiating outreach to briefly introduce the proposed Project at a very early stage of the development process and invite you to an ongoing dialogue as the Project proceeds through the development process.

Project Description

The Project includes:

- A single-circuit 765-kV high voltage transmission line between the existing North Rochester Substation[1] and a point near Marion, Minnesota;
- A 765-kV/161-kV double-circuit high voltage transmission line from near Marion, Minnesota, to the Wisconsin border; and
- A new three-circuit breaker 161 kV switching station in Houston County, Minnesota; a specific location has not yet been identified.

Project Need

The Project is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc.'s (MISO) Long Range Transmission Planning (LRTP) Tranche 2.1 set of transmission line projects, and is needed to maintain system reliability amid fundamental changes in demand for electricity and the type and amount of generation interconnected to the grid within the MISO footprint. The Project in combination with the other Tranche 2.1 projects will create a backbone connection in Minnesota that will ultimately be interconnected with the existing 765-kV network in the eastern United States. This network will make Minnesota's connection to the broader

[1] The existing North Rochester Substation will be expanded to accommodate 765-kV facilities as part of the PowerOn Midwest Project and will be part of a separate Certificate of Need Application.

Midwest and eastern United States more robust and resilient, enabling Minnesota and the region to meet electrical demand in a more reliable and cost-effective manner.

Regulatory Process

The Project requires two types of approvals from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC or Commission): a Certificate of Need and a Route Permit. The Participants will submit a Certificate of Need Application for the Project to the Commission in February 2026. Separately, Applicants will also submit a Route Permit application to the Commission later in 2026. The Project cannot be constructed unless the Commission determines that it is needed in the Certificate of Need proceeding. In the Route Permit proceedings, the Commission will decide where the transmission line and other associated facilities will be located.

Stakeholders will have an opportunity to submit comments and participate in the Certificate of Need and Route Permit processes. You can get involved by submitting comments or attending public meetings and hearings. Please keep in mind that "need" issues should be raised in the Certificate of Need process, and issues concerning the location of the transmission line should be raised during the forthcoming Route Permit process.

Prior to submitting a Route Permit application, the Participants will host open houses in the Project area to solicit feedback from landowners and stakeholders regarding the routes. The Participants will also send Project letters to the Tribes and agencies to invite feedback and meetings to further discuss routing. During the routing process, we would welcome guidance on culturally important locations, Traditional Cultural Properties, landscapes, and practices to consider. We will treat sensitive information with care and can discuss appropriate confidentiality protections.

We anticipate field surveys (environmental, cultural, and engineering) as development of the Project moves forward and are committed to coordinating with all interested Tribes as planning advances. We recognize and respect the enduring cultural, historical, and spiritual connections your Nation maintains with these lands and waters. The scope of jurisdiction and level of analysis under National Environmental Policy Act and a lead agency has not been determined. Xcel Energy and Dairyland do not intend for any discussions between the Tribes and the Applicants to take the place of any government-to-government consultation required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Additional Information and Mailing Lists

To learn how to subscribe to the Project's Certificate of Need docket and to receive email notifications when information is filed in that docket, please visit www.mn.gov/puc/edockets/how-to/. To subscribe to this docket, follow those instructions and enter Docket Number 25-121. A docket number for the route permit has not yet been assigned.

To be placed on the Project Certificate of Need mailing list, email eservice.admin@state.mn.us or call 651-201-2246. You may request to receive notices by email or U.S. Mail. If you have questions about the state regulatory process, you may contact the Minnesota state regulatory staff listed below:

Sam Lobby
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
651-201-2205
1-800-657-3782
Sam.lobby@state.mn.us

Also, please feel free to contact the Project team with any questions. Questions can be sent to: connect@gophertobadgerlink.com and 612-474-7799. Information regarding the Project is also available at www.gophertobadgerlink.com.

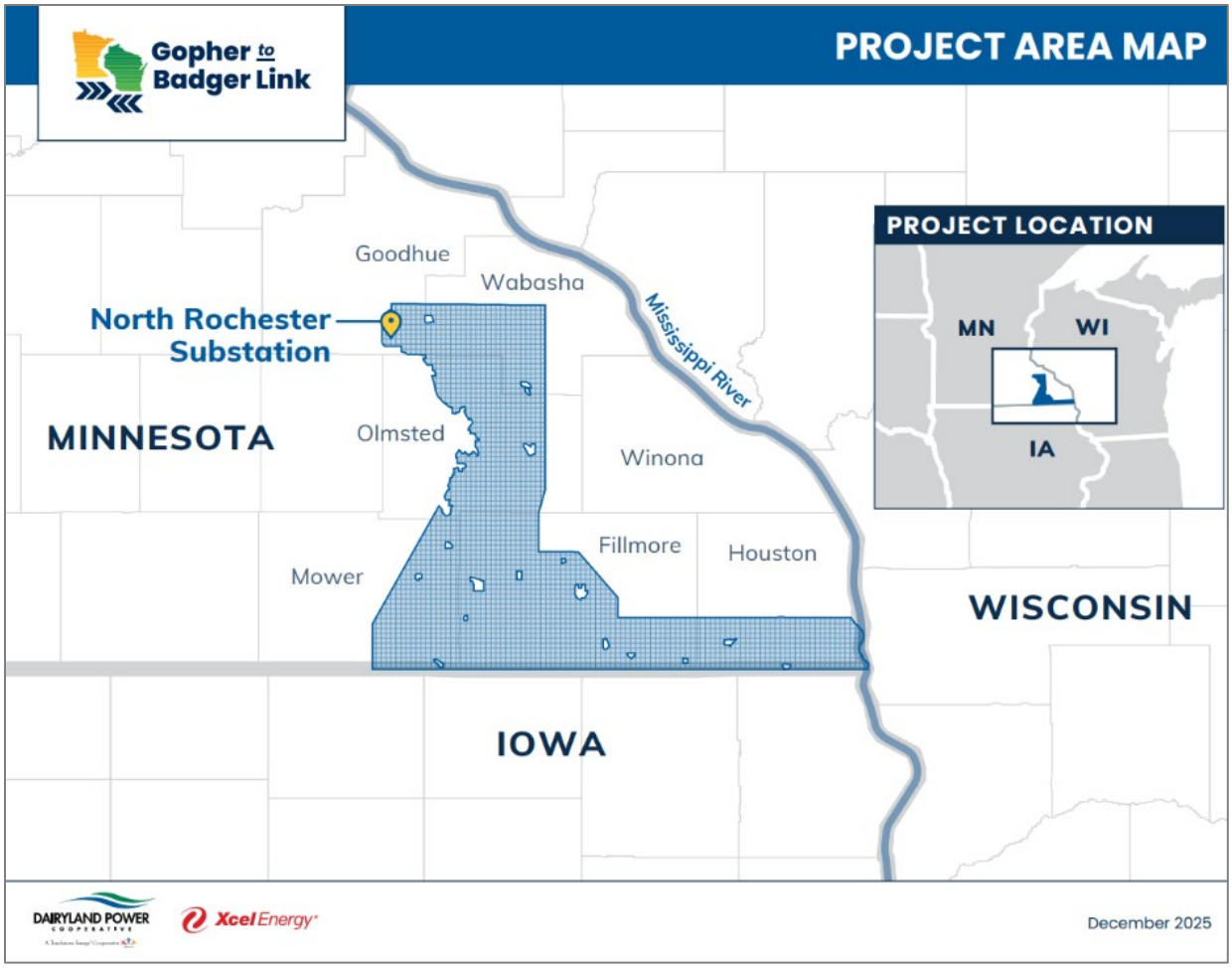
We hope this information has been helpful to you. Please contact Matt Langan with Xcel Energy or Michael Peters with Dairyland (contact information below) if you have an interest in the Project area and would like to be involved in further discussions so that we can answer any questions, provide you additional information, and discuss any concerns you may have about the Project.

Sincerely,

Matt Langan
Xcel Energy
Manager, Regulatory Policy
matthew.a.langan@xcelenergy.com
Phone: 612-330-6954

Michael Peters
Dairyland Power Cooperative
Environmental Permitting Lead
Michael.Peters@DairylandPower.com
Phone: 608-787-1300

Enclosed: Project Area Map

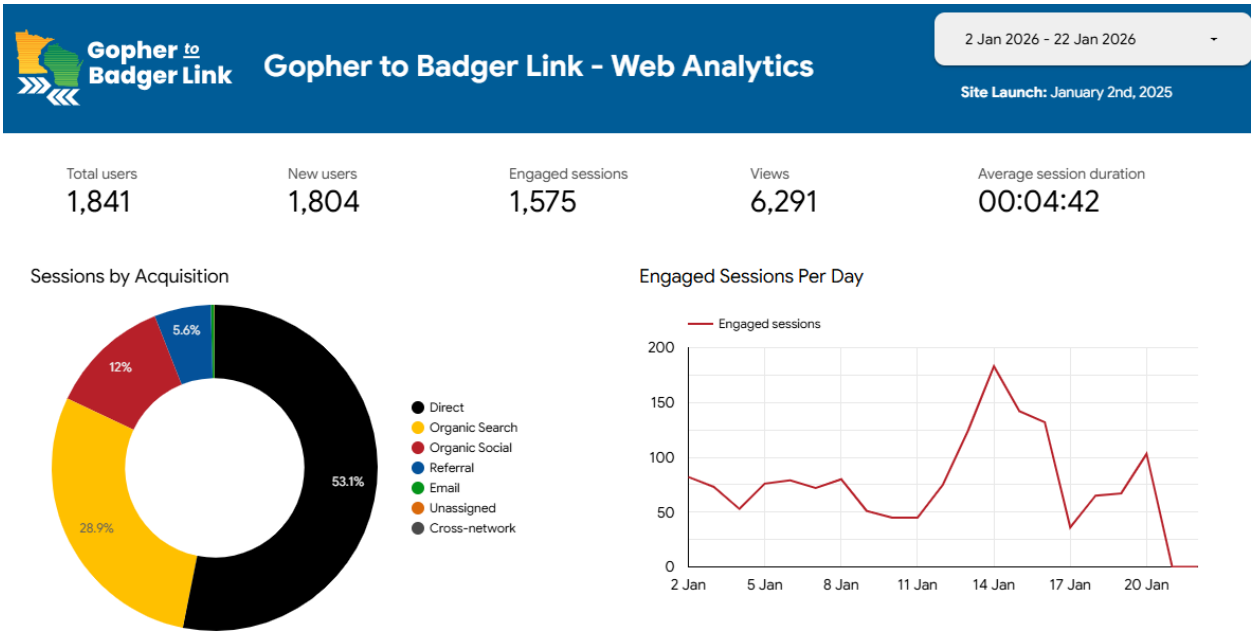

Gopher to Badger Link
PROJECT AREA MAP
PROJECT LOCATION
MN
WI
IA
Goodhue
Wabasha
North Rochester Substation
Mississippi River
MINNESOTA
Olmsted
Winona
Fillmore
Houston
Mower
WISCONSIN
IOWA
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Xcel Energy
December 2025

Local Outreach

Local Outreach	
People's Energy Electric Cooperative Board of Directors	September 29th, 2025
Commissioner Rossman and Mueller (Olmsted County)	October 9th, 2025
City of Harmony, MN	October 22nd, 2025
Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative Board of Directors	October 28th, 2025
MiEnergy Cooperative Board of Directors	October 30th, 2025
MiEnergy Annual Electric Municipal Meeting	November 13th, 2025
Houston County Board of Commissioners	November 18th, 2025

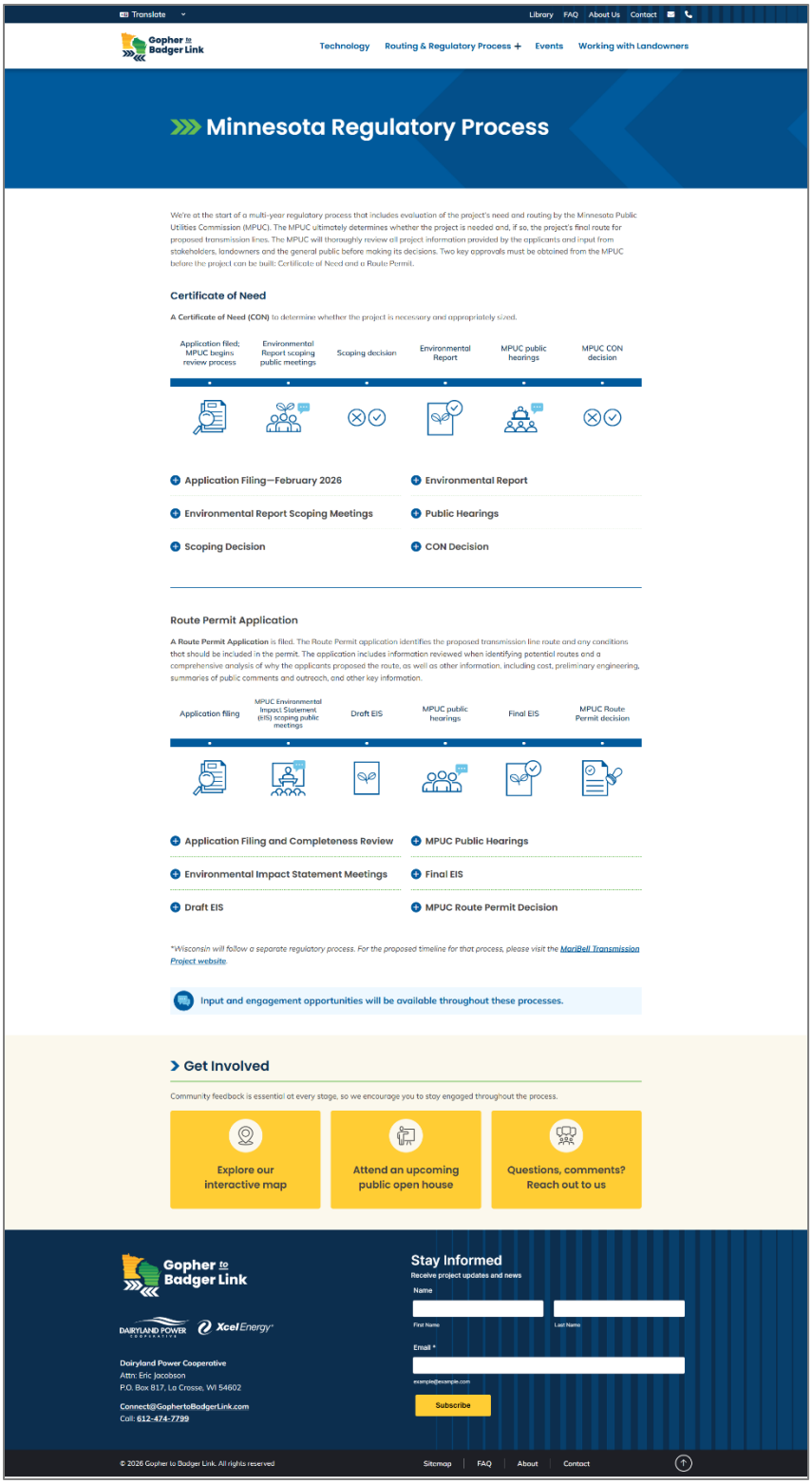
Communication Channels

Website analytics from January 2-21, 2026



Website screenshots

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Library FAQ About Us Contact
Gopher to Badger Link
Technology Routing & Regulatory Process + Events Working with Landowners
Minnesota Regulatory Process
We're at the start of a multi-year regulatory process that includes evaluation of the project's need and routing by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The MPUC ultimately determines whether the project is needed and, if so, the project's final route for proposed transmission lines. The MPUC will thoroughly review all project information provided by the applicants and input from stakeholders, landowners and the general public before making its decisions. Two key approvals must be obtained from the MPUC before the project can be built: Certificate of Need and a Route Permit.
Certificate of Need
A Certificate of Need (CON) to determine whether the project is necessary and appropriately sized.
Application filed; MPUC begins review process
Environmental Report scoping public meetings
Scoping decision
Environmental Report
MPUC public hearings
MPUC CON decision
Application Filing—February 2026
Environmental Report
Environmental Report Scoping Meetings
Public Hearings
Scoping Decision
CON Decision
Route Permit Application
A Route Permit Application is filed. The Route Permit application identifies the proposed transmission line route and any conditions that should be included in the permit. The application includes information reviewed when identifying potential routes and a comprehensive analysis of why the applicants proposed the route, as well as other information, including cost, preliminary engineering, summaries of public comments and outreach, and other key information.
Application filing
MPUC Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping public meetings
Draft EIS
MPUC public hearings
Final EIS
MPUC Route Permit decision
Application Filing and Completeness Review
MPUC Public Hearings
Environmental Impact Statement Meetings
Final EIS
Draft EIS
MPUC Route Permit Decision
*Wisconsin will follow a separate regulatory process. For the proposed timeline for that process, please visit the MariBell Transmission Project website
Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.
Get Involved
Community feedback is essential at every stage, so we encourage you to stay engaged throughout the process.
Explore our interactive map
Attend an upcoming public open house
Questions, comments? Reach out to us
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Xcel Energy
Dairyland Power Cooperative
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Applicant's Routing Process
How Routes Are Developed
Identifying a new transmission line route is a multi-step analysis that considers constraints, opportunities and alternatives that aim to minimize impacts on people and the environment.
Develop Preliminary Route Options
WE ARE HERE!
Refine Route Options
Identify a Proposed Route to Submit in the Application
MPUC Issues a Decision on a Final Route
Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.
Routing Considerations
During the routing process, our team will identify opportunities where routes and route alternatives could be located while evaluating sensitivities or areas that would make routing difficult.
Opportunities are considered linear features that are oriented in the direction of the project:
Field lines
Property lines
Property lines
Roads
Utility corridors
Sensitivities are area resources or conditions that may require additional review and consideration:
Agricultural impacts
Public airports
Cemeteries, religious facilities and cultural and historic resources
Communication towers
Conservation area/nature preserves
Contaminated areas
Forest
Hospitals
Leveesdams
Mines/quarries
Pipelines
Planned developments
Protected federal and state lands
Railroads
Recreational uses
Residences and schools/daycares
Rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands
Scenic byways
Protected animal and plant species
Share Your Feedback
The map below highlights potential route options for the transmission line. The yellow lines represent preliminary routes, and we're seeking your input to help refine these options as we work toward identifying the proposed route for the permit application. The green line shows the existing 161 kV line, which we plan to follow for the Marshall segment.
We want your feedback! Drop a pin on the map to identify any opportunities or sensitivities in the area.
Click or tap 'Add a comment' to get started. If you prefer to leave a general comment, click or tap the 'Comment' button in the top left of your screen.
ADD COMMENT
Legend
Map
Rochester
Get Involved
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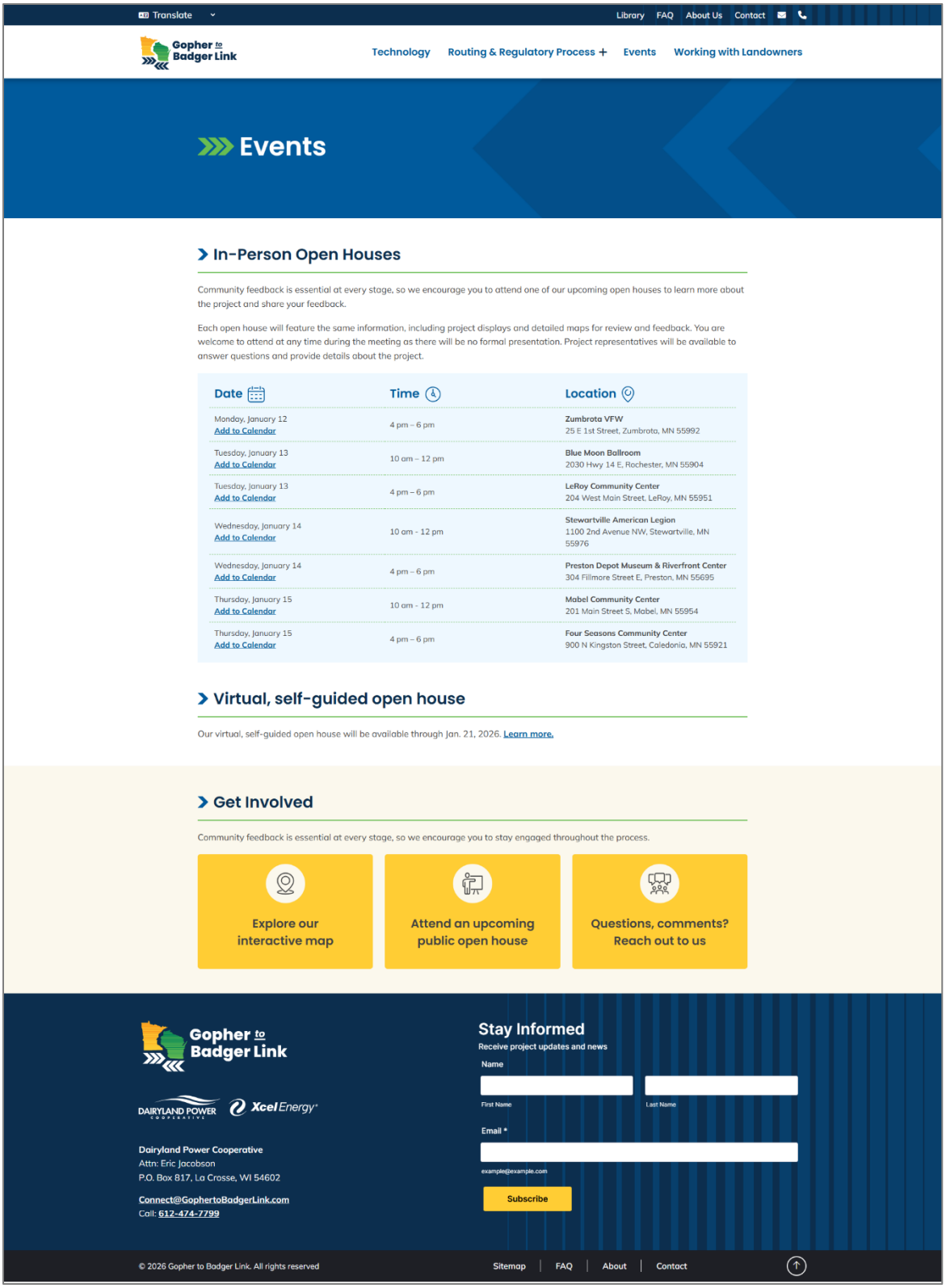
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In-Person Open Houses
Community feedback is essential at every stage, so we encourage you to attend one of our upcoming open houses to learn more about the project and share your feedback.
Each open house will feature the same information, including project displays and detailed maps for review and feedback. You are welcome to attend at any time during the meeting as there will be no formal presentation. Project representatives will be available to answer questions and provide details about the project.
Date
Time
Location
Monday, January 12
Add to Calendar
4 pm – 6 pm
Zumbrota VFW
25 E 1st Street, Zumbrota, MN 55992
Tuesday, January 13
Add to Calendar
10 am – 12 pm
Blue Moon Ballroom
2030 Hwy 14 E, Rochester, MN 55904
Tuesday, January 13
Add to Calendar
4 pm – 6 pm
LeRoy Community Center
204 West Main Street, LeRoy, MN 55951
Wednesday, January 14
Add to Calendar
10 am - 12 pm
Stewartville American Legion
1100 2nd Avenue NW, Stewartville, MN 55976
Wednesday, January 14
Add to Calendar
4 pm – 6 pm
Preston Depot Museum & Riverfront Center
304 Fillmore Street E, Preston, MN 55695
Thursday, January 15
Add to Calendar
10 am - 12 pm
Mabel Community Center
201 Main Street S, Mabel, MN 55954
Thursday, January 15
Add to Calendar
4 pm – 6 pm
Four Seasons Community Center
900 N Kingston Street, Caledonia, MN 55921
Virtual, self-guided open house
Our virtual, self-guided open house will be available through Jan. 21, 2026. Learn more.
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Working with Landowners
Transmission Line Easements and Rights-of-Way
Energy companies build transmission lines to serve customers, connect new generation sources, and help ensure the reliable delivery of electricity to customers. The area around a transmission line is called a right-of-way (ROW) and is governed by an easement, a legal document noting that is recorded with the property.
At the start of the routing and regulatory processes, project team members will meet with landowners at open houses or other meetings to discuss the project. Landowners will be notified of these opportunities through mailings and other communications.
As potential routes develop, we may seek "rights of entry" which allow permission to complete survey activities such as—environmental and land boundary surveys and possibly soil borings—along potential transmission line routes.
As routes are finalized, we will work with landowners to secure the rights needed to construct, operate and maintain the transmission line. These rights are typically obtained through an "easement", and in some cases, utilities may first negotiate an "option" before acquiring the easement.
What are ROW?
ROW are the actual land areas acquired for a specific purpose such as a transmission line, roadway or other infrastructure. We anticipate an easement of up to 250 feet wide (125 feet on each side of the center of the structure) will be necessary for the new transmission line. Right of way is typically secured through negotiation and acquisition of a transmission line easement.
Can I still use the area in the ROW?
Land within the ROW may be used for any purpose that does not interfere with the construction, operation or maintenance of the transmission line. In agricultural areas, the land may continue to be used for crop production and pasture.
What is a transmission line easement?
An easement is a legal document that allows our team to construct, operate and maintain transmission structures and lines on your property while you maintain ownership and use of your land.
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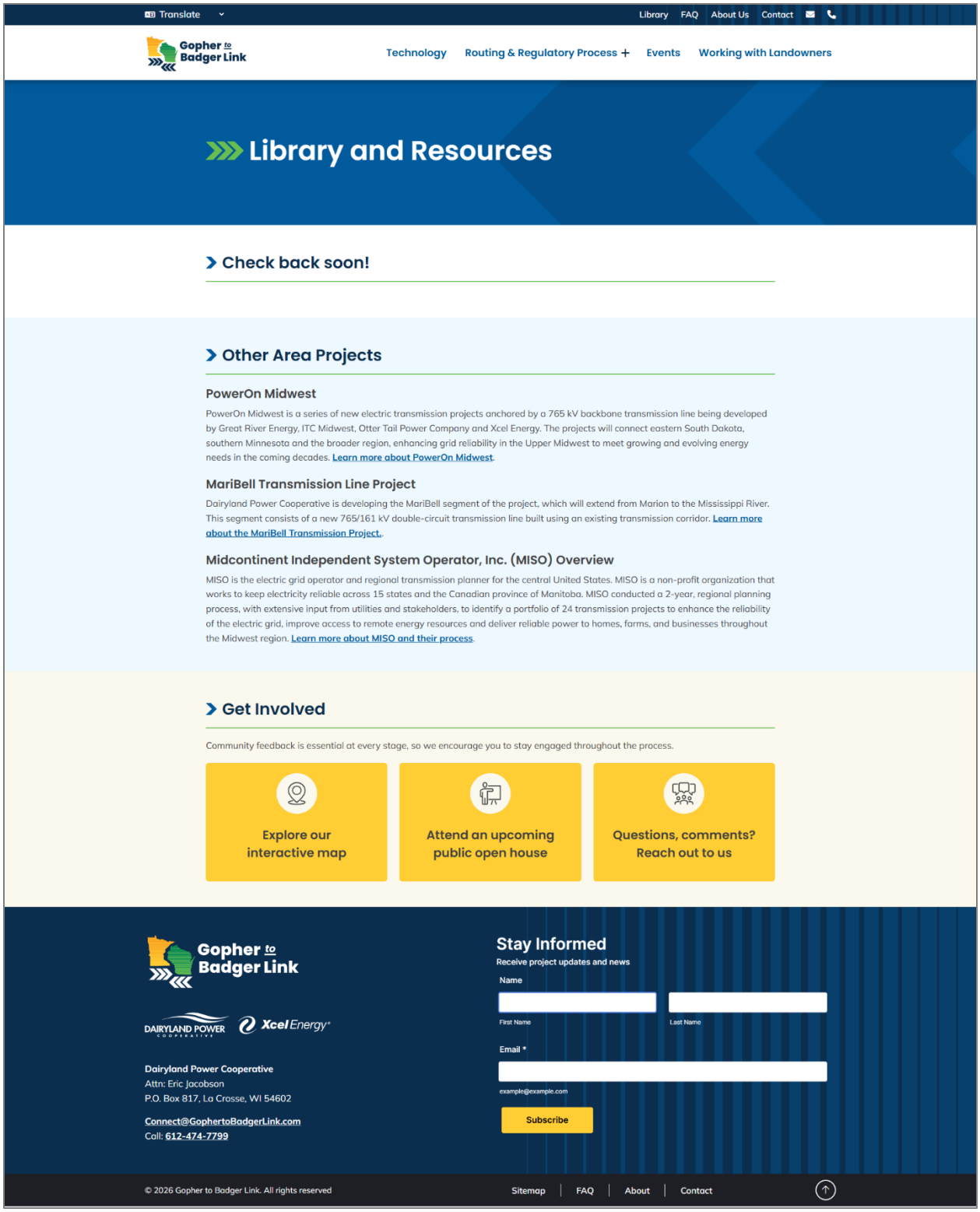
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Library and Resources
Check back soon!
Other Area Projects
PowerOn Midwest
PowerOn Midwest is a series of new electric transmission projects anchored by a 765 kV backbone transmission line being developed by Great River Energy, ITC Midwest, Otter Tail Power Company and Xcel Energy. The projects will connect eastern South Dakota, southern Minnesota and the broader region, enhancing grid reliability in the Upper Midwest to meet growing and evolving energy needs in the coming decades. Learn more about PowerOn Midwest.
MariBell Transmission Line Project
Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project, which will extend from Marion to the Mississippi River. This segment consists of a new 765/161 kV double-circuit transmission line built using an existing transmission corridor. Learn more about the MariBell Transmission Project.
Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) Overview
MISO is the electric grid operator and regional transmission planner for the central United States. MISO is a non-profit organization that works to keep electricity reliable across 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba. MISO conducted a 2-year, regional planning process, with extensive input from utilities and stakeholders, to identify a portfolio of 24 transmission projects to enhance the reliability of the electric grid, improve access to remote energy resources and deliver reliable power to homes, farms, and businesses throughout the Midwest region. Learn more about MISO and their process.
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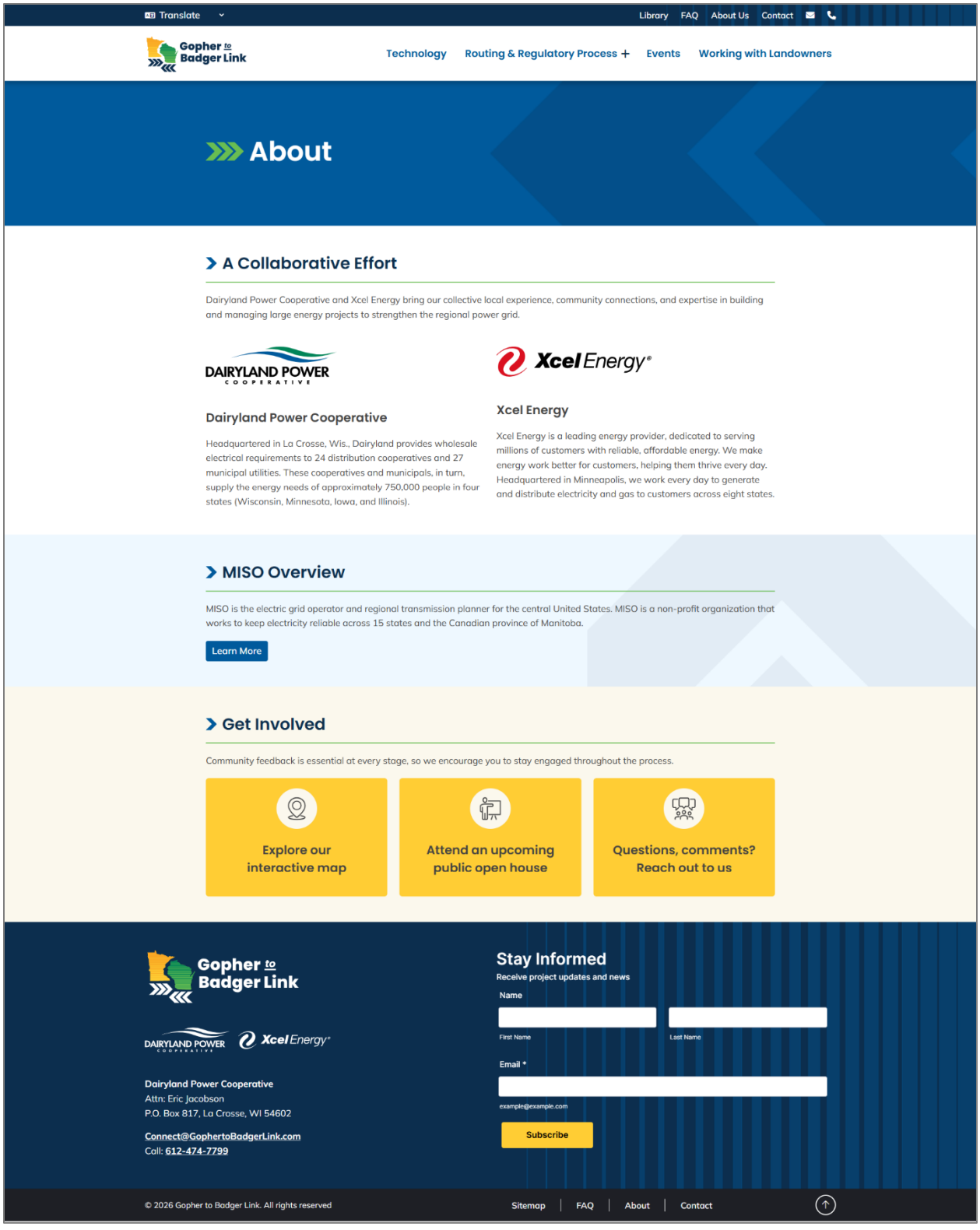
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A Collaborative Effort
Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy bring our collective local experience, community connections, and expertise in building and managing large energy projects to strengthen the regional power grid.
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Xcel Energy
Dairyland Power Cooperative
Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides wholesale electrical requirements to 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of approximately 750,000 people in four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois).
Xcel Energy
Xcel Energy is a leading energy provider, dedicated to serving millions of customers with reliable, affordable energy. We make energy work better for customers, helping them thrive every day. Headquartered in Minneapolis, we work every day to generate and distribute electricity and gas to customers across eight states.
MISO Overview
MISO is the electric grid operator and regional transmission planner for the central United States. MISO is a non-profit organization that works to keep electricity reliable across 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba.
Learn More
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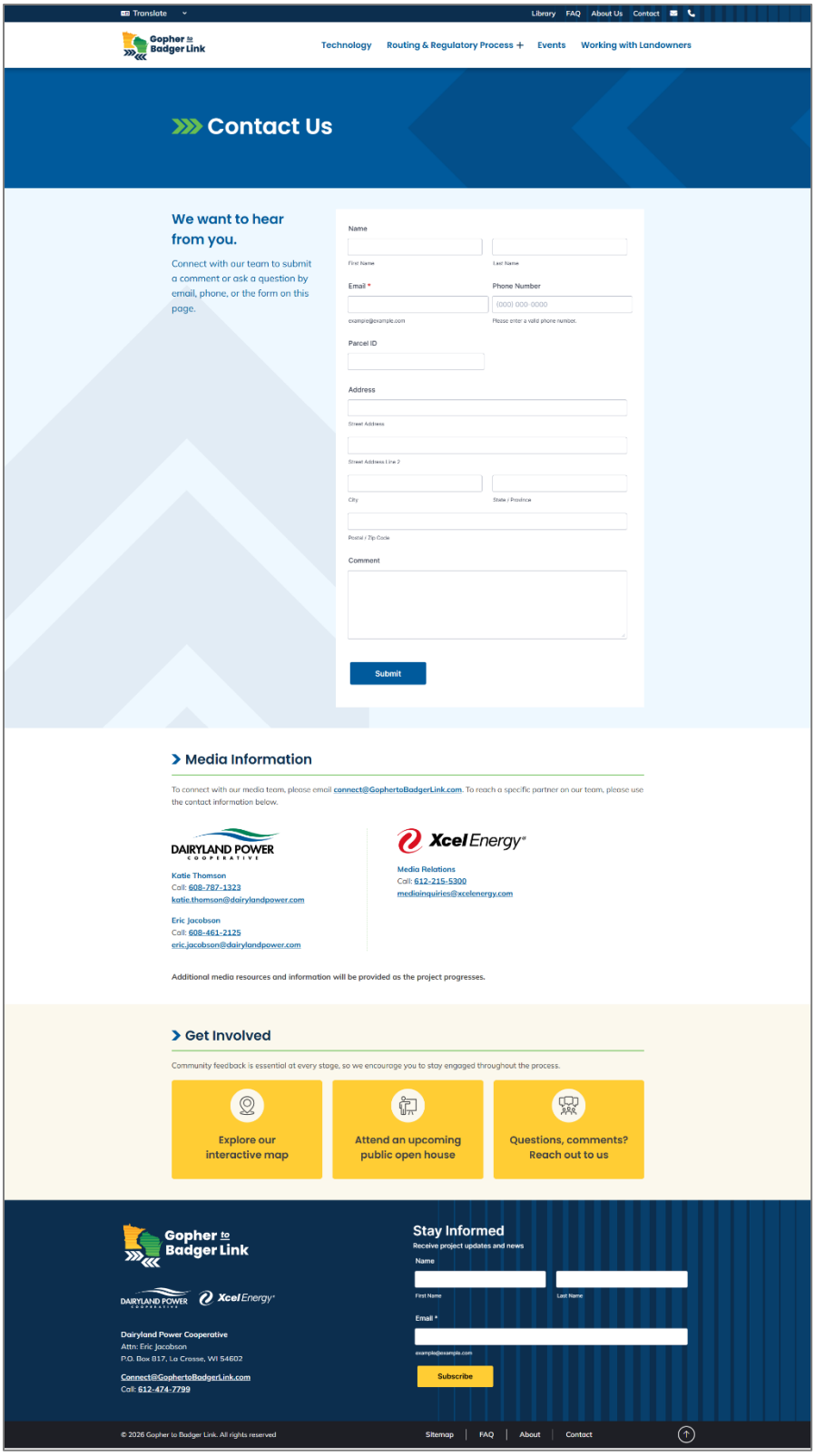
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We want to hear from you.
Connect with our team to submit a comment or ask a question by email, phone, or the form on this page.
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Email *
Phone Number
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Parcel ID
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Media Information
To connect with our media team, please email connect@GophertoBadgerLink.com. To reach a specific partner on our team, please use the contact information below.
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Katie Thomson
Call: 608-787-1323
katie.thomson@dairylandpower.com
Eric Jacobson
Call: 608-461-2125
eric.jacobson@dairylandpower.com
Xcel Energy
Media Relations
Call: 612-215-5300
mediainquiries@xcelenergy.com
Additional media resources and information will be provided as the project progresses.
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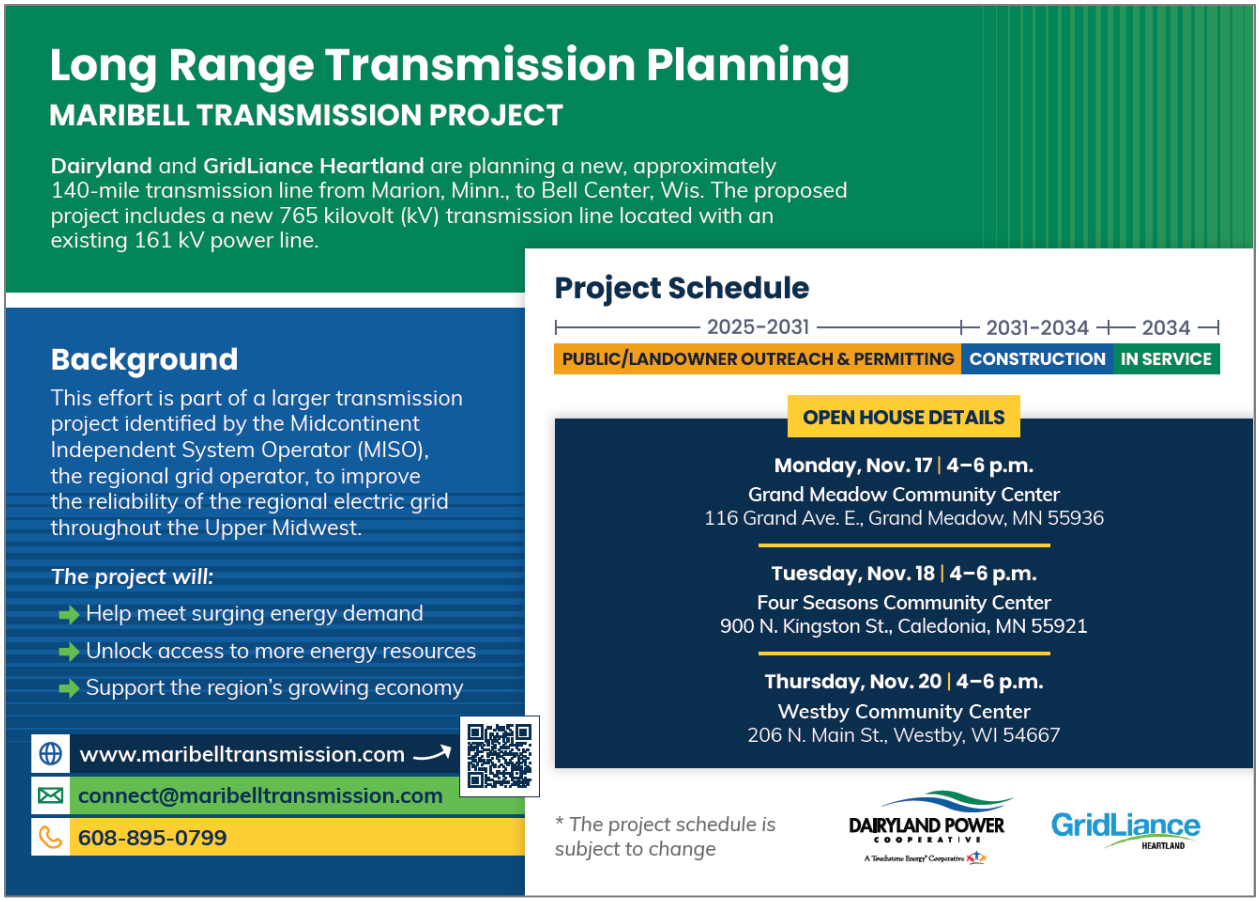
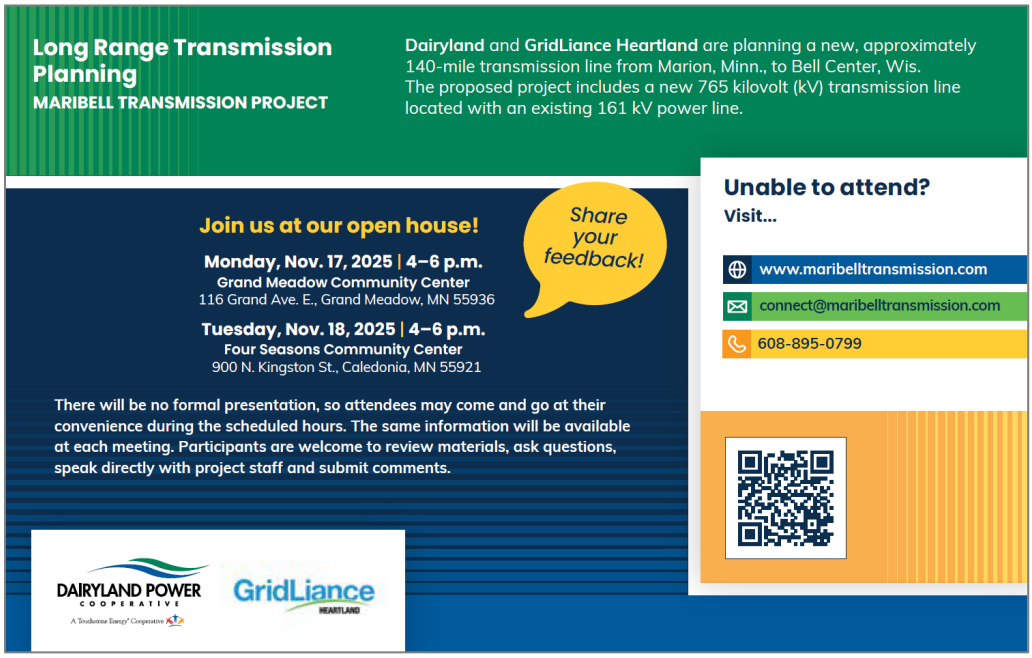
November 2025 Open Houses

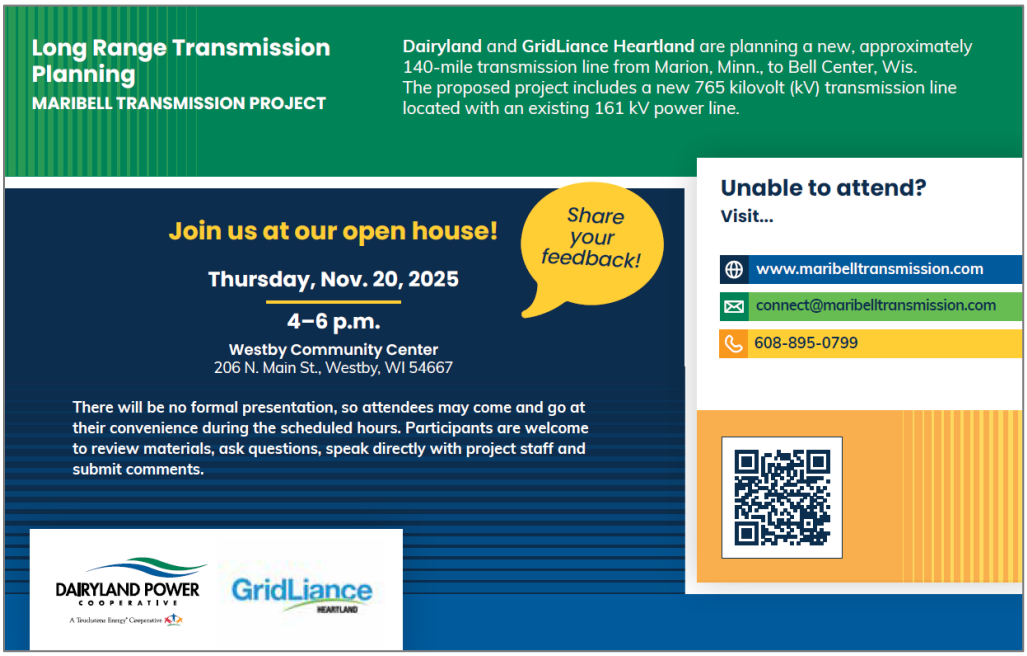
Postcard




Long Range Transmission Planning
MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland are planning a new, approximately 140-mile transmission line from Marion, Minn., to Bell Center, Wis. The proposed project includes a new 765 kilovolt (kV) transmission line located with an existing 161 kV power line.
Background
This effort is part of a larger transmission project identified by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), the regional grid operator, to improve the reliability of the regional electric grid throughout the Upper Midwest.
The project will:
Help meet surging energy demand
Unlock access to more energy resources
Support the region's growing economy
www.maribelltransmission.com
connect@maribelltransmission.com
608-895-0799
Project Schedule
2025-2031
2031-2034
2034
PUBLIC/LANDOWNER OUTREACH & PERMITTING
CONSTRUCTION
IN SERVICE
OPEN HOUSE DETAILS
Monday, Nov. 17 | 4–6 p.m.
Grand Meadow Community Center
116 Grand Ave. E., Grand Meadow, MN 55936
Tuesday, Nov. 18 | 4–6 p.m.
Four Seasons Community Center
900 N. Kingston St., Caledonia, MN 55921
Thursday, Nov. 20 | 4–6 p.m.
Westby Community Center
206 N. Main St., Westby, WI 54667
* The project schedule is subject to change
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
GridLiance HEARTLAND

Newspaper advertisement (November 2025 Open Houses)

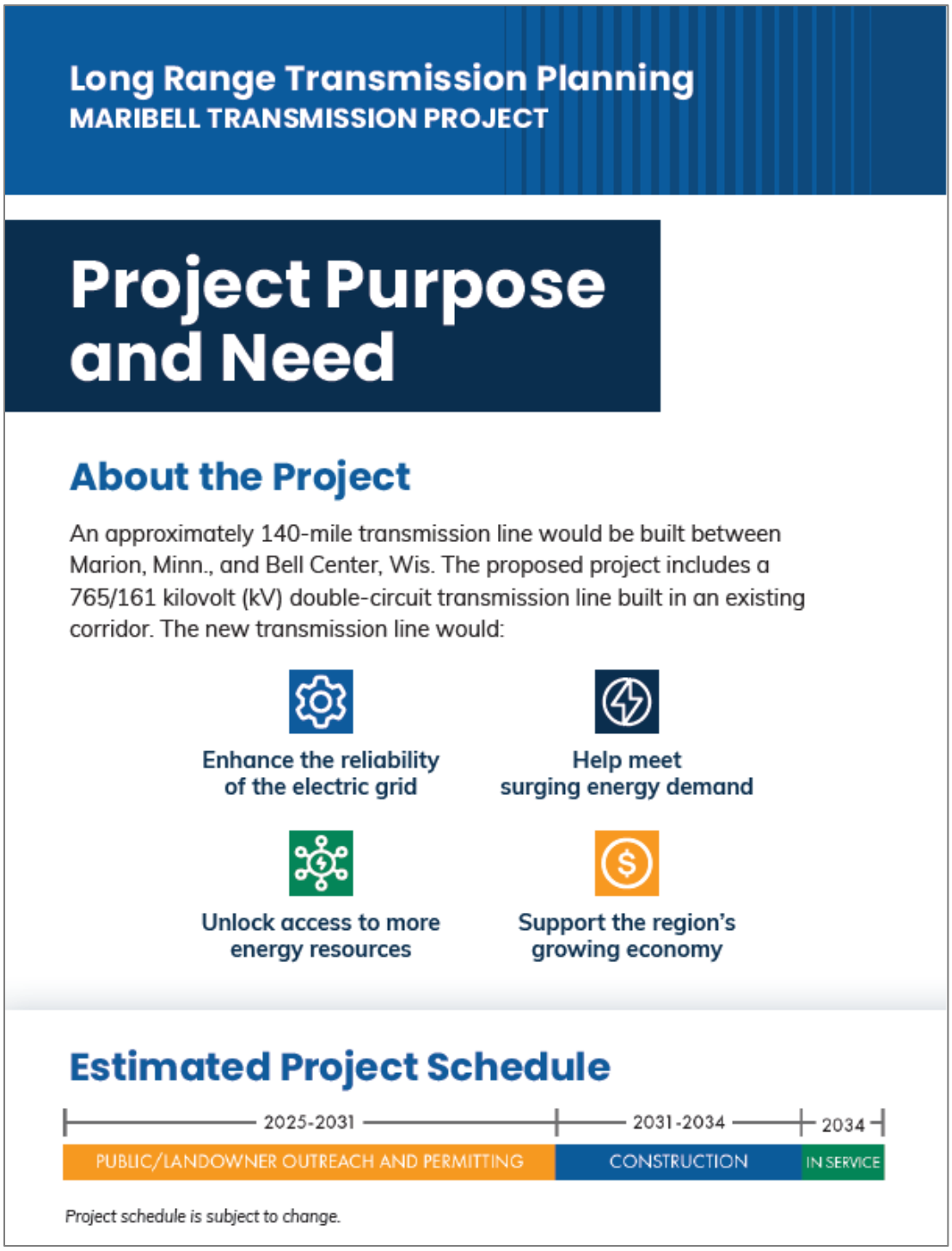


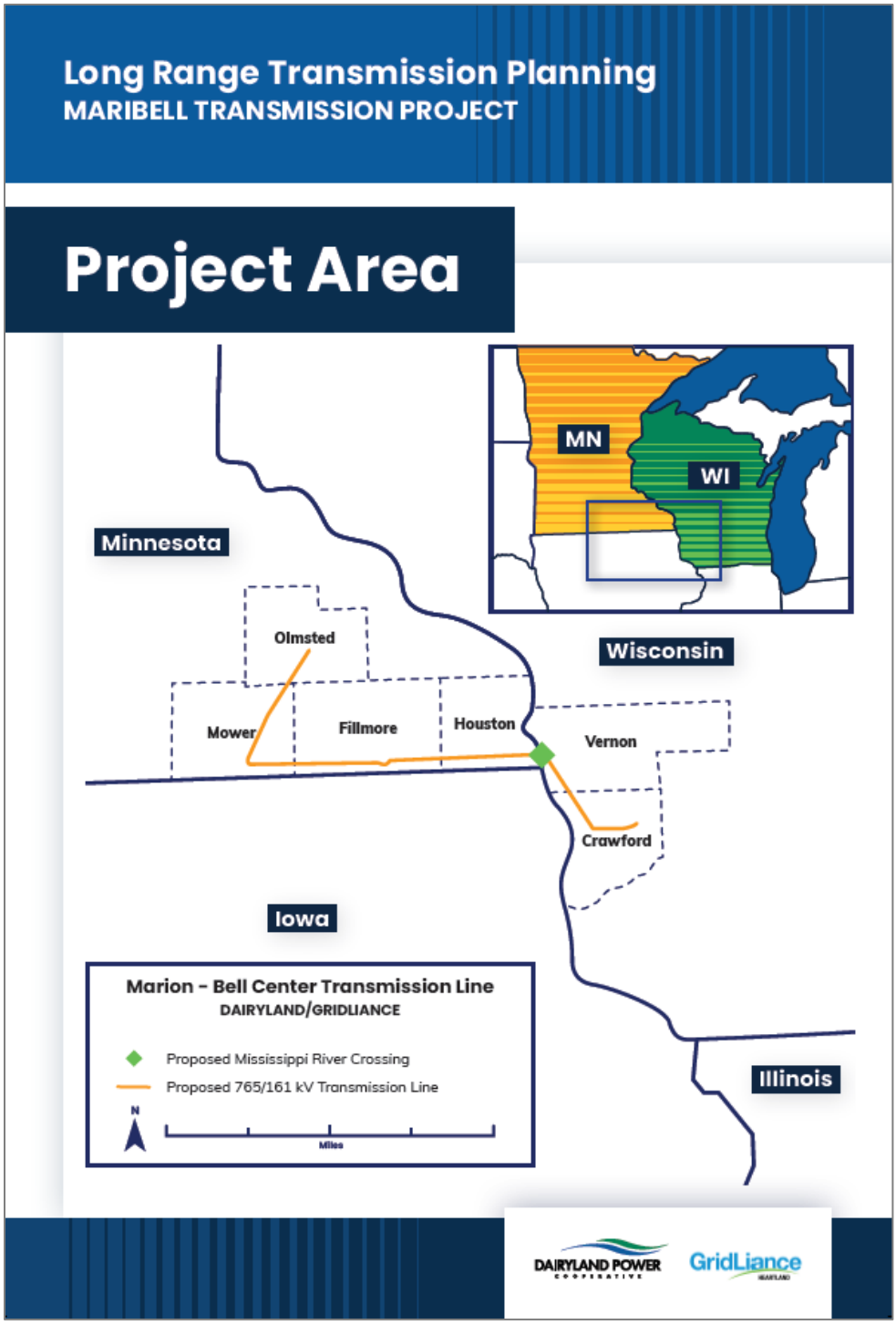


Paid advertisement overview table (November 2025 Open Houses)

Publication	Run date	Run date 2	Circulation
Le Roy Mower County Independent	Nov. 6, 2025	Nov. 13, 2025	1,238
Preston Fillmore County Journal	Nov. 3, 2025	Nov. 10, 2025	13,500
Crawford County Independent	Nov. 12, 2025	Nov. 19, 2025	1,700
Vernon County Journal	Nov. 12, 2025	Nov. 19, 2025	Information not available
Caledonia Argus	Nov. 5 , 2025	Nov. 12, 2025	1,600
Total			18,038+

Boards (November 2025 Open Houses)




Long Range Transmission Planning
MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Project Area
MN
WI
Minnesota
Wisconsin
Olmsted
Mower
Fillmore
Houston
Vernon
Crawford
Iowa
Illinois
Marion - Bell Center Transmission Line
DAIRYLAND/GRIDLIANCE
Proposed Mississippi River Crossing
Proposed 765/161 kV Transmission Line
N
Miles
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
GridLiance

Long Range Transmission Planning
MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT

MISO Overview

What is MISO?

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is the electric grid operator for the central United States. MISO works to keep electricity reliable across 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

MISO assigned Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland an approximately 140-mile segment (Marion, Minn., to Bell Center, Wis.) of the proposed 273-mile North Rochester—Columbia 765 kV transmission line.

This project is part of MISO's broader effort to build a 765 kV transmission backbone across the Midwest, enhancing the reliability of the electric grid, improving access to remote energy resources and delivering reliable power to homes, farms, and businesses throughout the region.

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Project Partners

The partnership between Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland brings together Dairyland's local experience and community connections with GridLiance's expertise in building and managing large energy projects to strengthen the region's power reliability.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides wholesale electrical requirements to 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of approximately 750,000 people in four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois).

GridLiance Heartland, LLC

GridLiance Heartland, LLC is a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Transmission, a leading competitive transmission company that develops, finances, constructs, operates and maintains transmission assets across North America. The company's subsidiaries have approximately 3,100 circuit miles of high-voltage transmission assets in operation and development in 18 states and Canada. GridLiance Heartland collaborates with rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities in America's heartland to invest in electric infrastructure and improve the reliability of regional grids.

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Economic Benefits

The MariBell Project will provide economic benefits to local communities.

Minnesota

- Approximately $400 million in local and state property taxes over the life of the project
- Approximately $200 million in economic impact from construction and operations

Wisconsin

- Approximately $30 million in state tax revenue over the life of the project
- Approximately $70 million in economic impact from construction and operations

*Economic Analysis of the MariBell Transmission Project by Strategic Economic Research, LLC

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Regulatory Process

We are at the beginning of a multi-year process that requires routing studies and approval by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

Minnesota

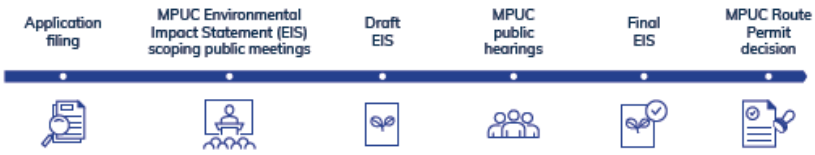
There will be public engagement opportunities during the regulatory process.

Two key approvals must be obtained from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) before a high-voltage transmission line can be built:

- A **Certificate of Need (CON)** to determine whether the project is necessary and appropriately sized.



- **Route Permit** to identify where the lines should be located and what conditions, if any, should be included in the permit



Written comments can be submitted to the MPUC during the regulatory process. We anticipate filing permit applications with the MPUC in 2026. After independent analysis and public input, the MPUC will issue the final decision on the transmission line route.

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Regulatory Process

We are at the beginning of a multi-year process that requires routing studies and approval by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin

A **Certificate or Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN)** must be obtained from the **Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW)** before a high-voltage transmission line can be built.

- In the CPCN proceeding, the PSCW determines whether the proposed facilities are necessary and appropriately routed.

The PSCW will hold public meetings during which the public can comment on the proposed facilities.

During the PSCW permitting process, the public can submit comments by attending and speaking at public hearings, submitting written comments via email or postal mail or by using the PSCW's Electronic Regulatory Filing (ERF) system.

We anticipate filing the CPCN application with the PSCW in 2026, with a final decision from the PSCW approximately 12 months after the filing of the application.

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Working with Landowners

Our team is reaching out to landowners in potential routing areas to discuss right-of-way needs and hear your feedback. We're committed to keeping you informed every step of the way and are here to help with questions or concerns.

What is right-of-way (ROW)?

- Rights-of-way are the actual land areas acquired for a specific purpose such as a transmission line, roadway or other infrastructure.
- We anticipate an easement of up to 250 feet wide (125 feet on each side of the centerline) will be necessary for the new transmission line. Right of way is typically secured through negotiation and acquisition of an easement agreement.

Can I still use the area in the right-of-way?

- Land within the ROW may be used for any purpose that does not interfere with the construction, operation or maintenance of the transmission line. In agricultural areas, the land may be used for crop production and pasture.

What is an easement agreement?

- An easement is a legal document that allows our team to construct, operate and maintain transmission structures and lines on your property while you maintain ownership and use of your land.

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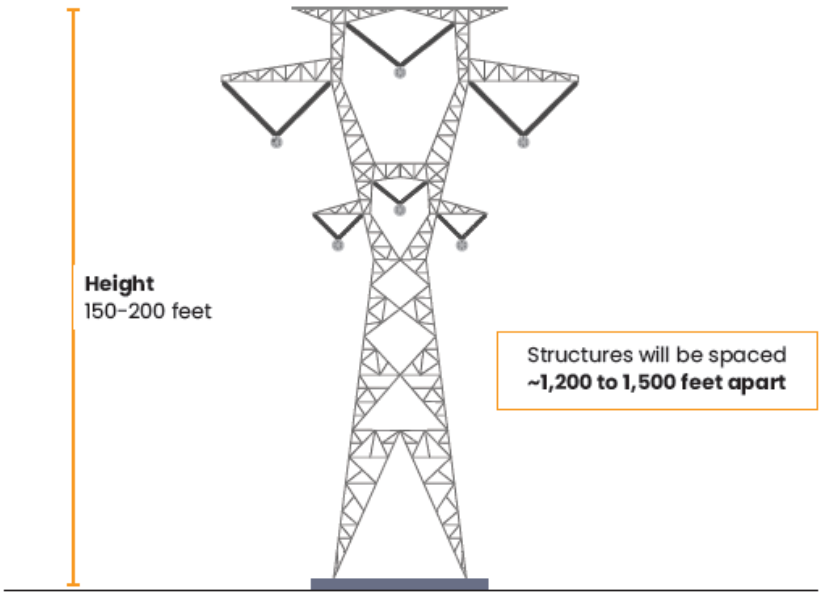
Transmission Line Design

Typical lattice tower structure



Preliminary design, not to be used for construction.

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Long Range Transmission Planning
MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT

765 Kilovolt (kV) Technology

765 kilovolt (kV) technology was identified in the MISO planning process as the preferred solution for the region, presenting several advantages:

- Efficiently carries power over long distances, keeping costs low and power flowing to where it needs to go.
- Fewer transmission lines needed to carry the same amount of power.
- Fewer structures reduce impact on land, communities and the environment.
- Provides additional capacity to power new manufacturing, homes, businesses and farms.

*One 765 kV transmission line can carry as much power as six 345 kV single circuit lines—**minimizing the landed needed** by as much as 70-80%.*



Double Circuit Tower	Double Circuit Towers	Single Circuit Towers
765/161 KV	**345 KV**	**345 KV**
~250 FT Total right-of-way	**450 FT** Total right-of-way	**900 FT** Total right-of-way

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Route Development Process

The route development process is a multi-step analysis that considers constraints, opportunities and alternatives that aim to minimize impacts to humans and the environment.

Route Development Process

1. Initial landowner and stakeholder conversations — WE ARE HERE!
2. Define Preliminary Route Options
   Areas where possible routes could be located
3. Refine Route Options
   A further narrowed area within the Preliminary Route Options
4. Proposed Route
   Develop Proposed Route(s) to be submitted to the MPUC and PSCW
5. MPUC and PSCW issue a decision on a final route

Feedback from the community is a critical component of the route development process. We will be incorporating comments from the public as well as specific stakeholders, including:

- Landowners
- Local government
- Environmental agencies
- Tribal Nations
- Federal and state agencies

ADDITIONAL FACTORS CONSIDERED IN ROUTE DEVELOPMENT

- Existing transmission and utility corridors
- Alternative locations and routes
- Roads, highways and railways
- Property, field and section lines
- Location of existing homes and businesses
- Agricultural impacts
- Airports
- Reliability
- Cemeteries, religious facilities and cultural and historic resources
- Rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands
- Impacts on sensitive animal and plant species
- Economics
- Safety

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE GridLiance MARYLAND


Long Range
Transmission Planning
MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT
Connect with us
www.maribelltransmission.com
connect@maribelltransmission.com
608-895-0799
Scan here to visit the
official project website
DAIRYLAND POWER
COOPERATIVE
GridLiance

Frequently asked questions handout (November 2025 Open Houses)

MariBell Transmission Project
Frequently Asked Questions

Revised Oct. 2025

What is the MariBell Transmission Project?

The MariBell Transmission Project is an approximately 140-mile, 765/161-kV proposed double-circuit transmission line that would be built between Marion, Minn., and Bell Center, Wis. The proposed transmission line would span portions of Olmsted, Mower, Fillmore and Houston counties in Minnesota and Vernon and Crawford counties in Wisconsin.

The segment is part of a larger North Rochester – Columbia transmission project that was approved by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) in December 2024. As part of the larger project, the MariBell Transmission Project will enhance the reliability and resilience of the regional electric grid, help meet surging energy demand and support the region's growing economy.

Why is this project needed?

In December 2024, MISO identified and approved a portfolio of transmission projects in its Long Range Transmission Plan that are needed to enable the grid of the future -- boosting reliability, providing access to low-cost energy resources and meeting growing energy demand. The MariBell segment is among the projects included in the plan.

MISO is the regional grid operator responsible for ensuring power flows reliably across 15 states in the central United States and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

Overall, the proposed transmission project would strengthen the ability to transfer power between Minnesota and Wisconsin, unlock access to more energy resources and enable a reliable grid for the future.

What is your role in this project?

MISO selected Dairyland Power Cooperative to build, operate and maintain the MariBell Transmission Project. Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland, LLC will jointly develop and construct the transmission line.

Who will receive the power?

The MariBell Transmission Project will reinforce the electric grid in the Upper Midwest and enable access to low-cost energy to communities throughout the region.

How will my community benefit from the project?

The project is expected to provide numerous benefits to communities throughout the Upper Midwest, including enhancing the reliability of the regional grid and unlocking access to more energy resources. In addition, the project would help support the region's growing economy and spur economic investment in the community during construction. The project is expected to generate approximately $400 million in local and state tax revenue in Minnesota and $30 million in state tax revenue in Wisconsin over the life of the project that could support community services and public infrastructure.

Have you considered the environmental impact of the new transmission line?

Yes, Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland are cooperating with relevant federal, state and local regulatory agencies to ensure the project is designed, constructed and operated in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and management policies.

We are committed to environmental protection and stewardship. We conduct rigorous environmental analyses to ensure we appropriately locate transmission

MariBell Transmission Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised Oct. 2025

lines and implement best practices to limit our impact on wildlife, sensitive habitats and other natural resources as well as Tribal, cultural and historic resources. We incorporate siting and design features to minimize impacts to sensitive viewsheds to the greatest extent practicable.

What plans do you have to mitigate impacts on local communities?

Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland intend to use existing rights-of-way where transmission assets are currently located as much as possible and expand the existing rights-of-way, as required to meet state or federal standards. We plan to work closely with communities and landowners to gather their input to limit impacts on farmland and other properties.

How can I provide feedback on the route?

We are studying potential routes to identify a preferred route. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback through the project website, at open houses and through the permitting processes of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

What is the expected schedule?

The MariBell Transmission Project is anticipated to be in service by 2034 following the regulatory review process and thorough stakeholder and community engagement. The project schedule is subject to change.

What government approvals are required?

Federal and state permits and approvals, including environmental permits, will be required to support construction of the line.

When will the final route be selected?

We anticipate filing permit applications that include a proposed route with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and preferred and alternative routes with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in 2026. After independent analyses and public input, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and Public Service Commission of Wisconsin will issue the final decision on the transmission line route.

What will the transmission line look like?

The full project parameters are still being developed. We expect a right-of-way width of up to 250 feet and steel lattice structures that are between 150 and 200 feet tall.

Will this transmission project increase the rates that customers pay for electricity?

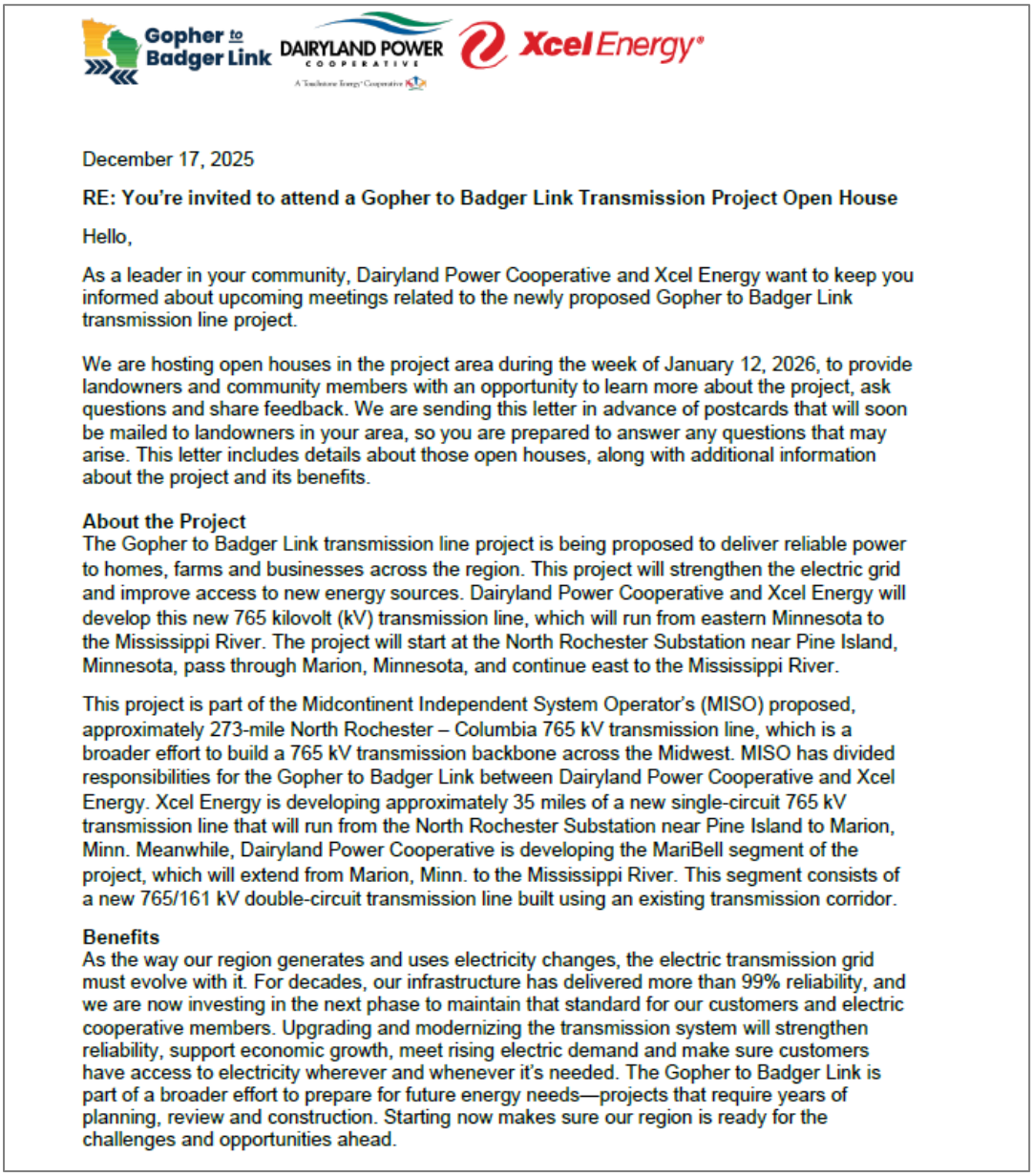
Dairyland and GridLiance Heartland do not set rates but understand customers' concerns regarding their electric bills. The costs will have a regional cost allocation with all costs being spread across the benefitting communities in MISO's Midwest subregion. The purpose of the MariBell Transmission Project is to enable access to low-cost energy and address soaring energy demand. The completed MariBell line would provide greater reliability, leading to fewer power outages and disruptions.

www.maribelltransmission.com

connect@maribelltransmission.com

January 2026 Open Houses

Stakeholder letter



December 17, 2025

RE: You're invited to attend a Gopher to Badger Link Transmission Project Open House

Hello,

As a leader in your community, Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy want to keep you informed about upcoming meetings related to the newly proposed Gopher to Badger Link transmission line project.

We are hosting open houses in the project area during the week of January 12, 2026, to provide landowners and community members with an opportunity to learn more about the project, ask questions and share feedback. We are sending this letter in advance of postcards that will soon be mailed to landowners in your area, so you are prepared to answer any questions that may arise. This letter includes details about those open houses, along with additional information about the project and its benefits.

About the Project
The Gopher to Badger Link transmission line project is being proposed to deliver reliable power to homes, farms and businesses across the region. This project will strengthen the electric grid and improve access to new energy sources. Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will develop this new 765 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which will run from eastern Minnesota to the Mississippi River. The project will start at the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island, Minnesota, pass through Marion, Minnesota, and continue east to the Mississippi River.

This project is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator's (MISO) proposed, approximately 273-mile North Rochester – Columbia 765 kV transmission line, which is a broader effort to build a 765 kV transmission backbone across the Midwest. MISO has divided responsibilities for the Gopher to Badger Link between Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy. Xcel Energy is developing approximately 35 miles of a new single-circuit 765 kV transmission line that will run from the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island to Marion, Minn. Meanwhile, Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project, which will extend from Marion, Minn. to the Mississippi River. This segment consists of a new 765/161 kV double-circuit transmission line built using an existing transmission corridor.

Benefits
As the way our region generates and uses electricity changes, the electric transmission grid must evolve with it. For decades, our infrastructure has delivered more than 99% reliability, and we are now investing in the next phase to maintain that standard for our customers and electric cooperative members. Upgrading and modernizing the transmission system will strengthen reliability, support economic growth, meet rising electric demand and make sure customers have access to electricity wherever and whenever it's needed. The Gopher to Badger Link is part of a broader effort to prepare for future energy needs—projects that require years of planning, review and construction. Starting now makes sure our region is ready for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Open Houses
Each open house will feature the same information, including project displays and detailed maps for review and feedback. You are welcome to attend at any time during the meeting as there will be no formal presentation. Project representatives will be available to answer questions and provide details about the project. For those unable to attend in person, all shared information will also be available on the project website and through the virtual open house.

Date	Time	Location
Monday, January 12	4 pm – 6 pm	**Zumbrota VFW** 25 East 1st Street, Zumbrota, MN 55992
Tuesday, January 13	10 am – 12 pm	**Blue Moon Ballroom** 2030 Highway 14 East, Rochester, MN 55904
Tuesday, January 13	4 pm – 6 pm	**LeRoy Community Center** 204 West Main Street, LeRoy, MN 55951
Wednesday, January 14	10 am – 12 pm	**Stewartville American Legion** 1100 2nd Avenue NW, Stewartville, MN 55976
Wednesday, January 14	4 pm – 6 pm	**Preston Depot Museum & Riverfront Center** 304 Fillmore Street East, Preston, MN 55695
Thursday, January 15	10 am – 12 pm	**Mabel Community Center** 201 Main Street South, Mabel, MN 55954
Thursday, January 15	4 pm – 6 pm	**Four Seasons Community Center** 900 North Kingston Street, Caledonia, MN 55921

Contact Us
Visit www.GophertoBadgerLink.com for more information. If you have any questions, please email us at Connect@GophertoBadgerLink.com or leave us a message at 612-474-7799. We look forward to connecting with you.

Sincerely,

Clay DeWitt
Manager, Regional Transmission Projects
Dairyland Power Cooperative

Ross Lexvold
Manager, Community Relations
Xcel Energy

Enclosed: Project Area Map

Invite postcard (January 2026 Open Houses)

Dairyland Power Cooperative
Attn: Eric Jacobson
P.O. Box 817
La Crosse, WI 54602

Gopher to Badger Link

Join us at an upcoming open house to learn about a proposed transmission line in your area.

Transmission Line Information.
OPEN THIS POSTCARD TO LEARN MORE.

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Xcel Energy®

Gopher to Badger Link

The Gopher to Badger Link transmission line project is being proposed to deliver reliable power to homes, farms and businesses across the region.

This project will strengthen the electric grid and facilitate access to new energy sources. Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will develop separate segments of this new 765 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which will run from eastern Minnesota to the Mississippi River. Xcel Energy is developing approximately 35 miles of a new single-circuit 765 kV transmission line that will run from the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island to Marion, Minn. Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project in Minnesota, which will extend approximately 105 miles from Marion to the Mississippi River. This segment consists of a new 765/161 kV double-circuit transmission line built using an existing transmission corridor.

Project Benefits

Enhance the reliability of the electric grid
Helps ensure the transmission system can deliver electricity to customers where and when it's needed, regardless of weather, demand or generation source.

Help meet growing energy demand
Supports the projected growth in electricity use over the coming decades by providing more capacity.

Expand access to more energy resources
Improves access to energy sources throughout the region to create a stronger, more reliable power system for the future.

Support the region's growing economy
Creates opportunities for new jobs and business growth in the region.

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Xcel Energy®

Join us at an upcoming open house to learn about this important project and how you can participate.

Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

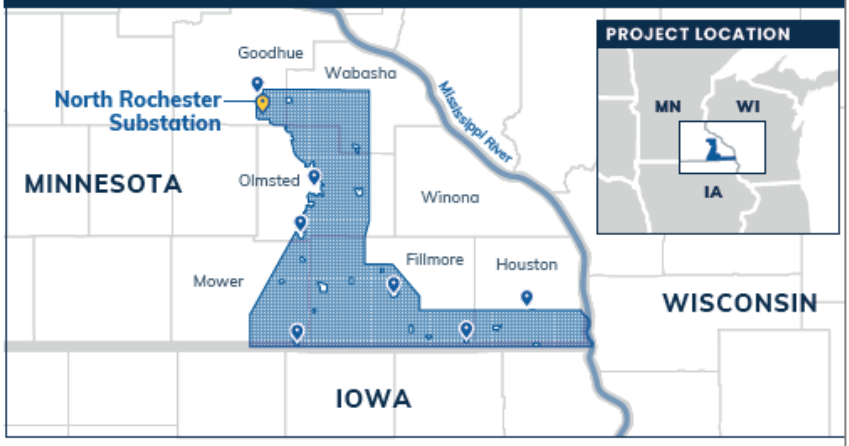
Xcel Energy

Each open house will feature the same information, including project displays and detailed maps for review and feedback.

You are welcome to attend at any time during the meeting as there will be no formal presentation.

Project representatives will be available to answer questions and provide details about the project.

PROJECT AREA MAP



Open House Locations

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Thursday, January 15	4 pm – 6 pm	**Four Seasons Community Center** 900 N Kingston Street, Caledonia, MN 55921

Unable To Attend In Person?

- Explore our virtual, self-guided open house available Jan. 7-21
- Request additional information or a meeting with the project team
- Leave a comment on our interactive map
- Scan here or visit GophertoBadgerLink.com to learn more

Contact Us www.gophertobadgerlink.com | connect@gophertobadgerlink.com | 612-474-7799

Media advisory (January 2026 Open Houses)

Media Advisory
January 9, 2026

For more information, contact:
Xcel Energy: Randy Fordice (612) 345-2674
Dairyland Power Cooperative: Katie Thomson (608) 787-1323
Eric Jacobson (608) 461-2125

Gopher to Badger Link transmission line open houses begin January 12

Members of the public invited to learn about project, provide feedback about initial route options

What:
Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will host seven public open house meetings in mid-January to introduce the Gopher to Badger Link, a new proposed electric transmission project designed to enhance grid reliability in the Upper Midwest to meet the growing and changing energy needs our communities will face in the coming decades.

The open houses will provide landowners, stakeholders, and community members with an opportunity to learn about the need for the project, the timeline, preliminary routes, and the regulatory process, as well as to provide feedback to the project team.

Dates and Locations:

- Monday, Jan. 12, 4:00-6:00 p.m., at the Zumbrota VFW, 25 E. 1st St., Zumbrota, Minn.
- Tuesday, Jan. 13, 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Blue Moon Ballroom, 2030 Hwy. 14 E., Rochester, Minn.
- Tuesday, Jan. 13, 4:00-6:00 p.m., at the LeRoy Community Center, 204 W. Main St., LeRoy, Minn.
- Wednesday, Jan. 14, 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Stewartville American Legion, 1100 2nd Ave. NW, Stewartville, Minn.
- Wednesday, Jan. 14, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Preston Depot Museum and Riverfront Center, 304 Fillmore St. E., Preston, Minn.
- Thursday, Jan. 15, 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Mabel Community Center, 201 Main St. S., Mabel, Minn.
- Thursday, Jan. 15, 4:00-6:00 p.m. at the Four Seasons Community Center, 900 N. Kingston St., Caledonia, Minn.

Xcel Energy is developing approximately 35 miles of a new single-circuit 765 kilovolt (kV) transmission line that will run from the North Rochester substation near Pine Island to Marion, Minnesota. Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project in Minnesota, which will extend approximately 105 miles from Marion, Minnesota, to the Mississippi River, connecting to the transmission system in Wisconsin and the broader Upper Midwest region. This segment is proposed to rebuild an existing 161 kV transmission line with a double-circuit 765/161 kV transmission line in the existing corridor.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
3200 East Ave. S. • PO Box 817 • La Crosse, WI 54602-0817 • 608-788-4000 • www.dairylandpower.com
Dairyland Power Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

At the open houses, Gopher to Badger Link representatives will:

- Explain the **need for Gopher to Badger Link**, including how it will support electric reliability and regional economic growth.
- Outline the regulatory process, including the upcoming **Certificate of Need application** filing (planned for February 2026) and the subsequent **Route Permit application** phase. Attendees can view preliminary route options and provide feedback on those options to project team members, which we will include as the route development process moves forward. The team expects to file a Route Permit application in late 2026.
- Offer attendees a chance to **engage directly with project staff**, ask questions, share feedback, and understand how to participate in the upcoming regulatory processes.

Additional information:
Property owners within the study area received letters the week of January 5 inviting them to attend. The project team is committed to early and proactive engagement, recognizing the importance of local input in shaping the future of the electric grid.

The Gopher to Badger Link project was identified, studied and approved by the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator (MISO), the regional grid operator, in December 2024. The project, along with others in the region, was determined to provide benefits to customers throughout the region. These benefits include delivering reliable electricity for customers, enabling new electric generation in the region, and providing system resilience in extreme weather conditions. The project must still receive state regulatory approval before any construction activities can begin.

###

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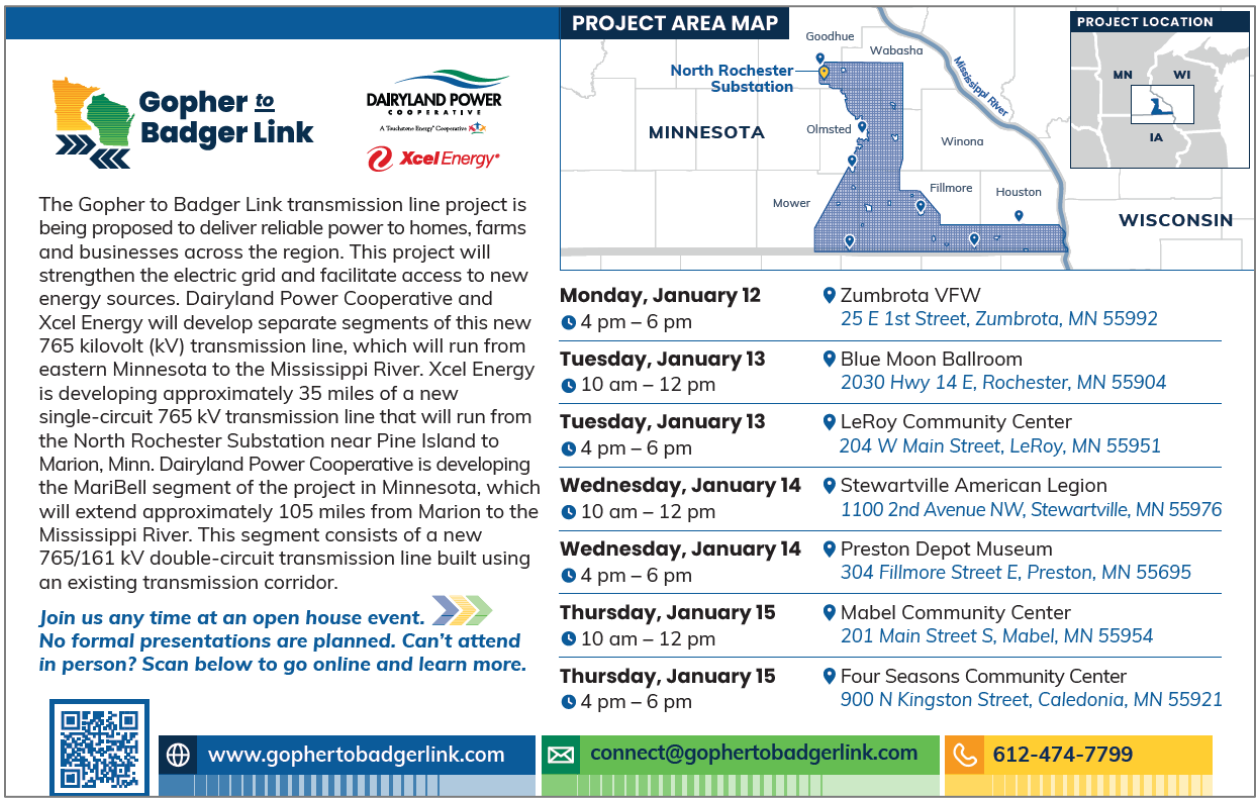
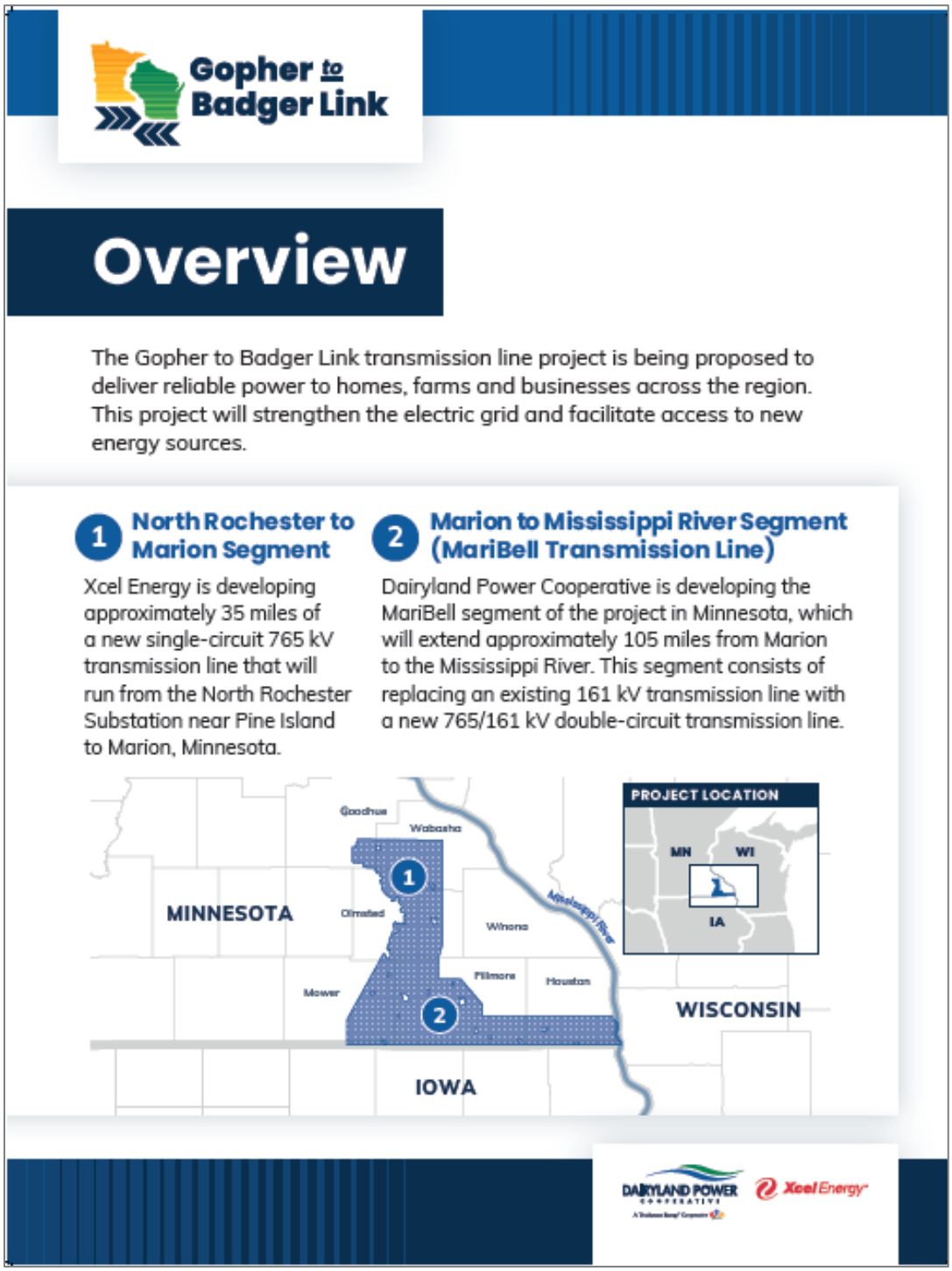
Paid newspaper overview table (January 2026 Open Houses)

Publication	Run date	Run date 2	Circulation
Kenyon Leader	Dec. 31, 2025	Jan. 7, 2026	1,830
Wabasha County Herald	Dec. 30, 2025	Jan. 6, 2026	3,187
Rochester Post Bulletin	Jan. 3, 2026	Jan. 10, 2026	44, 893
Austin Daily Herald	Jan. 3, 2026	Jan. 10, 2026	2,388
Fillmore County Journal	Jan. 5, 2026	Jan. 12, 2026	13,500
Caledonia Argus	Jan. 7, 2026	Jan. 14, 2026	1,600
Total			67,398

Paid newspaper advertisement (January 2026 Open Houses)



Open house boards (January 2026 Open Houses)



Gopher to Badger Link

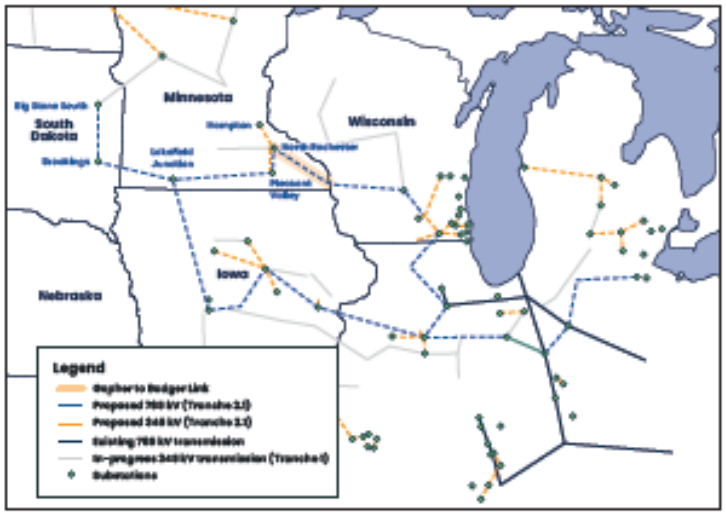
MISO Overview

Meeting Our Region's Energy Needs

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) conducted a 2-year, regional planning process, with extensive input from utilities and stakeholders, to identify a portfolio of 24 transmission projects to enhance the reliability of the electric grid, improve access to remote energy resources and deliver reliable power to homes, farms, and businesses throughout the Midwest region. Gopher to Badger Link was identified as one of the projects in MISO's proposed Long Range Transmission Plan (LRTP).

MISO is the electric grid operator and regional transmission planner for the central United States. MISO is a non-profit organization that works to keep electricity reliable across 15 states and the Canadian province of Manitoba.

MISO's Final Tranche 2.1 Map



*The lines on this map do not represent proposed route options.

Learn more at misoenergy.org

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Gopher to Badger Link

Benefits

The Gopher to Badger Link will deliver key benefits:



Enhance the reliability of the electric grid

Helps ensure the transmission system can deliver electricity to customers where and when it's needed, regardless of weather, demand or generation source.

Help meet growing energy demand

Supports the projected growth in electricity use over the coming decades by providing more capacity to deliver energy to customers.



Expand access to more energy resources

Improves access to energy sources throughout the region to create a stronger, more reliable power system for the future.



Support the region's growing economy

Creates opportunities for new jobs and business growth in the region.

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Gopher to Badger Link

Anticipated Schedule

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

1. **2025 – 2026**
   - Initial public, landowner, agency, Tribal and stakeholder engagement
2. **2026 – 2027**
   - File Gopher to Badger Link Certificate of Need (CON) application with Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC)
   - CON application review process
   - Route development
   - File route permit (RP) application with MPUC
   - RP application review process
3. **2028 – 2030**
   - Detailed engineering design
   - Environmental surveys and permitting
   - Easement acquisition
4. **2031 – 2034**
   - Pre-construction activities
   - Construction
   - Restoration
5. **2034**
   - Anticipated in-service

Preliminary schedule is subject to change.

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Gopher to Badger Link

Project Partners

A Collaborative Effort

Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy bring collective local experience, community connections and expertise in building and managing large energy projects to strengthen regional power reliability.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides wholesale electrical requirements to 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of approximately 750,000 people in four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois).

Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy is a leading energy provider, dedicated to serving millions of customers with reliable, affordable energy.
We make energy work better for customers, helping them thrive every day. Headquartered in Minneapolis, we work every day to generate and distribute electricity and gas to customers across eight states.

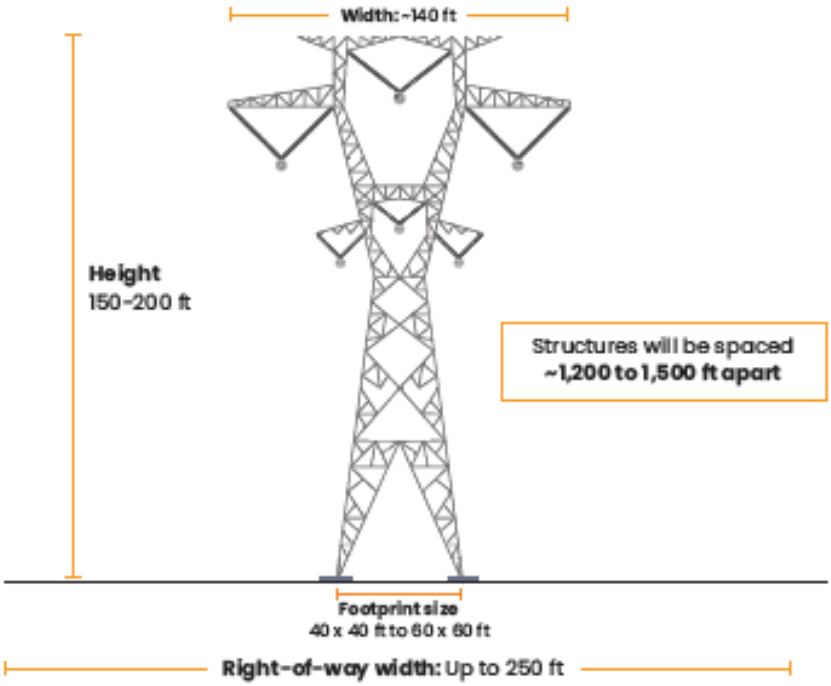
Gopher to Badger Link

765 kV Structure

MariBell Segment

This is an example of a double-circuit 765/161 kV steel lattice structure, similar to what could be used on the MariBell segment.

Typical lattice tower structure



NOTE: Preliminary design, not to be used for construction.

Dairyland Power Cooperative

Xcel Energy

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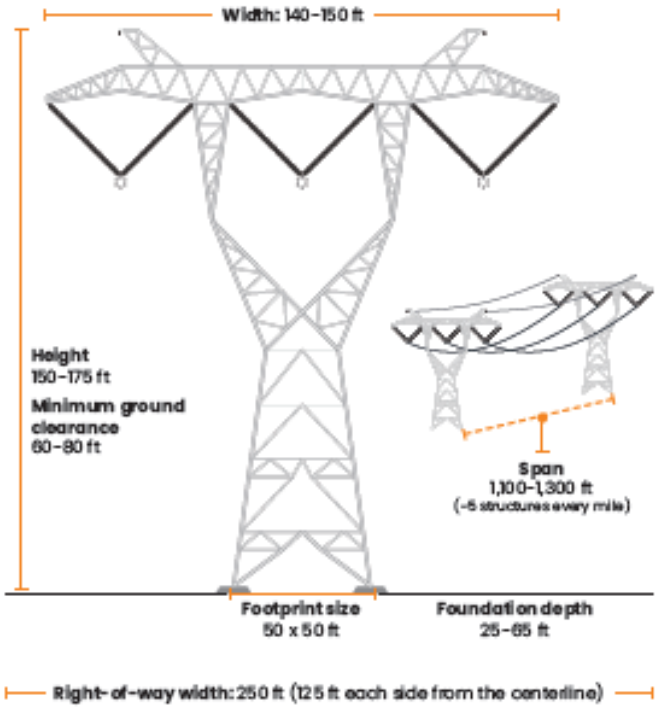
765 kV Structure

North Rochester to Marion Segment

This is an example of a typical single-circuit 765 kV structure, similar to what could be used on the North Rochester to Marion segment.



NOTE: Preliminary design, not to be used for construction.

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Gopher to Badger Link

Regulatory Process

We're at the start of a multi-year regulatory process that includes evaluation of the project's need and routing by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC).

The MPUC ultimately determines whether the project is needed and, if so, the project's final route for proposed transmission lines. The MPUC will thoroughly review all project information provided by the applicants and input from stakeholders, landowners and the general public before making its decisions.

Two key approvals must be obtained from the MPUC before the project can be built:

1 A **Certificate of Need (CON)** to determine whether the project is necessary and appropriately sized.



2 A **Route Permit (RP)** to determine where the project will be located.



Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.

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Gopher to Badger Link

765 kV Technology

765 kV technology was identified in the MISO planning process as the preferred solution for the region, presenting several advantages:

- Efficiently carries large amounts of power over long distances while reducing overall project costs and reliably delivering electricity to customers throughout the region.
- Needs fewer transmission lines to carry the same amount of power.
- Requires fewer structures, reducing impact on land, communities and the environment.
- Provides additional capacity to power new manufacturing, homes, businesses and farms.

*MISO's analysis showed that one 765 kV transmission line can carry as much power as six 345 kV single-circuit lines—**minimizing the land needed** by as much as 70-80%.*



Single-Circuit Tower	Double-Circuit Towers	Single-Circuit Towers
765 KV	**345 KV**	**345 KV**
250 FT Total right-of-way	**450 FT** Total right-of-way	**900 FT** Total right-of-way

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Applicant's Routing Process

How Routes are Developed

The route development process is a multi-step analysis that considers constraints, opportunities and alternatives that aim to minimize impacts to humans and the environment. Public input and the project team's own expertise all play a vital role in developing and finalizing a proposed route.

Community feedback is essential at every stage, so we encourage you to stay engaged throughout the process.



1. **Develop preliminary route options** WE ARE HERE!
   Identify areas for potential transmission line route options.



2. **Refine route options**
   Using public feedback, we'll further refine and narrow the preliminary route options to develop the proposed route for the route permit application.



3. **Identify a proposed route to submit in the application**
   We'll submit a proposed route to the MPUC later in 2026.



4. **MPUC issues a decision on a final route**
   The MPUC will issue a final determination on the route at the conclusion of the route permit application review process.

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Routing Criteria

During the routing process, our team will identify opportunities where routes and route alternatives could be located while evaluating sensitivities or areas that would make routing difficult.

+ Opportunities

Linear features that are oriented in the direction of the project:

- Field lines
- Property lines
- Section lines
- Roads
- Utility corridors

Sensitivities

Area resources or conditions that may require additional review and consideration

- Agricultural impacts
- Cemeteries, religious facilities and cultural and historic resources
- Communication towers
- Conservation area/ nature preserves
- Contaminated areas
- Forest
- Hospitals
- Levees/dams
- Mines/quarries
- Pipelines
- Planned developments
- Protected federal and state lands
- Public airports
- Railroads
- Public recreational land
- Residences and schools/daycares
- Rivers, lakes, streams and wetlands
- Protected animal and plant species

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Transmission Line Easements and Rights-of-Way

Energy companies build transmission lines to serve customers, connect new generation sources and help ensure the reliable delivery of electricity to customers. The area around a transmission line is called a right-of-way (ROW) and is governed by an easement, a legal document noting the easement that is recorded with the property.

What are ROWs?

- Rights-of-way are the actual land areas acquired for a specific purpose such as a transmission line, roadway or other infrastructure.
- We anticipate an easement of up to 250 feet wide (125 feet on each side of the center of the structure) will be necessary for the new transmission line. The ROW is typically secured through negotiation and purchase of a transmission line easement.

Can I still use the area in the ROW?

- Land within the ROW may be used for any purpose that does not interfere with the construction, operation or maintenance of the transmission line. In agricultural areas, the land may continue to be used for crop production and pasture.

What is a transmission line easement?

- A transmission line easement is a property right that allows our team to construct, operate and maintain transmission structures and lines on your property while you maintain ownership and use of your land.

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Why This Project Is Needed

This new, 765 kilovolt (kV) 'back-bone' transmission line represents the next step in our region's energy story. MISO and energy companies plan decades ahead to make sure we can meet the future electricity needs of our customers, and the Gopher to Badger Link is part of a series of proposed new regional transmission projects across the Upper Midwest to support the energy system as it grows and evolves.



Evolving the Grid

The electric grid must evolve as our region transforms how it generates and uses electricity. As older power plants retire and new sources of electrical generation are developed Gopher to Badger Link will help ensure reliable electricity for customers as these changes occur.



Sustaining Reliability

Our current system delivers 99% reliability as a direct result of the infrastructure built and operated over many decades. This next phase of transmission investments will maintain that high reliability into the future.



Strengthening the System

Upgrading our transmission system supports electric reliability, fosters economic growth, meets rising energy demand, and ensures customers have electricity wherever and whenever its needed, even during extreme weather.

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Construction

Our typical transmission line construction process includes the following steps:

1.  Soil surveys and property staking
2.  Construction access and vegetation clearing
3.  Mobilizing equipment and delivering material
4.  Foundation construction
5.  Installing structures and stringing conductor
6.  Land restoration

We currently expect construction to start in 2031 with the project in-service in 2034.

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Factsheets (January 2026 Open Houses)

Use of aerial applicators near transmission lines

Based on our experience with transmission lines, aerial applicators should be able to parallel new transmission infrastructure similar to how they work with existing infrastructure today. Some adjustments to aerial applicator flights may be necessary based on the line's orientation along fields.

Drain tile

Protecting drain tile during construction is a common concern, and it's something we deal with regularly. We've successfully built transmission lines on properties that depend on drain tiles. We work with landowners to identify where drain tile is located and will work with landowners to minimize any impacts during construction.

If drain tile damage occurs during construction, we will work with landowners to repair the issue at our cost. Once construction is complete, it's rare that any long-term impacts occur, and we will work with landowners to correct any issues that are identified.





Gopher to Badger Link

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Transmission lines and agriculture

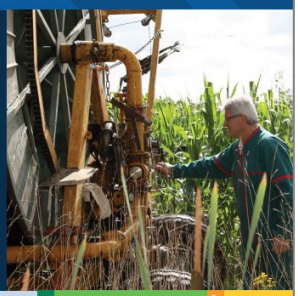
WHAT TO KNOW

Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy are committed to working closely with landowners to reduce impacts from the Gopher to Badger Link Project, including in agricultural areas. From construction through operation, the project team will coordinate with landowners to support safe coexistence with farming equipment, livestock, crops, irrigation systems and other agricultural infrastructure. This handout outlines what to expect, key safety considerations and how we work with landowners to minimize disruption and restore land so agricultural uses can continue.

Transmission lines and farming equipment

We design structures and transmission lines to safely operate in agricultural areas. Some important safety notes about coexisting with transmission lines and your farming equipment:

- Do not lift, elevate, build or pass under a power line with any object, tool or vehicle that could make contact or near-contact with the wires.
- If you're unsure of your equipment height, have someone be a spotter to double check your clearance from a safe distance.



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The Gopher to Badger Link project is being developed in a way that recognizes the important role farming plays in our region where agriculture and energy infrastructure have shared the landscape for decades.





Transmission lines and animals

We will work closely with landowners during construction to minimize impacts on livestock, including coordinating any necessary temporary relocations using fencing or gating to make sure there is continued access to feed and water throughout construction. After construction, the areas will be restored, and livestock use can return to normal.

Decades of scientific research have shown that proximity to transmission lines does not cause adverse effects on livestock.

Transmission lines and crops

During construction of the transmission line, there may be temporary impacts on some agricultural activities. Once construction is complete, agricultural activities can resume. The team will communicate with landowners in advance of pre-construction and construction activities. We will strive to coordinate construction activities with farming and livestock operations to minimize inconveniences. Landowners will be compensated for any crop damage.

Locating transmission line structures on cultivated land and pastureland

We will coordinate with landowners in the routing and design process to identify and address potential impacts to cultivated land and pastureland before construction begins. When needed, transmission structures may be placed on cultivated land or pastureland. If this happens, we will work with you to the extent possible to position structures to minimize disruption to farming operations.



Locating transmission lines near irrigation systems

We will work with landowners to limit the impacts that the transmission lines may have on irrigation systems, including through thoughtful route development and placement of the transmission structures. Where irrigations systems are going to be operated around or underneath the transmission lines, we will work with landowners to make sure the systems are set up to be compatible.

Some important safety notes about transmission lines and irrigation systems:

- Provide proper electrical grounding for all metal irrigation equipment (center pivots, wheel lines, linear move systems) to protect against induced voltages.
- Maintain adequate clearances between irrigation equipment and overhead conductors at all times—irrigation equipment and water streams must maintain safe distances and never contact, approach closely, or spray toward the lines. Bond and inspect all metal components of your irrigation system annually to ensure grounding effectiveness and safe operation.
- Contact Gopher to Badger Link if you have questions or concerns.

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The Basics: Electromagnetic Fields

Electromagnetic fields, or EMF, are a normal part of everyday life. They're created whenever electricity is present and come from both natural sources, like the earth's magnetic field, and everyday things we all use, such as household appliances, wireless devices, and power lines. This handout explains what EMF is, where you might encounter it, and what decades of research tell us about EMF levels near transmission lines.



What is EMF?

Electromagnetic fields (EMF) are a form of energy created by a combination of electricity and magnetism. Some EMF is natural, such as sunlight, lightning or the earth's magnetic field. Other sources are human made, such as power lines or any devices that run on power or send a wireless signal.

You encounter EMF daily

EMF are created whenever electricity flows or an electrical force is present. These fields can occur naturally, such as in a person's brain, heart and muscle. The level of magnetic fields at 60 Hertz are also produced by everyday household items like space heaters, vacuums, kitchen appliances and electric blankets. The widespread use of electricity means we are exposed to EMF in our everyday environment at work, school and home.

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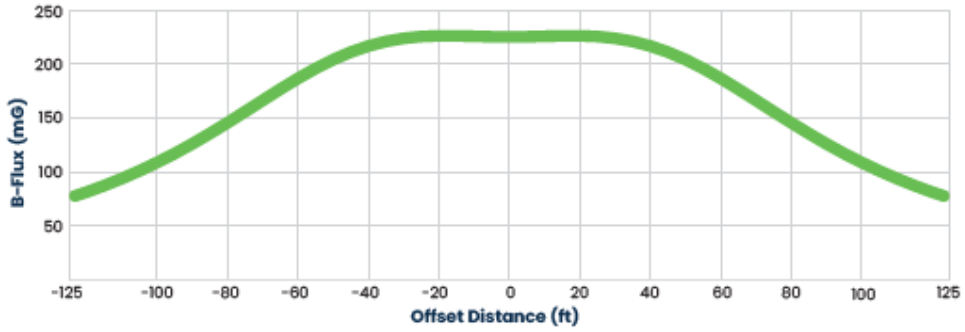
The following graphics provide magnetic field levels of common household appliances as well as anticipated magnetic fields under the proposed 765 kV line.

MAGNETIC-FIELD LEVELS (IN MILLIGAUSS) MEASURED NEAR HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Hair dryer		Electric shaver		Blender		Vacuum cleaner		Coffee makers	
6 in. away	12 in. away	6 in. away	12 in. away	6 in. away	12 in. away	6 in. away	12 in. away	6 in. away	12 in. away
300 mG	1 mG	100 mG	20 mG	70 mG	10 mG	300 mG	60 mG	200 mG	40 mG

ANTICIPATED MAGNETIC FIELD LEVELS FOR GOPHER TO BADGER LINK 765 KV TRANSMISSION LINE



EMF and Health

EMF from power lines, and their effects on health, have been studied for more than 40 years by governmental bodies, public health organizations, and government appointed scientific panels all over the world. Initially, there were concerns of a possible association between childhood leukemia and magnetic fields of transmission lines. Subsequent research failed to demonstrate a causal relationship between transmission lines and any health risk. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other health agencies have concluded that scientific evidence does not support a link between health effects and exposure to electromagnetic fields.

EXPERT SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Power Lines – Low Frequency. *Available at: https:// www.icnirp.org/en/applications/power-lines/index.html. Accessed October 30, 2025.*
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; National Institutes of Health. Electric and Magnetic Fields Associated With the Use of Electric Power. 2002. *Available at: https://www.niehs.nih.gov/sites/default/files/health/materials/electric_and_ magnetic_fields_associated_with_the_use_of_electric_power_questions_and_answers_english_508.pdf. Accessed October 30, 2025.*
- National Cancer Institute. Electromagnetic Fields and Cancer. *Available at: https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/electromagnetic-fields-fact-sheet. Accessed October 30, 2025.*
- World Health Organization. Electromagnetic Fields. *Available at: https://www.who.int/health-topics/electromagnetic-fields#tab=tab_1. Accessed October 30, 2025.*

Gopher to Badger Link

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Gopher to Badger Link

The Gopher to Badger Link transmission line project is being proposed to deliver reliable power to homes, farms and businesses across the region. This project will strengthen the electric grid and facilitate access to new energy sources. Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will develop separate segments of this new 765/161 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which will run from eastern Minnesota to the Mississippi River.

Project Benefits

ENHANCE THE RELIABILITY OF THE ELECTRIC GRID

Helps ensure the transmission system can deliver electricity to customers where and when it's needed, regardless of weather, demand or generation source.

HELP MEET GROWING ENERGY DEMAND

Supports the projected growth in electricity use over the coming decades by providing more capacity to deliver energy to customers.

EXPAND ACCESS TO MORE ENERGY RESOURCES

Improves access to energy sources throughout the region to create a stronger, more reliable power system for the future.

SUPPORT THE REGION'S GROWING ECONOMY

Creates opportunities for new jobs and business growth in the region.

Anticipated Schedule

Developing and constructing major transmission lines is a multi-year effort that begins with extensive planning. This includes identifying the project study area, meeting with landowners and federal, state, Tribal and local officials to explore potential route options. It also requires a thorough regulatory review by state authorities. As our schedule evolves, we will provide updated information.

2025–2026

- Initial public, landowner, agency, Tribal and stakeholder engagement

2026–2027

- File Gopher to Badger Link Certificate of Need (CON) application with Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC)
- CON application review process
- Route development
- File Route Permit applications with MPUC
- Route Permit application review process*

*Wisconsin will follow a separate filing process. For the proposed timeline for that process, please visit the MariBell Transmission Project website.

2028–2030

- Detailed engineering design
- Environmental surveys and permitting
- Easement acquisition

2031–2034

- Pre-construction activities
- Construction
- Restoration

2034

- Anticipated in-service

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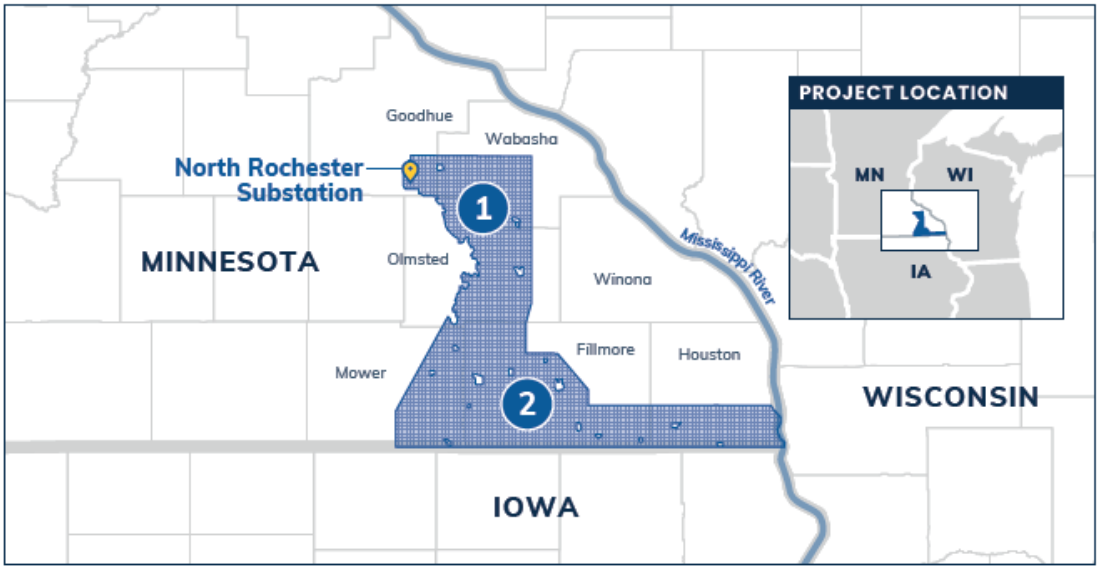
Project Area

This map shows the area that will be studied during the route development process where the project is likely to be located.

This project is part of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator Inc.'s (MISO) proposed, approximately 273-mile North Rochester – Columbia 765 kV transmission line, which is a broader effort to build a 765 kV transmission 'backbone' across the Midwest. MISO has divided responsibilities for the Gopher to Badger Link between Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy.



Segments

1 NORTH ROCHESTER TO MARION

Xcel Energy is developing approximately 35 miles of a new single-circuit 765 kV transmission line that will run from the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island to Marion, Minn.

2 MARION TO MISSISSIPPI RIVER (MARIBELL TRANSMISSION LINE)

Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project, which will extend from Marion, Minn. to the Mississippi River. This segment will replace an existing 161 kV transmission line with a new 765/161 kV double-circuit transmission line.

Scan to visit the MariBell Transmission Project website to learn more.

Gopher to Badger Link

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3 MPUC public hearings

After the Draft EIS is published, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) will hold public hearings throughout the project area, with a public comment period, to receive comments on the routes under review, and how potential impacts of the project could be addressed. Advance notice of these public hearings will be provided via mail and newspaper advertisements. The ALJ then prepares a report summarizing the overall record and writes a report and recommendation to the MPUC, including recommendations about what route should be selected and conditions that should be included in the route permit.

4 Final EIS

The MPUC publishes the Final EIS.

5 MPUC Route Permit decision

After reviewing the report from the ALJ, all public comments and the complete environmental review and permitting record, the MPUC will consider the application at a scheduled MPUC meeting to make its final Route Permit decision. MPUC meetings and hearings are open to the public. At that time, the MPUC will decide on which route, or combination of routes, to approve the transmission line and any conditions the permit should include. A Route Permit can only be issued after a CON is granted, and it is the approval that determines the transmission line route. Once approved, the utilities will pursue any additional required permits, such as those required by other state and federal agencies depending on the designated route.

**Wisconsin follows a separate regulatory process.*



Gopher to Badger Link

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Minnesota Regulatory Process

We're at the start of a multi-year regulatory process that includes evaluation of the project's need and routing by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The MPUC ultimately determines whether the project is needed and, if so, the project's final route. The MPUC will thoroughly review all project information provided by the applicants and input from stakeholders, landowners and the general public before making its decisions.

Two key approvals must be obtained from the MPUC before the project can be built:

1. A **Certificate of Need (CON)** identifies the issues the proposed project is designed to solve (the need for the project) and reviews how the project benefits the state and region.
2. A **Route Permit** identifies where the project should be located, including an evaluation of route alternatives.

To learn how to subscribe to the Project's Certificate of Need docket and to receive email notifications when information is filed in that docket, please visit: www.mn.gov/puc/edockets/howto

To subscribe to this docket, follow those instructions and enter Docket Number 25-121.

1 CERTIFICATE OF NEED

Application filed. MPUC begins review process → Environmental Report scoping public meetings → Scoping decision → Environmental Report → MPUC Public hearings → MPUC CON decision

Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.

Open this handout to learn more.

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CON Application filing —February 2026

The regulatory review process begins when we submit our application to the MPUC, which they evaluate for completeness and invite public comment. Once deemed complete, the case is typically assigned to an independent Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to oversee the review and develop a report and recommendations to the MPUC. The MPUC review of a CON generally takes 12 to 18 months.

1 Environmental Report scoping meetings

Next, the MPUC prepares an Environmental Report (ER) to evaluate potential human and environmental impacts of the overall project. Public meetings are held to explain the process and gather comments on issues and alternatives to include in the report. Written comments are also accepted.

2 Scoping decision

After reviewing all input, the MPUC issues a scoping decision that outlines the topics and alternatives the ER will address.

3 Environmental Report

The ER is then developed and made available for public review. The ER is part of the record the MPUC will review for the project.

4 Public hearings

The MPUC holds public hearings overseen by an ALJ. Notices are published in local newspapers and mailed to landowners and local government officials ahead of the hearings. Anyone can attend to share comments or express opinions on the applicants' proposal. Written comments are also accepted. After the hearings, the ALJ prepares a report summarizing the record, including public input, and provides recommendations to the MPUC.

5 CON decision

The MPUC makes the final decision on whether to issue a CON. In reaching its decision, the MPUC reviews all information in the record and deliberates at a formal commission meeting.



2 ROUTE PERMIT

Application filing → MPUC Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) scoping public meetings → Draft EIS → MPUC Public hearings → Final EIS → MPUC Route Permit decision

Input and engagement opportunities will be available throughout these processes.

Application filing and completeness review

After a utility files a route permit application and it is accepted as complete, the regulatory review process begins.

1 Public Information and Scoping meetings

Once the Route Permit application is deemed complete, the MPUC will hold public information and scoping meetings throughout the project area to begin developing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). These meetings, along with the public comment period, allow landowners and community members to ask questions of MPUC staff and the applicants, provide input on what should be studied in the EIS, suggest alternative routes for consideration by the MPUC and address potential impacts and mitigation measures that should be studied in the EIS.

The EIS evaluates potential effects on land use, including agricultural operations and residences, water resources, natural habitats and other environmental factors. Suggested alternative routes must be specific, with defined start and end points, and can range from minor adjustments to entirely different paths. Following this process, the MPUC publishes a decision outlining the topics and route alternatives that will be included in the EIS.

2 Draft EIS

The Draft EIS will be published and made available for public review and comment.

Process continues on the next page.



Gopher to Badger Link

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Applicant's Routing Process

Identifying a new transmission line route is a multi-step analysis that considers constraints, opportunities and alternatives that aim to minimize impacts on people and the environment. Input from landowners, community members, local leaders, Tribal representatives, state and federal agencies and the project team's own expertise all play a vital role in developing and finalizing a proposed route. Community feedback is essential at every stage, so we encourage you to stay engaged throughout the process.

1 Develop preliminary route options

We Are Here!

The first step in the process is to identify areas for potential transmission line route options. We will develop initial corridors based on system needs, review of publicly available data, and finding opportunities to minimize impacts to residential properties, agricultural operations, and other environmental considerations. We will present initial corridors and route options to landowners, local officials and key stakeholders to ask for feedback.

2 Refine route options

Public input will assist the project team as we further refine and narrow the preliminary route options to develop the proposed route for the Route Permit application. We encourage landowners and local officials to attend public open houses, review route options and provide comments about how each of the initial proposals would affect land uses in the area. We will evaluate all comments as route options are refined during the development process.

3 Identify a proposed route to submit in the application

Finally, the project team will use the information and public input gathered to develop a proposed route that will be submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) later in 2026.

4 MPUC issues a decision on a final route

The MPUC will issue a final determination on the route at the conclusion of the Route Permit application review process. Visit the website to learn more about the regulatory process: www.gophertobadgerlink.com.

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Transmission line easements and rights-of-way

Energy companies build transmission lines to serve customers, connect new generation sources, and help ensure reliable delivery of electricity to customers. The area around a transmission line is called a right-of-way (ROW) and is governed by an easement, a legal document the easement that is recorded with the property.

What are ROWs?

Rights-of-way are the actual land areas acquired for a specific purpose such as a transmission line, roadway or other infrastructure. The ROW is typically secured through negotiation and purchase of a transmission line easement.

Can I still use the area in the ROW?

Land within the ROW may be used for any purpose that does not interfere with the construction, operation or maintenance of the transmission line. In agricultural areas, the land may continue to be used for crop production and pasture.

What is a transmission line easement?

A transmission line easement is a property right that allows our team to construct, operate and maintain transmission structures and lines on your property while you maintain ownership and use of your land.

What is the Buy the Farm?

Buy the Farm is a law in Minnesota that gives property owners the right to require utility providers to purchase their entire property rather than a right-of-way for a transmission line if certain conditions are met. The law only applies to transmission line projects that are 200 kV or higher and does not apply to all types of property.

What is the ROW needed for this project?

Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will be seeking up to 250 feet easements (up to 125 feet on each side from the centerline) for the Gopher to Badger Link. There might be some instances where a larger easement may be required. Landowners will be assigned a land agent to provide them with information about their specific property.

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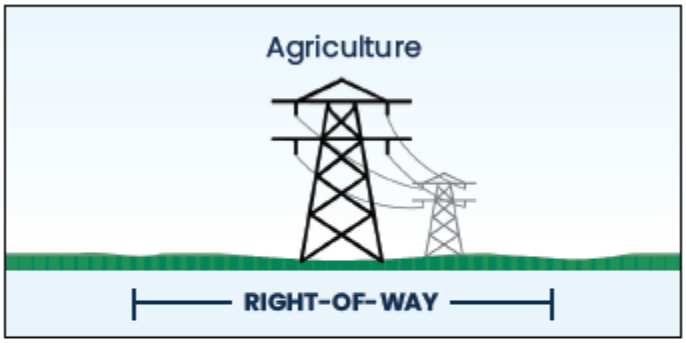
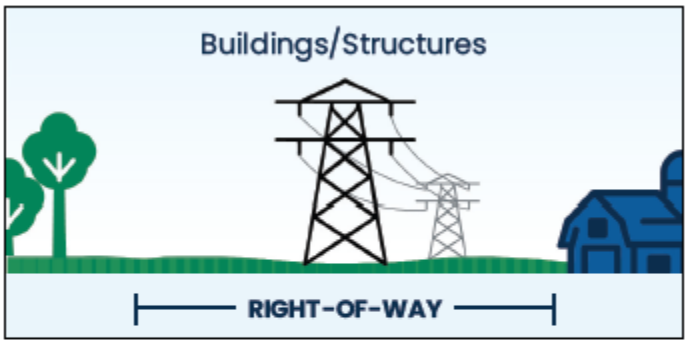
ALLOWED USES WITHIN EASEMENTS



- After construction, normal agriculture and farming activities may resume.



- Tree clearing, pruning and large shrub removal within the ROW will be required to allow for safe operation and maintenance of the transmission line.



- Buildings or other structures are not allowed in the ROW to maintain adequate clearance and safety. Landowners must receive written approval from the utility to build structures in the ROW.

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Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Why 765 kV Technology was selected

765 kV technology was identified in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) planning process as the preferred solution for the region, presenting several advantages:

- **Efficiently carries large amounts of power** over long distances while reducing overall project costs and reliably delivering electricity to customers throughout the region.
- **Needs fewer transmission lines** to carry the same amount of power.
- **Requires fewer structures**, reducing impact on land, communities and the environment.
- **Provides additional capacity** to power new manufacturing, homes, businesses and farms.

MISO's analysis showed that one 765 kV transmission line can carry as much power as six 345 kV single circuit lines— ***minimizing the land needed*** *by as much as 70-80%.*



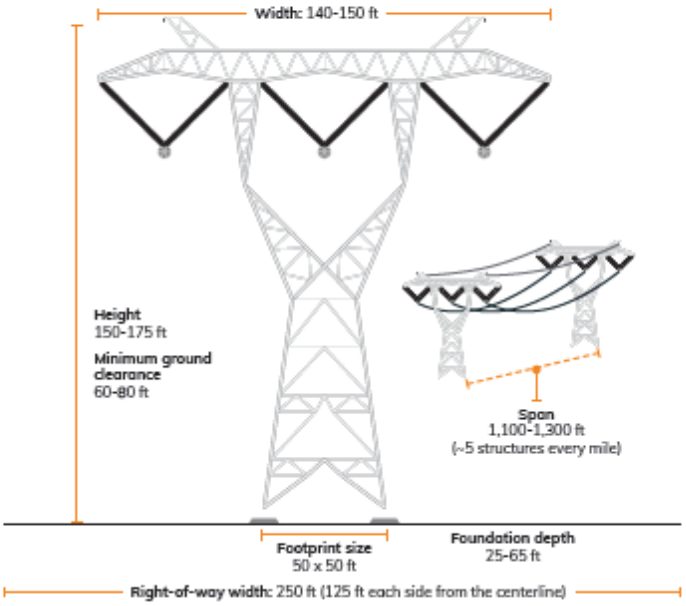
Single Circuit Tower	Double Circuit Towers	Single Circuit Towers
765 KV	**345 KV**	**345 KV**
250 FT Total right-of-way	**450 FT** Total right-of-way	**900 FT** Total right-of-way

CONTACT US GophertoBadgerLink.com Connect@GophertoBadgerLink.com 612-474-7799

Typical Structures

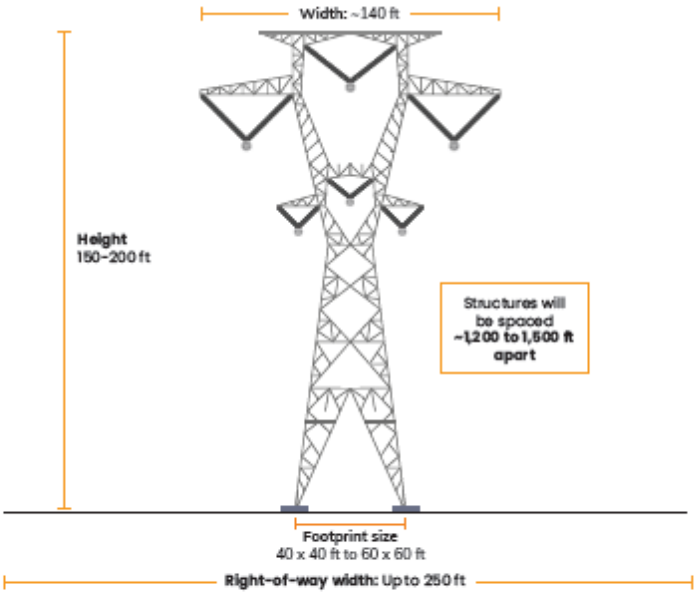
NORTH ROCHESTER TO MARION SEGMENT

This is an example of a typical single-circuit 765 kV structure, similar to what could be used on the North Rochester to Marion segment.



MARIBELL TRANSMISSION PROJECT SEGMENT

This is an example of a double-circuit 765/161 kV steel lattice structure, similar to what could be used on the MariBell segment.



NOTE: *Preliminary design, not to be used for construction.*

Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

The Need for Gopher to Badger Link

This new, 765 kilovolt (kV) "backbone" transmission line represents the next step in our region's energy story. MISO and energy companies plan decades ahead to make sure we can meet the future electricity needs of our customers, and the Gopher to Badger Link is part of a series of proposed new regional transmission projects being developed across the Upper Midwest to support the energy system as it grows and evolves.



Evolving the Grid

The electric grid must evolve as our region transforms how it generates and uses electricity. As older power plants retire and new sources of electrical generation are developed, the Gopher to Badger Link project will help deliver reliable electricity for customers as these changes occur.



Sustaining Reliability

Our current system delivers 99% reliability as a direct result of the infrastructure built and operated over many decades. We are now developing the next phase of transmission investments that will maintain that high reliability into the future.



Strengthening the System

Upgrading our transmission system supports electric reliability, fosters economic growth, meets rising energy demand, and ensures customers have access to reliable electricity wherever and whenever it's needed.

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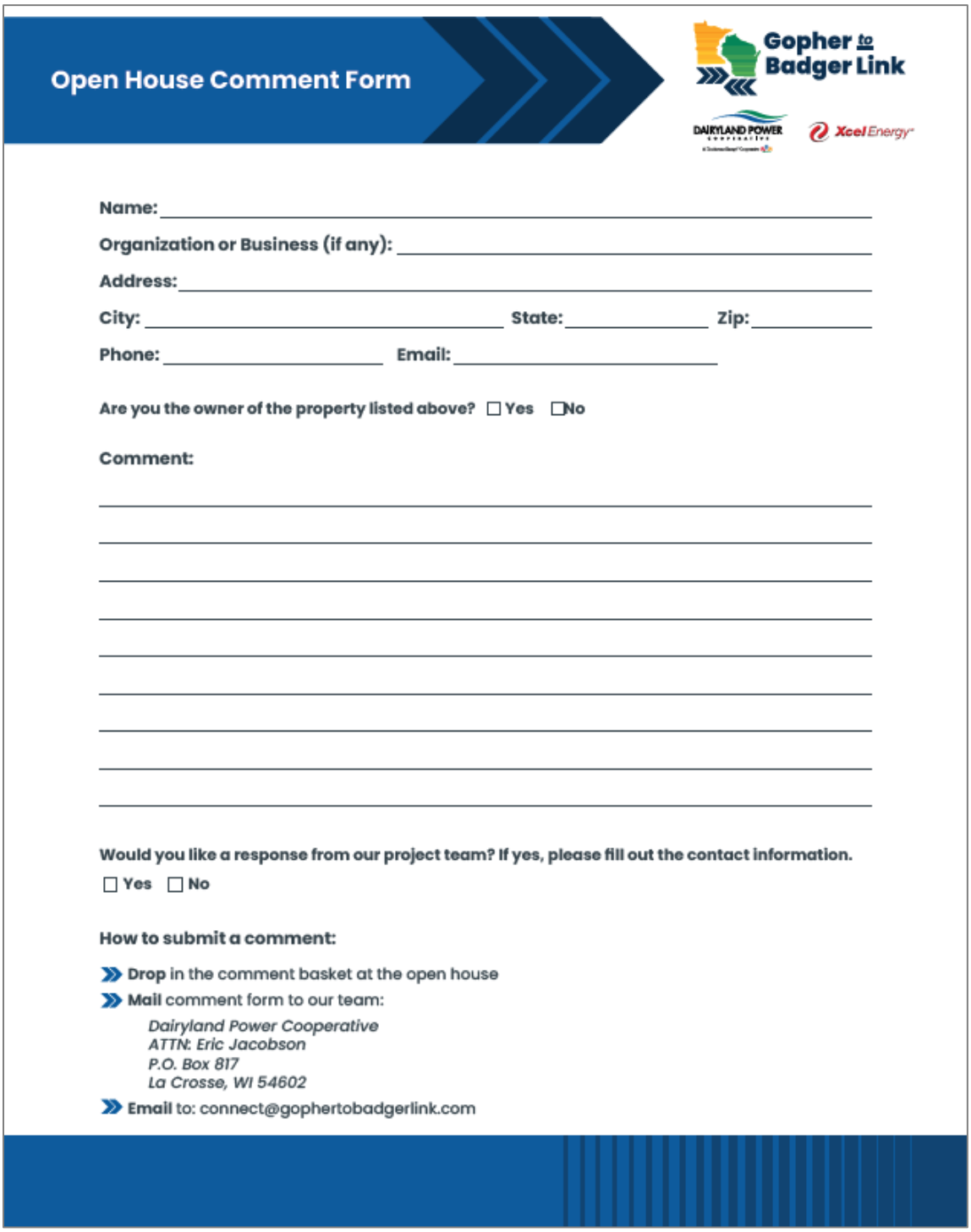
Comment form (January 2026 Open Houses)



Open House Comment Form

Gopher to Badger Link

DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE

Xcel Energy

Name: _____

Organization or Business (if any): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Are you the owner of the property listed above? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Would you like a response from our project team? If yes, please fill out the contact information.

☐ Yes ☐ No

How to submit a comment:

- **Drop** in the comment basket at the open house
- **Mail** comment form to our team:

  Dairyland Power Cooperative
  ATTN: Eric Jacobson
  P.O. Box 817
  La Crosse, WI 54602
- **Email** to: connect@gophertobadgerlink.com

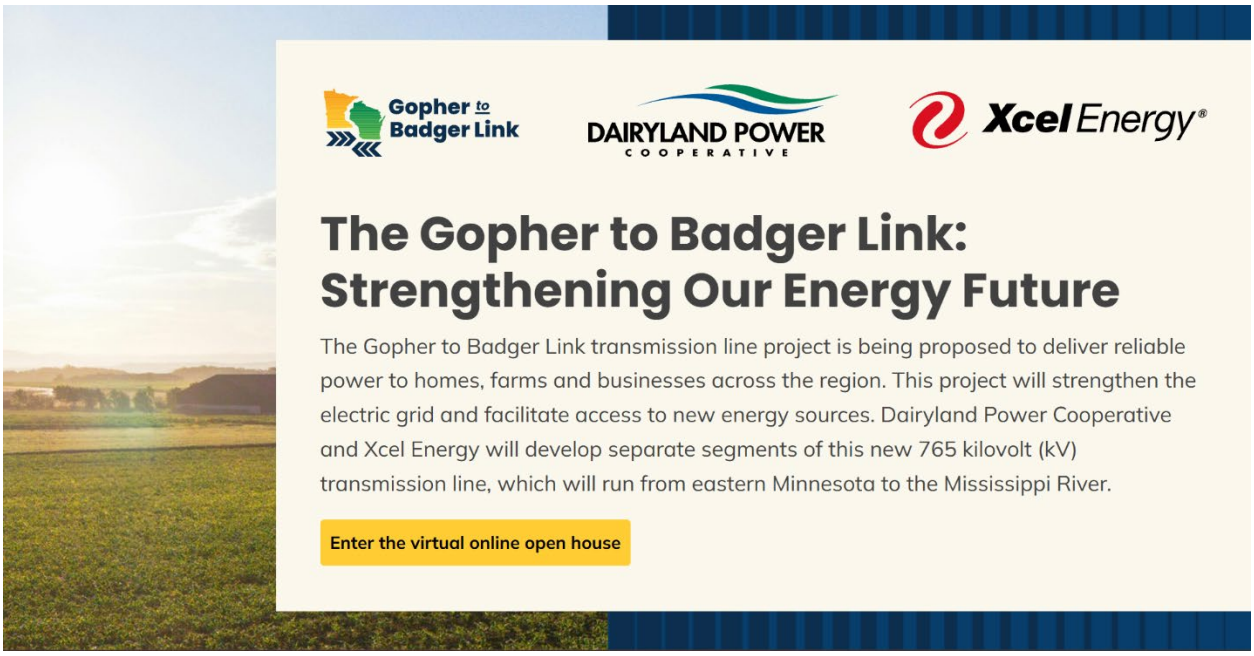
Please fold, fasten, and mail - No envelope necessary

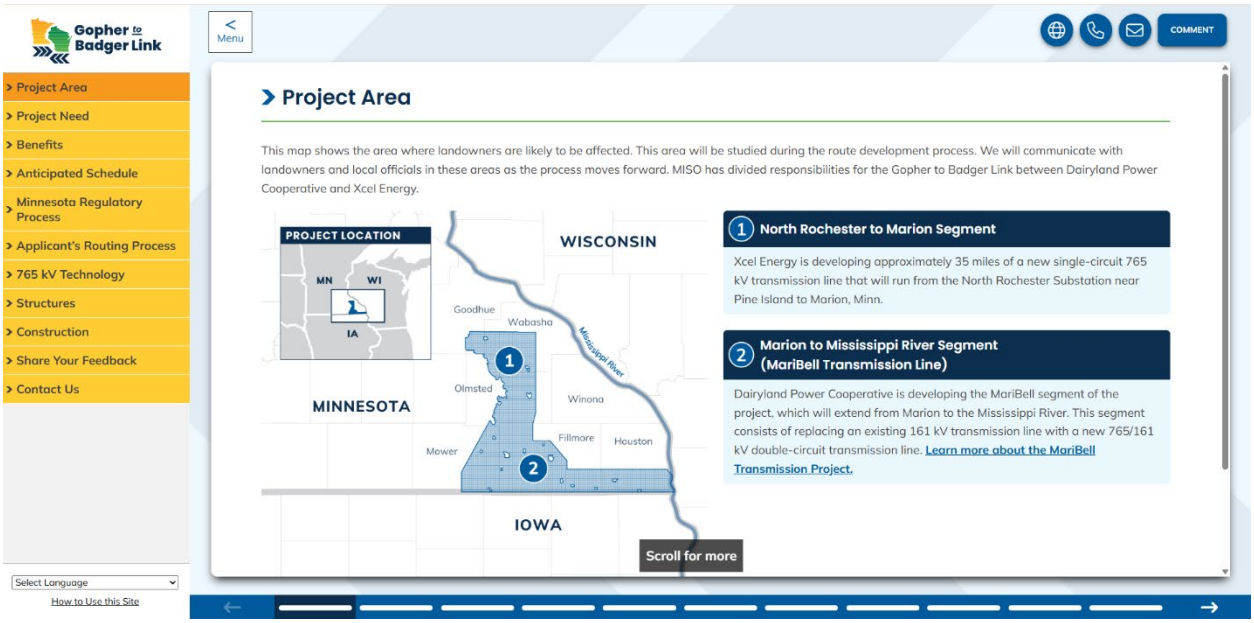
Place postage here

Dairyland Power Cooperative
ATTN: Eric Jacobson
P.O. Box 817
La Crosse, WI 54602

Virtual Open House

Virtual open house screen shots


Gopher to Badger Link
DAIRYLAND POWER COOPERATIVE
Xcel Energy®
The Gopher to Badger Link: Strengthening Our Energy Future
The Gopher to Badger Link transmission line project is being proposed to deliver reliable power to homes, farms and businesses across the region. This project will strengthen the electric grid and facilitate access to new energy sources. Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy will develop separate segments of this new 765 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, which will run from eastern Minnesota to the Mississippi River.
Enter the virtual online open house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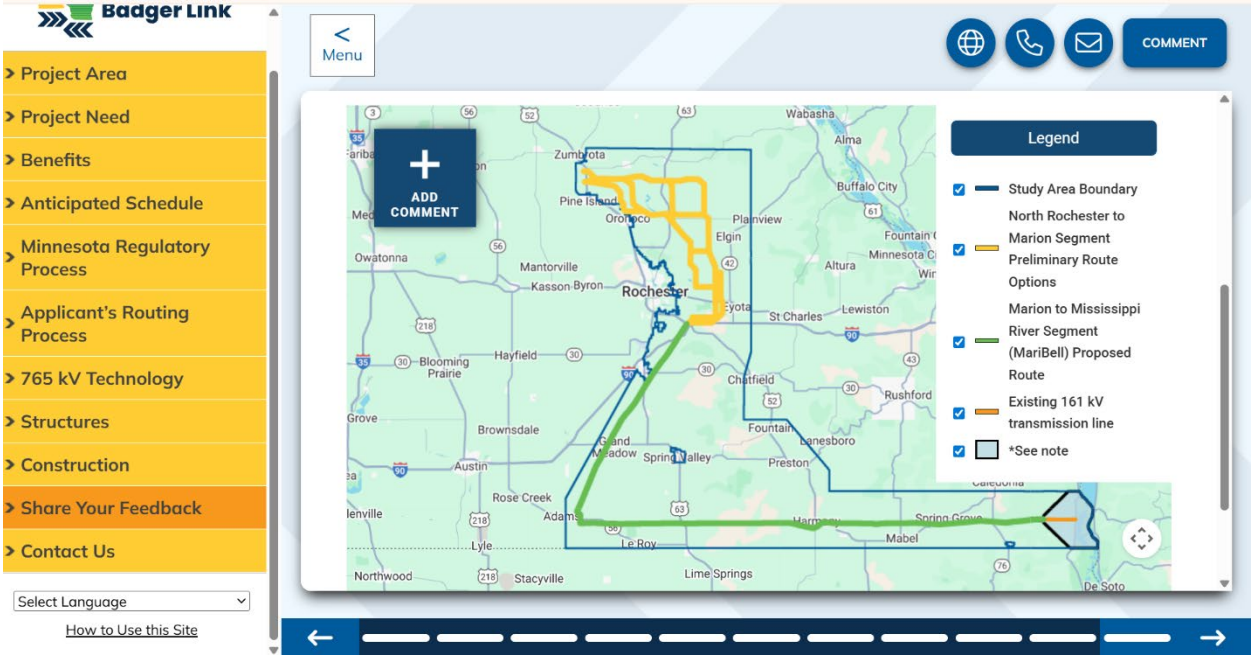
Project Area
This map shows the area where landowners are likely to be affected. This area will be studied during the route development process. We will communicate with landowners and local officials in these areas as the process moves forward. MISO has divided responsibilities for the Gopher to Badger Link between Dairyland Power Cooperative and Xcel Energy.
PROJECT LOCATION
MN
WI
IA
WISCONSIN
MINNESOTA
IOWA
Goodhue
Wabasha
Olmsted
Winona
Fillmore
Houston
Mower
Mississippi River
Scroll for more
1 North Rochester to Marion Segment
Xcel Energy is developing approximately 35 miles of a new single-circuit 765 kV transmission line that will run from the North Rochester Substation near Pine Island to Marion, Minn.
2 Marion to Mississippi River Segment (MariBell Transmission Line)
Dairyland Power Cooperative is developing the MariBell segment of the project, which will extend from Marion to the Mississippi River. This segment consists of replacing an existing 161 kV transmission line with a new 765/161 kV double-circuit transmission line. Learn more about the MariBell Transmission Project.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North Rochester to Marion Segment Preliminary Route Options
Marion to Mississippi River Segment (MariBell) Proposed Route
Existing 161 kV transmission line
*See note
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Zumbrota
Pine Island
Oronoco
Elgin
Plainview
Wabasha
Alma
Buffalo City
Owatonna
Mantorville
Kasson
Byron
Altura
St Charles
Lewiston
Hayfield
Blooming Prairie
Chatfield
Rushford
Grove
Brownsdale
Fountain
Lanesboro
Preston
Austin
Spring Valley
Rose Creek
Adams
Spring Grove
Mabel
Le Roy
Lyle
Northwood
Stacyville
Lime Springs
De Soto

Comment Themes

- Preliminary route locations
- Routing
- Proximity to homes
- Input on sensitivities in area
- Farmland and agriculture
- EMF
- Noise
- Size and scale of structures
- Land uses
- Project schedule
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission process
- Connection with data centers and other development in region
- Environment concerns including wildlife, rivers/streams, reservoirs
- Property values