

Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force Regular Meeting Minutes July 6, 2009

Opening:

The fourth regular meeting of the Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force was held at 2:00 P.M., July 6, 2009, in the City Hall Council Chambers, Burley, Idaho.

Present:

(See Attached List)

A. Call to order/Approval of Minutes

[2:03:38 PM](#) The meeting was called to order by Chairman Stoker. The meeting was recorded in digital format and will be made available on the Cassia County website www.cassiacounty.org. Time stamps are included in these abbreviated minutes for reference purposes. A motion to approve the minutes from the June 29, 2009 regular meeting was made by Mark Webb, seconded by Joe Tugaw, Jr., with voting on the matter unanimous in the affirmative.

B. Irrigation Equipment/Induced Voltage Issues

[2:07:52 PM](#) Bret Andersen, Lindsey Irrigation, addressed the group regarding induced voltage issues experienced with irrigation and farming equipment near transmission lines. [2:10:42 PM](#) Tad Barrie, Butte Irrigation, provided comment regarding guidance issues and induced voltage issues experienced near transmission lines. [2:15:46 PM](#) Pat McCammon, Six S Ranch, asked a question regarding computer cluster control communication shortened up due to noise near lines. [2:17:42 PM](#) Kent Searle asked a question regarding state electrical inspection of installation of irrigation equipment, and a question regarding use of log chain to bleed out stray voltage. [2:19:20 PM](#) Dan Duffin, Sprinkler Shop, provided comment regarding induced voltage issues experienced with irrigation equipment and with taller profile machines, as well as problems encountered with GPS guidance units near transmission lines. He noted electronics and communications between units are experiencing difficulties, and noted additional costs (3/1 ratio) incurred by farmers to troubleshoot problems. [2:28:27 PM](#) Mike McAfee, Sprinkler Shop, provided comment to the group regarding grounding issues experienced with linear equipment and radios/electronics, and noted attempts of trying different antennas to avoid issues. [2:32:54 PM](#) Pat McCammon asked a question regarding drag chains when the pivots are reversed. [2:34:04 PM](#) Stoker asked Idaho Power representative Todd Adams, if Idaho Power had any guidelines or charts/specs available for irrigation systems near transmission lines. [2:35:12 PM](#) Todd Adams responded that they have internal bonding and grounding guidelines that he believed could be made available, but no irrigation specific guide lines and noted that their agricultural reps may have documents. [2:36:04 PM](#) Stoker requested from Adams to assist with providing access to that information for the group. Stoker noted Bonneville Power data regarding recommended minimum distances between 500 KV lines. [2:39:19 PM](#) Stoker then reviewed information where end guns had to be adjusted/changes near lines. Stoker also depicted, for the record, personal experience of affects to private owners where land was devalued due to power lines. Stoker also noted experiencing a 5/1 cost ratio increase in adjustments needed due to transmission lines. [2:43:20 PM](#) Kent Searle testified that currently he has never experienced grounding/ shocking due to stray voltage using linear lines, but noted the dramatic, drastic constraints and change in the way he will need to do business if the proposed corridor is put in and stated that he thinks Idaho Power has not taken into consideration this impact. [2:46:08 PM](#) Adams responded by noting that Idaho Power is aware of induction issues. He noted that they have looked into where it is working now with no issues. He noted that they are listening to comments and concerns. [2:48:39 PM](#) Stoker asked a follow up question to Adams' examples cited, noting that they appeared to be mostly bordering dry or BLM ground, and he noted observations of additional difficulties experienced with end guns near lines, with the recent large amount of rains locally. [2:49:53 PM](#) Dan Duffin provided further comment regarding regular circular machines verses linear or corner equipment, and reduction of acreage coverage.

C. Stateline Alternative Route Review

[2:52:31 PM](#) Stoker briefed Idaho Power representatives of discussions with the county commissioners regarding the selection of a multi-line route or corridor, capable of handling five lines, through Cassia County. [2:55:09 PM](#) Doug Pickett, task force member, Scott Flinders, Tetra Tech, along with BLM & USFS reps, reviewed the Stateline Alternative route from East to West, pointing out potential constraints such as Roadless areas, Visual Resource Management/Visual Quality Objective areas, and National Grassland areas. [3:02:25 PM](#) Denton Darrington asked a question regarding the Black Pine area and platted town site of Strevell, and how close would this proposed route be to it. [3:03:35 PM](#) Scott Nannenga, USFS, commented regarding raptor nests. Review of the route continued with [3:04:41 PM](#) Mike Courtney, BLM, indicating potential issues with ferruginous hawk nests, and the need for notification to the State Parks, City of Rocks National Reserve, and California Trail regarding visual impacts and California Trail constraints. It was noted by Pickett that more data is needed from the BLM in Utah and Nevada, and the USFS, regarding sharp tailed grouse, pigmy rabbits, and sage grouse leks siting issues, as to which alternative, the northern or western route, would be better. Review continued regarding possible Heritage sites issues, noting USFS comments that Land Use Amendments may be required along forest lands. [3:11:46 PM](#) Review continued noting concerns expressed regarding the Oakley Reservoir. It was noted that the proposed route through the Magic Mountain area was not realistic. [3:13:34 PM](#) Joe Tugaw Jr reminded the group to consider the constraint of the runway on his property. [3:14:27 PM](#). It was noted that Tetra Tech will try and collect the missing data indicated, to assist in making an informed decision. Stoker asked how big the corridor would be and how many power lines would fit in the corridor. [3:15:06 PM](#) Todd Adams responded, stating a lot of it depends on where they would come from and where they were headed. He noted that as far as moving the Cedar Hill substation, he would take the map to the planners for review. [3:17:21 PM](#) Joe Tugaw, Jr., asked Adams to expand on his comment regarding Idaho Power taking a hit on their rating. Adams responded. [3:19:31 PM](#) Tugaw asked a question regarding Rocky Mountain Power/ Pacific Corp. ownership information. Adams responded with an overview of the ownership data from the top down: Warren Buffet, Pacific Corp, Rocky Mountain Power and Pacific Power Division Corp. [3:20:42 PM](#) Tugaw asked a question regarding indication on a 2007 Gateway West map of the substation located at Hollister, rather than Cedar Hill. Adams responded that preliminary planning may have initially chosen that site, noting that originally the criteria selection for Cedar Hill was where the Swipp line and the Gateway West line would cross. [3:21:56 PM](#) Tugaw then asked a question regarding the distance between towers and how much flexibility they have with avoiding obstacles, and additional costs. Adams responded that there are approximately 4 -5 towers per mile/ 1200 to 1300 ft average distance between towers. [3:25:37 PM](#) Representative Fred Wood related to the group the experience Oneida County had with Rocky Mountain Power building a line through their county, noting that the President of Rocky Mountain Power had promptly become involved to cooperate and come to an agreement with the citizens as to where to place the line. He noted the mistakes by the power company of not involving the citizens at an early point, and also noted that the successful cooperation between the power company and the citizens led to agreement of where to place the lines with the least amount of impact. [3:31:51 PM](#) Senator Denton Darrington emphasized the prompt involvement and cooperation of the President of Rocky Mountain Power with the matter in Oneida County. [3:32:35 PM](#) Stoker requested from Idaho Power, that if an alternate route is recommended, will Idaho Power give a commitment, from someone with authority, to cooperate and support the recommended route. [3:36:03 PM](#) Todd Adams, Idaho Power responded that he will take that message forward. [3:37:40 PM](#) Stoker noted that the task force will meet July 13, and 20th. He noted that he has been contacted by the Governor of Wyoming regarding participating in cooperation on multi-state, multi-county levels, regarding siting authority within the states. [3:40:02 PM](#) Stoker asked Adams what kind of time frame would be needed to get this kind of commitment from Idaho Power. [3:40:34 PM](#) Adams was unsure of how long it would take. Al Barrus asked if Nevada and Utah had a siting authority. Adams will find out. [3:42:08 PM](#) Clay Handy noted that if the task force agrees that the southern route is the one they want to support, the Cassia County Commissioners will invite surrounding counties to meet in a coalition to coordinate a single corridor through the southern Idaho.

[3:45:38 PM](#) Stoker called for a motion of recommendation. No motion was made. Discussion continued with [3:46:38 PM](#) Darrington noting concern that constituents along the southern border have not been involved in this process at this point. [3:47:34 PM](#) Handy agreed with Darrington's comments, noting that a list of the landowners could be generated and contacted. [3:48:28 PM](#) He also noted that the topic of

compensation for landowners needs to be addressed, and recommended support for affected landowners in this regard.

[3:49:39 PM](#) Representative Scott Bedke commented regarding the southern route, encouraging the group to support and stay engaged and committed with the federal agencies BLM/USFS, through the federal siting processes, if this route is recommended. [3:52:10 PM](#) Larry Gahn, Bannock County, noted willingness to cooperate with the counties for a corridor, and recommended visiting with Oneida County officials, and ensuring that all parties are informed. [3:54:54 PM](#) Fred Wood reiterated points of involvement and notification of all potentially affected landowners, and the involvement of higher level officials of Idaho Power. [3:57:13 PM](#) Vicki Meadows, Power County, noted appreciation of Cassia County efforts and Idaho Power's willingness to work, and requested Idaho Power's commitment to wait until the coalition of counties can meet to collaborate and establish a path for the project.

[3:59:35 PM](#) Stoker stated that the motion to recommend a route will wait until more research can be conducted and property owners can be notified of proposal. It was noted that County Administrator Kerry McMurry will contact the counties to set up a meeting. Clay Handy stated that it would be beneficial to have a commitment of support prior to that meeting from Idaho Power, for establishing a corridor that would meet the criteria for both groups.

D. Action Items

1) Idaho Power to provide information and/or access to data regarding recommended guidelines for irrigation systems in close proximity to transmission lines.

2) Tetra Tech will secure data from the Utah/Nevada BLM and Forest Service regarding possible environmental constraints along the Stateline Alternate route for animal habitat (sage grouse/hawks/etc..).

3) Idaho Power will bring request to investigate options and feasibility of relocating the Cedar Hill substation to their planners.

4) Adams will forward the request from the task force, of a commitment from company authoritative officials, for support and cooperation with the counties for an establishment of a transmission corridor through southern Idaho.

5) Adams to determine if Utah and Nevada have siting authority.

6) Scott/Tetra Tech and Cassia County Mapping Staff will generate a map and list of property owners along the Stateline Alternative route.

7) Dan Olmstead will notify the task force regarding the July 22nd NTGD meeting in Boise.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 4:01P.M. A special task for meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 13, 2009 at 1:00 P.M., with the regular meeting scheduled for 2:00 P.M. on the same date, in the Burley City Hall Council Chambers, 1401 Overland Ave, Burley, Idaho.

Minutes submitted by: Susan M. Keck, Deputy Clerk, Cassia County

Approved by: Gateway Task Force, 07/13/2009