

# **KETA Project – Frequently Asked Questions**

## **THE PROJECT**

### **Q. Why is this line needed?**

A. The Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) was formed in 2005 to ensure the reliable operation of the state's electrical transmission system and to diversify and expand the Kansas economy through improvements to the state's electrical transmission grid. KETA commissioned a study to identify transmission projects that would benefit Kansas. This line, from Spearville, Kansas to Axtell, Nebraska, was identified as a project that would bring significant economic and reliability benefits to Kansas and the regional grid.

The KETA Project will provide access to more reliable, efficient and affordable electricity in Kansas and the Midwest. It will facilitate the development and export of wind generation from central and western Kansas and serve as a critical link for Kansas to regain its position as a net exporter of energy while providing access to reliable and affordable energy across the state and region. It also will ease congestion across the transmission network, addressing the lack of high-voltage transmission lines in central and western Kansas which causes inefficiencies in the grid and does not allow power to flow in the most efficient manner.

### **Q: Will I receive a bill from ITC Great Plains?**

A: No, transmission is included in the bill you receive from your retail provider.

### **Q: Who is paying for this line? Are taxpayers?**

A: Construction will be financed by ITC Great Plains. Because the line will benefit the entire region in terms of improved reliability, increased efficiency, lower costs and making it possible for Kansas to export and import power, ITC Great Plains will recover its costs for building, owning, operating, and maintaining the line through rates approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and charged to transmission customers in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) footprint, which includes Kansas, Oklahoma and parts of Nebraska, Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas and Missouri. These federally-regulated charges are not based upon the amount of power that actually flows on the transmission line.

### **Q: Why is the line going to Nebraska?**

A: Engineering planning studies conducted by ITC Great Plains, SPP and KETA have determined that an additional transmission line to Nebraska is necessary to achieve economic benefits from existing generating plants and to facilitate wind generation in western Kansas. The line also provides additional reliability benefits to the transmission grids in both states.

### **Q: Is the KETA Project being constructed in Phases?**

A: Yes. The KETA Project has been divided into three Phases. Phase I is the transmission line between Spearville and the Post Rock Substation (formerly the Knoll Substation) near Hays. Phase II is the transmission line between Post Rock and the Kansas/Nebraska border. Phase III is the transmission line between the Kansas/Nebraska border and Axtell, Nebraska that will be constructed by the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD).

## **THE ROUTE**

### **Q. How did you develop the route for Phase II of the KETA Project?**

A. ITC Great Plains started with a preliminary route selection study to identify several route alternatives for the line. Field investigations were conducted of the project area and each route alternative. The review was conducted by a transmission line engineer, an environmental route selection specialist and a biologist.

We identified three potential routes through Ellis, Rooks, Osborne, Phillips and Smith counties based on consideration of environmental, cultural, historical, land use, economic, engineering, and constructability issues. As part of the preliminary route selection, we contacted state and local officials and local business and community leaders to fully discuss the project, review our proposed routes and answer questions. We also conducted two public open house events attended by more than 400 landowners, residents and other interested parties who provided input regarding the routes.

All comments we received were taken into consideration during development of the proposed final route, which attempts to minimize impacts to residents, their land and the natural environment while providing a technically viable and cost-effective transmission line. ITC Great Plains attempts to route lines at least 500 feet away from residences unless no other alternative can be determined. We also have attempted to place our route where it will not interfere with the operation of center-pivot irrigation systems; we will work with landowners as such irrigation systems are further identified. As part of the route selection, we coordinated with NPPD on a border crossing point in Smith County to connect with the Nebraska portion of the line.

### **Q. Why wasn't this line taken down mile roads or even along section lines instead of cutting across valuable land?**

A. The proposed route attempts to minimize impacts to residents, their land and the natural environment while providing a technically viable and cost-effective transmission line. We try to stay on section and half-section lines in areas of cultivation wherever possible. This is not always possible due to the need to avoid residences and other structures as well as the fact that the termination points of the line are not directly north-south, thus requiring some east-west movement. We seek to place east-west movement on land that is not cultivated where possible.

In some cases the line may cross over fields with center pivot irrigation, but we have attempted to place our route where it will not interfere with the operation of those systems. We will work with landowners to avoid conflicts. These factors are also balanced with the need to keep electric transmission rates as low as possible.

## **IMPACTS ON FARMING**

### **Q. Will you compensate us for crop damage and lost production?**

A. We will compensate you for crop damage and lost production due to our construction activities, including access roads. We are committed to working with you throughout the siting, design, and construction process to attempt to minimize impacts to your property.

**Q: Will this line adversely affect the operation of my GPS-guided agriculture equipment?**

A: Normal reception of GPS signals will not be affected by the operation of the line. However, some GPS equipment itself may not be shielded adequately for its electronics to always function properly in the electrical environment directly under the line. This is rare, and no action is warranted in anticipation of a problem. But if you have some evidence that GPS-guided precision agriculture is not working properly under a transmission line, please contact ITC Great Plains for advice.

**Q: Will the use of my land for farming be restricted if I sell ITC Great Plains an easement for the construction of this project?**

A: After construction is completed, ITC Great Plains expects that in most cases land can be used for the same purposes for which it was used prior to the construction of the transmission line.

**IMPACTS ON PROPERTY**

**Q. How will ITC Great Plains compensate us for damage to our land during construction?**

A. We are committed to working with you throughout the siting, design, and construction process to attempt to minimize impacts to your property. We will work with you to establish favorable points of ingress and egress to the right of way. We will re-route fencing as necessary and will keep gates closed to keep livestock in. Due to the weight of equipment and materials used in construction, there may be impacts on property such as soil disturbance and compaction. After construction is completed, the company will return your property as near as possible to its pre-existing condition.

**Q: What use of my land, if any, will be available to me if I sell ITC Great Plains an easement for the construction of this project?**

A: Vehicles, equipment and livestock generally will be free to pass under the new lines, and in most cases property owners will be able to use their land for the same purposes they used it prior to construction of the line.

**Q. Does locating the transmission line on my property mean I can't lease my land to wind farm developers?**

A. An appropriate buffer zone is required between transmission lines and wind turbines. Wind turbines can be placed closer to transmission lines than they can to each other. This results in little or no disturbance to wind turbine location.

**Q: Will the proposed transmission line adversely affect my ability to develop oil and gas on my property?**

A: The line easement or right-of-way width is determined to provide for safe clearances to normally anticipated activities adjacent to the line. Well drilling, which involves tall structures, requires additional clearance from the line and is not permitted within our easements. However, modern drilling techniques allow for considerable variability in the location of the drilling rig, so no practical impediment would be anticipated for the development of any underground petroleum resource. Tanks associated with oil wells are prohibited within the easements.

**Q: Will ITC notify landowners every time it wishes to access a landowner's property?**

A: We will work with you to establish favorable points of ingress and egress to the right of way during construction. After construction is completed, ITC will attempt to notify landowners when access is needed for non-emergency maintenance or other purposes related to the line. We will keep gates closed to keep livestock in.

**EMF**

**Q: Will this line be safe?**

A. 345-kV transmission lines are not new technology. They have operated safely in Kansas and across the entire country, around people and animals, for many years. The KETA 345-kV line will be built to exceed all applicable safety standards, similar to the many miles of existing ITC lines that have an excellent record for safe operation. Any electrical-environmental effects of the transmission line will be mitigated by good design practices, which include the careful selection of key design elements such as conductor diameter, height and spacing.

Transmission lines of this voltage class have been operating safely for quite some time, being first built in the United States in the 1950s. Today there are more than 65,000 miles of these lines across the country, including 2,809 miles of lines in the 345-kV voltage class (254-400-kV) in Kansas. These existing lines represent well more than a million mile-years of safe operation. If there were some sort of significant adverse effect on the health of people or animals around these lines, it would be very well known by now.

ITC now owns and safely operates 2,939 miles of 345-kV lines, and new lines are being built across the country at the rate of approximately 300 miles every year. We can provide references to third-party studies that further address these questions.

**Q: Will the line adversely affect the operation of my cell phone?**

A: Normal cellular phone communications will be unaffected by the operation of the line. Hundreds of cellular phone base station antennas are located on high voltage transmission towers all across the country, including 345-kV lines. If the proximity to high voltage transmission lines was any detriment to the operation of cell phone technology, the cell sites could not be located on transmission towers.

**Q: Will the line affect my pacemaker?**

A: Pacemakers will not be affected in areas generally accessible to the public under the line. Pacemakers and other implantable electronic medical devices are designed to operate normally in commonly encountered electrical environments. The manufacturers of these devices can provide

specifications for the threshold value of both the electric and magnetic fields that may affect the devices.

In general, these values will not be exceeded in any area on the ground, accessible to the public, around the KETA line. In the case that an equipment operator is high on top of metal equipment, such as a tractor or combine, without being inside a metal cab or safety cage, the electric field from the line will be enhanced. In this situation, the manufacturer of the device should be contacted to determine that the threshold values for normal operation of the implanted device will not be exceeded.

## **THE LINE**

### **Q. What will the line look like?**

A. Phase II of the KETA Project is expected to be built primarily with single tubular steel poles, subject to final detailed engineering design. Single tubular steel pole structures will minimize the impact on agricultural land use.

The poles will be directly embedded into the ground with a crushed rock backfill where soil conditions permit. Angle and dead end structures will be supported on concrete drilled pier foundations. In areas of poor soil, the structures will either have a concrete backfill or be supported on concrete drilled pier foundations.

The height of the structures will vary based on terrain, clearances to the ground, objects under the line and structure spacing, but will typically range between 100 and 150 feet. The span lengths between structures will be approximately 600 to 1,100 feet, with an average span of 900 feet. Structure placement and span lengths will be adjusted, if necessary, in cultivated fields to minimize interference with the operation of center pivot irrigation systems.

The transmission line will be constructed with steel reinforced aluminum conductors. The conductors will be arranged in a two-conductor bundle for each of its three phases. The two conductors will be arranged in a vertical pattern with the conductors spaced 18 inches apart. One overhead ground wire will be located at the top of the structure to protect the conductors from a lightning strike. Insulator assemblies will be equipped with metal rings to minimize corona. Insulators will be polymer type.

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **Q. What happens next?**

A. The KCC will accept written comments from the public through Wednesday, May 12, 2010. Written comments regarding the case should reference Docket No. 10-ITCE-557-MIS and should be emailed directly to the Kansas Corporation Commission Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection at [public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov](mailto:public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov). Comments may also be submitted by mail to the Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, Kansas Corporation Commission, 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road, Topeka, Kansas 66604-4027 or made by calling 1-800-662-0027.

The KCC will conduct a technical hearing, which is open to the public, concerning the proposed transmission construction project. This technical hearing is scheduled to begin on May 19, 2010, at 9:00 a.m. in the first floor hearing room at the Kansas Corporation Commission Topeka office, 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road. At this hearing the Commission staff, ITC Great Plains representatives and CURB staff will present their respective positions to the Commission.

The Commission must issue a decision by June 30, 2010, and is required to make a decision with respect to the necessity for the proposed transmission line and the reasonableness of the location of the proposed electric transmission line, taking into consideration the benefit to both consumers in Kansas and consumers outside the state, and economic development benefits in Kansas.

Once a route is approved by the KCC, detailed engineering will begin and ITC Great Plains will commence negotiations with landowners to secure right-of-way easements for the line.

**Q. When will the line be built?**

A. Construction is projected to begin in late 2011. The official in-service date is June 2013, but ITC Great Plains is coordinating with NPPD to energize the line by December 2012.

**RIGHT-OF-WAY PROCESS**

**Q. What is the process for negotiating right-of-way easements?**

A. ITC Great Plains will complete a title search of all land within the parameters of the approved route. Some landowners will also be contacted to schedule ground surveys and/or soil borings of their property prior to initiating individual negotiations. Landowners on the approved route can expect to be contacted by a right-of-way agent to initiate individual property negotiations.

ITC Great Plains' right-of-way agents will provide each landowner with an easement form and purchase offer based on the fair market value of the portion of their land subject to the easement. ITC Great Plains currently plans to purchase easements rather than the entire bundle of ownership rights in the portion of the land needed for the project. This will allow property owners to continue most uses of their property. Our property specialists will be available for detailed questions when the negotiation process begins.

**Q. What kind of payment structure do you use?**

A. We provide one-time payments, typically negotiated up-front, based on determination of market value and individual negotiations. This approach is consistent with the law governing the payment of utility easements.

**Q. Why doesn't ITC purchase easements on an annual basis instead of a one time payment?**

A. Our right-of-way and other project costs are subject to regulation by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and must be just and reasonable. We are required to pay "just

compensation," defined by law as "The difference between the fair market value of the entire property or interest immediately before the taking, and the value of that portion of the tract or interest remaining immediately after the taking."

**Q. What options do I have if I don't want your line on my property?**

A. The final route for this line will be determined by the Kansas Corporation Commission. It is always ITC's goal to reach a negotiated agreement with affected landowners. However, ITC Great Plains is a certificated Kansas utility with the authority to file condemnation actions under procedures established by the Kansas Eminent Domain Procedure Act, KSA 26-501.

**THREATENED/ENDANGERED SPECIES**

**Q. What actions are you taking to protect threatened and endangered species along the route, especially whooping cranes?**

A. We have engaged an outside firm with expertise in endangered and threatened species to conduct a threatened and endangered species survey of the route. This survey will include an assessment of potential impacts to listed species and their habitats. The assessment also will include recommendations to reduce or eliminate impacts to listed species or habitats from the project. When the survey is completed, the results will be reviewed by and discussed with the appropriate regulatory agencies to address any concerns.

**Q. What threatened or endangered species may be affected by this project?**

A. Based on preliminary reviews, Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) and Eastern Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale putorius*) may be affected. The Whooping Crane is listed as a federal and state endangered species. Eastern Spotted Skunk is a state threatened species. Biological studies are ongoing, but additional species are not anticipated; for example, several listed fish species may use streams in the project area, but these species and their habitats would not be affected by the transmission line.

**Q. What are threatened or endangered species?**

A. Species are listed by state or federal agencies as endangered or threatened based primarily on their biological status and known threats to their continued existence. Under the Endangered Species Act, an endangered species is under an imminent threat of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Similarly, a threatened species is any species that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

In Kansas, a state endangered species is any species of wildlife whose continued existence as a viable component of the state's wild fauna is determined to be in jeopardy. A threatened species is any species of wildlife that within the foreseeable future is likely to become an endangered species.

**Q. What laws protect threatened or endangered species in Kansas?**

A. The Endangered Species Act was enacted in 1973 and requires all federal agencies to ensure that actions they fund, authorize, permit, or otherwise carry out will not jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitats. In Kansas, the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1975, directs the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to issue special action permits for activities that affect federal or state species listed as threatened and endangered in Kansas. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks also have responsibility for listing species as either threatened or endangered and periodically updating the species lists at the federal or state levels, respectively.

### **ABOUT ITC GREAT PLAINS**

#### **Q. What authority do you have as a private company to build a transmission line?**

A. ITC Great Plains is a public utility under the provisions of K.S.A. 66-104, pursuant to the KCC's order approving a Limited Certificate of Public Convenience to Transact the Business of an Electric Public Utility in the State of Kansas, Docket No. 07-ITCE-380-COC (KCC, June 5, 2007).

ITC Great Plains, LLC is a subsidiary of ITC Grid Development, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of publicly traded ITC Holdings Corp. (NYSE: ITC), the nation's only fully independent electric transmission company. Headquartered in Topeka, Kansas, ITC Great Plains holds transmission-only utility status in Kansas and Oklahoma with the authority to construct, own, operate, and maintain a regulated, high-voltage transmission system. For more information, please visit [www.itctransco.com](http://www.itctransco.com).

### **CONTACTING ITC GREAT PLAINS**

#### **Q. Where can landowners get official information about the KETA project?**

A. For more information on the KETA project, please contact ITC Great Plains at 785-783-2226 or [skafedback@itctransco.com](mailto:skafedback@itctransco.com). Information also is available at [www.itcgreatplains.com/6\\_skaoverview.html](http://www.itcgreatplains.com/6_skaoverview.html).