

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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“Stop CHC” Public Forum March 2 in Dodgeville

by David Giffey

A carefully planned “Stop CHC” public forum is set for Friday, March 2, challenging potential threats and policy issues posed by the Cardinal-Hickory Creek (CHC) high-voltage transmission line proposed to span 125 miles from Middleton to Dubuque.

Utility myths, energy efficiency, local power, and the harmful impacts of transmission expansion will be described during three afternoon panel discussions and an evening program featuring important speakers at the free public forum beginning at 1 p.m. Friday, March 2, at Dodger Bowl, 318 King Street, Dodgeville. All residents, elected officials and electricity users of Southwestern Wisconsin and across the state are invited.

The Dodgeville forum, titled “Stop CHC/Harnessing Our Local Energy Futures,” is co-sponsored by a Southwestern Wisconsin coalition of six municipal governments in Iowa, Dane, Vernon, and Grant counties, and SOUL of Wisconsin (Save Our Unique Lands), a non-profit promoting “...efficient and responsible management of electrical power for the public good.” The coalition was formed more than a year ago as the Inter-Municipal Energy Planning Committee (IMEPC).

More than a dozen speakers, panelists, and moderators will offer local, state and national perspectives during three afternoon panels beginning at 1 p.m., and an evening session at 6:30 p.m. Networking and food will be available at 5:30 p.m.

Key afternoon and evening speakers include California energy and environmental engineer Bill Powers, and long time anti-transmission expansion activist Keryn Newman, of West Virginia. Newman has been a crucial researcher and strategist in efforts leading to successful denials of expansion transmission line proposals in many states. Drawing on more than 30 years’ experience, Powers will explain how no-wire alternatives he presented to public utility commissions in Wisconsin, Missouri and California are more economical, reliable and environmentally beneficial than expansion transmission lines like CHC, which are promoted by utilities.

Powers and Newman will join other professionals and community organizers on panels stressing comprehensive energy planning and results. “These are panelists whose volunteerism and follow-through exemplifies the power of standing up for one’s locality,” said Rob Danielson, secretary of SOUL.

The Inter-Municipal Energy Planning Committee (IMEPC) recently announced plans for the “Stop CHC” forum after months of meetings in the Town of Arena hall in northern Iowa County. Voting member municipalities of IMEPC include the townships of Arena, Clyde, and Wyoming (Iowa County), Lima (Grant County), Stark (Vernon County), and Vermont (Dane County). Non-voting IMEPC members include five additional townships in Iowa and Lafayette counties, and the Driftless Area Land Conservancy. IMEPC members are among more than 120 municipalities and 10 county boards adopting resolutions asking the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) for

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answers regarding CHC, a project proposed by American Transmission Company (ATC), ITC Midwest, and Dairyland Power Cooperative.

The upcoming forum in Dodgeville is a major coalition effort to introduce critical facts to the public because transmission builders have presented scant information at their “open houses” and study to date. ATC, ITC, and Dairyland Power Cooperative were invited to meet jointly with four town governments to answer questions in March 2017.

The transmission companies quickly turned down the invitation, saying they didn’t have the resources to respond to the questions.

Local Solutions

Forum participants on March 2 will include Vermont Township resident Michael McDermott, facilitator of local responses in his community. At 1 p.m. McDermott will introduce the forum’s first panel: “Meeting Our Priorities with Household and Local Solutions.” In addition to Powers, panelists are Melissa Davis, a conservation and energy efficiency community organizer based in Houghton, Michigan. Also a member of the first panel will be Gary Radloff, recently retired UW-Madison researcher and director of Midwest Energy Policy Analysis for the Wisconsin Energy Institute. Radloff will discuss the potential of energy efficiency, load management and other distributed Energy Resources (DERs) in Wisconsin’s future as alternatives to enlarging utility-scale infrastructure. The panel will be moderated by conservation enthusiast and Wisconsin Rep. Sody Pope, 80th District.

Utility Myths

“Shortfalls in HVT Review Process and Busting Utility Myths” will be the topic of the second panel from 2:20 to 3:50 p.m. Panelists will include Powers and Newman, joined by Frank Jablonski, legal counsel for the Town of Holland, La Crosse County. Jablonski will describe the basis of the on-going appeal of the Badger-Coulee transmission line, and discuss possible implications for opponents of Cardinal Hickory Creek and strategies to help overcome shortfalls in the review process and in appeal should one become necessary. Also on the 2:20 p.m. panel is Ross Astoria, political science and law professor at the University of Wisconsin-Racine, to explain significant savings and environmental gains in avoiding expenditures like Cardinal Hickory Creek.

Harmful Impacts

A discussion from 4 to 5:30 p.m. will consider “Confronting the Harmful Land and Economic Impacts of Transmission Expansion.” Panelists are: Marilyn Pedretti, town clerk and off-grid energy advocate in the Town of Holland, La Crosse County, home to two 345 kV expansion transmission lines; Dave Clutter, executive director of Driftless Area Land Conservancy, to provide an overview of the area’s unique assets, sensitivities and plans, and studies that will be required in the review process of the Cardinal Hickory Creek transmission proposal; Jon Greendeer, former Ho-Chunk Nation president, *Maasusga (White Feather)*, who will discuss concerns about the proposed Cardinal Hickory Creek high capacity transmission line’s impact on tribal assets based on his personal experience of Arrowhead-Weston, Wisconsin’s first 345 kV expansion

transmission line; Lila Zastrow, a certified arborist and property owner severely impacted by transmission lines near Appleton; and Mary Mauch, executive director of the Illinois Landowner's Alliance and co-founder of the Block Rock Island Clean Line, will describe techniques which proved effective in stopping the Rock Island Clean Line, and other lines in Missouri and Iowa that sought to use eminent domain to take private property for transmission expansion.

Evening session

Iowa County's Village of Montfort board trustee Pat Raimer will introduce the evening keynote session. Raimer's concerns include CHC's proposed city-scale 345 kV sub-station, which, if built, is likely to attract more expansion transmission lines to Montfort, a village of 700 people.

Speakers at the evening session include engineer Powers, DALC's Clutter, and West Virginia activist Newman. A question-and-answer session will be led by Sony Pope, Ross Astoria of Citizens' Climate Lobby and La Crosse Tribune energy writer Chris Hubbuch. Audience participation is welcomed.

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(Note to media: Please contact David Giffey with questions at 608-753-2199)