

ETT Barney Davis to Laguna 138-kV Transmission Line Project

Q. WHY IS THE PROJECT NEEDED AND WHO BENEFITS?

- A. The Flour Bluff peninsula area of south Corpus Christi is presently interconnected electrically by 69-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines originating from the west across Oso Bay and from the east from the barrier islands. In November 2009 the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) approved a project to improve electric service reliability in the Flour Bluff area specifically and the Corpus Christi region in general. The project requires Electric Transmission Texas (ETT) to construct a new 138-kV transmission line to connect the Barney Davis Substation located at the Barney Davis Plant site (southeast of the intersection of Yorktown Boulevard and Waldron Road) and the Laguna Substation located northeast of the intersection of Hustlin Hornet Drive and Waldron Road. The new line will improve reliability by providing the Flour Bluff peninsula with a direct electrical source from Barney Davis Plant and will complete a 138-kV transmission loop to supply electrical redundancy and to reduce the possibility of electrical problems, particularly during scheduled maintenance outages of autotransformers at Airline Substation west of Oso Bay. At Laguna Substation, ETT is also required to construct a new 138-kV busbar and install a new 138 kV / 69 kV-autotransformer.

Once completed, this work is expected to improve transmission reliability for residents of the Flour Bluff peninsula and surrounding areas.

Q. WHAT IS ERCOT?

- A. In early 1996, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) issued revised rules to incorporate the Texas Legislature's changes to the Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA) to create an Independent System Operator (ISO). Essentially an ISO is an independent, third-party entity that oversees the activities related to the reliable and safe transmission of electricity within a specified geographic area. However, as part of the electric retail choice implementation by the Texas Legislature, in the case of the ERCOT ISO, it also provides the platform for an open, competitive marketplace in the areas in Texas open to retail competition. Under PURA, the ERCOT ISO is required to perform four primary functions:

1. Ensure non-discriminatory access to the transmission and distribution systems for all electricity buyers and sellers.
2. Ensure the reliability and adequacy of the regional electric network.
3. Ensure that information related to customer retail choice is provided in a timely manner.
4. Ensure that electricity production and delivery are accurately accounted for among all regional generators and wholesale buyers and sellers.

Q. WHO IS ETT?

A. Electric Transmission Texas, LLC (ETT), co-owned by American Electric Power (AEP) and MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company (MidAmerican), is an electric utility holding a Texas certificate to provide transmission service. AEP is also the parent company of AEP Texas Central Company (AEP TCC). AEP sought a partner to help share in the financing of the significant transmission investments that AEP TCC faced over a period of 10 to 15 years related to wind energy expansion and electrical load growth. The result was a partnership (50% equal ownership) between AEP and MidAmerican. AEP will engineer, construct, and operate these new transmission facilities for ETT.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE?

A. The open houses provide ETT and its routing consultant the opportunity to obtain public input on the route identification and evaluation process, while also providing a venue to inform the public on the project and the routing process. Input received by ETT during an open house is used in possible refinement of the potential route. All public open houses are held in the evening and on days that are not intended to conflict with landowners' availability to attend. Meetings are "come and go" settings with different stations available to discuss different aspects of the proposed transmission line -- from the need for the transmission line to the routing evaluation process. Questionnaires are provided to solicit attendee responses that will also be considered as part of the routing process.

Q. WHO APPROVES THE CONSTRUCTION AND ROUTING OF THE LINE?

A. ETT's activities are regulated by the PUCT, which has the ultimate authority to approve the construction and routing of the transmission line.

Q. HAS THE TRANSMISSION LINE APPROVAL BEEN OBTAINED?

A. ETT has not obtained approval for a route at this time. ETT is currently working with an experienced consultant in routing evaluation and will present the routing results and make recommendations at a later date for the PUCT's consideration and approval. ETT plans on filing its application for a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN), which is necessary for the PUCT to consider the approval of the line and route, in the summer of 2011.

Q. WHAT IS THE PROJECTED IN SERVICE DATE FOR THIS LINE?

A. The target in-service date for the transmission line is the end of 2013.

Q. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO CONSTRUCT THE TRANSMISSION LINE?

A. After receipt of PUCT approval, which is required to build the line, construction is anticipated to take approximately three to five months.

Q. WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THIS LINE ON LAND USE?

A. The impact to land use for this area is expected to be minimal. The routing evaluation process attempts to reasonably minimize the impact to land use by paralleling compatible rights of way and apparent boundary features that separate land use (i.e., what appears to be a potential property boundary). The routing evaluation also attempts to minimize the number of habitable structures close to the potential easements.

Q. WHAT IS AN EASEMENT?

A. An easement is a legal document that gives a utility the right to use privately owned land for a specific purpose. The landowner retains ownership of the property. The proposed project will require easements to be obtained from landowners on the route approved by the PUCT. Easement rights would be purchased along the path of the transmission line as needed to allow for installation, operation and maintenance of the line.

Q. HOW ARE LANDOWNERS IMPACTED BY EASEMENTS?

A. Easements provide the utility the ability to clear right-of-way and construct electric facilities within the easement boundaries. Clearing includes the removal of trees and shrubs in the easement that would interfere with the safe operation and maintenance of the transmission line. Erosion control measures are implemented during the clearing and construction process. After ETT has obtained a necessary easement from a landowner, the landowner will be contacted prior to clearing and construction activities. ETT will undertake reasonable efforts to minimize disturbances to the landowner's use of the property and the impact to landowner's property in general during clearing and construction activities. After completing construction of the transmission line, the surface of the easement area will be restored as nearly as possible to its original contours and grades and will be re-vegetated as necessary using native species, while giving consideration to landowner preferences. The landowner may continue to use the easement property, as long as the activity does not interfere with the construction, operation and maintenance of the line and does not jeopardize the safe use of the easement area. The PUCT does require that a new easement restrict the new construction of any above-ground structures within the right-of-way.

Q. WHAT WILL BE THE REQUIRED EASEMENT WIDTH?

A. A 100-foot wide easement will be typically required. Additional easement area may be required for structure anchors and guy wires as well as multiple structures at line angle locations.

Q. WHEN WILL ETT APPROACH THE LANDOWNERS FOR EASEMENTS?

A. ETT will only approach landowners after it is assured that the PUCT is going to approve a specific route or has approved a specific route. Only those landowners located on the approved route will be contacted for easements. At this time, ETT does not know which alternative route the PUCT will ultimately approve.

Q. WHAT IS A TYPICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURES TO BE BUILT?

A. ETT anticipates that the typical structure will be a single pole made of steel. The typical structure height will be about 100 feet above groundline with the span distance between structures normally ranging between 500 to 800 feet. The single pole towers are required to be of this height because ETT complies with the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) regarding minimum clearances to the ground, roadways, structures, other utility structures, etc. These clearance requirements are for the safety of the general public.

Q. ARE THE STRUCTURES SECURE AND SAFE?

A. Yes. ETT designs and constructs transmission lines with safety in mind. Materials are used that comply with the strength requirements of all applicable codes, including the NESC (as required by Texas statute) and the American Standard Testing Materials Specifications. ETT's design and construction practices meet or exceed all of these codes and specifications, which were developed in part to protect the general public from electrical shock. Also, if a severe event occurs, such as extreme wind conditions from a thunderstorm, causing an overhead line to break and fall to the ground or upon the pole structure, ETT has in place protective devices to de-energize the line to further protect the general public. However, any downed line should always be avoided.