



Frequently Asked Questions

Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association

Transmission Improvement Project

Richards Lake to Waverly 115-kilovolt Transmission Line

Organizational Structure

1. Who is Tri-State G&T and what is the relationship with Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association?
Tri-State is a wholesale electric power supplier owned by the 44 electric cooperatives that it serves. Tri-State generates and transports electricity to its member systems, including Poudre Valley REA. The distribution cooperative then directly supplies electricity to rural residences, farms and ranches, cities, towns and suburban communities, as well as large and small commercial businesses and industries.
2. Is Tri-State working directly with the affected properties owners on this project.
Tri-State has hired Bensing & Associates, a Colorado-based land management and acquisition firm, to assist with the transmission line project. Tri-State will re-build the transmission line project for the benefit of Poudre Valley REA's member consumers.

Easement Questions

1. Who will own the easement?
Poudre Valley REA will transfer the *existing* transmission line and easements to Tri-State. Tri-State will acquire *additional* easements required for the new line.

Once the new transmission line is completed, Tri-State will own, operate and maintain it. Meanwhile, Poudre Valley REA will retain ownership of its existing substations and the distribution system.

2. What if a landowner refuses to cooperate?
Before application with city and county agencies, Tri-State's primary objective is to work closely with local landowners and businesses to determine the best routing options. The transmission line project is a response to the community's current and anticipated growth. Tri-State and Poudre Valley REA are obligated to provide safe, reliable electricity. Tri-State encourages landowner participation in this process and welcomes the feed back it receives.
3. What other routes did you look at and why did you pick the one you are pursuing now?
There were several routes considered during the initial review. Determining factors when evaluating a route are population, terrain and accessibility to the line. The current route selected adequately addressed the engineering, land and environmental factors evaluated by Tri-State.
4. What determines the width of the easement?
Design and construction of utility lines must be in compliance with the National Electric Safety Code with oversight by the Rural Utility Service. The width of the easement is governed by the voltage of the line and the necessity to incorporate enough width for the sway of the conductors to be contained within the width of the easement.
5. How do you deal with conservation easements?
Conservation easements are restrictions to commercial and residential developments of the designated lands and do not apply to power lines and other public utilities.

Structures/Equipment

1. What is the life expectancy of wooden poles?
In this climate, the life expectancy of wooden poles is 50 years. The current wooden poles have been in place since the early 1960s and are approaching their useful life.
2. What will be the height of the poles and wires at their lowest point?
The height of the poles will be between 70 and 85 feet, depending on terrain and the span between poles. The lines will be 28 feet above the ground at the lowest point. Once the engineers have designed the line, specification details will be provided for each property.
3. What will be the span of the line and the type of pole to be used?
The distance between the poles will be between 400 and 600 feet, depending if the structure is an H-frame or a single-pole design.

4. Can structures be lowered to minimize the visual impact?
Structures are only as tall as then need to be to support the wires and provide adequate clearance. The structure can be shortened, but this would increase the number of structures per mile.

5. Will the 115-kilovolt line be adequate to meet future growth and development?
Planners and engineers develop their growth forecasting based on numerous factors, including information derived from current customers, age of the system and details received from county and city planners.

Tri-State's system planning and engineering staff operate on a 10-year planning horizon, which is anticipated to meet necessary electric needs for that timeframe.

Construction Questions

1. Will the structures interfere with center pivots irrigation?
Tri-State avoids center pivots in routing the transmission line to the extent possible. Tri-State mitigates impacts by using a single pole structure that can skirt the edge of a center pivot system. These routing details can be worked out with affected landowners.

2. How will the project impact planting and harvesting seasons during construction? Is compensation offered for the crops?
Tri-State schedules construction to avoid planting and harvesting seasons. If this is not possible, compensation is arranged for any loss or damage to crops.

3. How is livestock managed if you have to take down a fence?
Tri-State and its representatives will work with each individual landowner on livestock issues and may construct temporary fencing as the line is being built. Tri-State's contractors are very cautious about livestock and their safety.

4. Who will handle construction?
Tri-State will competitively bid the construction of the project to a list of pre-qualified contractors that are very familiar with line construction, minimizing impacts and respecting property rights.

5. What activities can I expect on my property during line construction?
Line construction involves a series of distinct activities that are performed in sequence including: staging the poles, auguring holes, framing and erecting the structures, stringing the wire and cleaning up and reclamation. The line construction work is not continuous; rather it is conducted in phases.

6. How long will the process take after it begins?
Pre-construction land, environmental and engineering tasks can take up to two years. The route selection process is documented in an Environmental Report. The route is heard and decided on by local permitting authorities. This process depends on the time it takes to obtain signed Permission to Survey forms, circulate an RFP and hire a surveyor, complete the survey and archaeological and environmental review, engineer the line after incorporating what the survey reveals and then obtain all of the Option Agreements.

Tri-State is in the process of obtaining Option Agreements together with beginning the permitting process which will require permits from Larimer County for a majority of the line and the City of Fort Collins for a portion of the line. Once the project has been permitted, Tri-State will complete its acquisition process securing the necessary easements and land rights for the project. Tri-State will then send out a Request for Proposal to select a construction company to construct the line.

Actual construction of the line takes approximately six months, depending upon the weather and other factors.

Underground Alternatives

1. Can the line be placed underground?
Tri-State will bury only the line if the requesting party pays the incremental difference in cost between above ground construction and under ground construction.
2. What does it cost to bury a line?
It is seven to 10 times more expensive to bury a transmission line than the cost to build it above ground.
3. What does it take logistically to bury all or segments of the line if the landowner is willing to pay for it?
The requesting party must provide a written request to Tri-State requesting a feasibility study be completed for burying the line. The cost of the feasibility study is \$35,000 and must be funded in advance by the requesting party. The feasibility study shows if the line can be constructed underground and includes an estimate for the underground cost. If at that time the requesting party elects to proceed with undergrounding, the requesting party must provide the funding and execute the required agreements with Tri-State.

Communication

1. Can developers work with Tri-State engineering as they work through their preliminary plats and conceptual plans?
Tri-State is in the preliminary stages of this project and is working with landowners and local developers for permission to survey and to complete additional studies concerning the placement of the new transmission line.

Health Concerns

1. Should I be concerned about any health risks associated with the line?
There has been considerable research devoted to the subject of health concerns and transmission lines over the past 30 years. Questions and Answers prepared by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences can be found on the website <http://niehs.nih.gov/lemfrapid>. In addition, the website contains an executive summary of the NIEHS report to Congress.