

Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

Central Project Advisory Team Meeting #5

Summary

March 3, 2010

4 – 9 p.m.

Community Connections Senior Center

2810 Cedar Street

Baker City, OR 97814

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Community Advisory Process Background

Idaho Power is committed to partnering with communities to identify proposed and alternate routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. The initial process of identifying a route began in late 2007 when Idaho Power submitted documents to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). Following public scoping meetings held in October 2008, these agencies received public input requesting that Idaho Power conduct more extensive outreach while identifying the transmission line route.

In Spring 2009, Idaho Power initiated a process to engage communities—from Boardman, Oregon, to Melba, Idaho—in siting the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line. This process is called the Community Advisory Process.

As a part of the Community Advisory Process, five Project Advisory Teams have been formed: North, Central, South, Grant County and Harney County. The Project Advisory Teams are made up of residents, property owners, business leaders and local officials.

The Project Advisory Teams will work closely with technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes.

During the Community Advisory Process the Project Advisory Teams will:

- **Identify** issues and concerns; develop criteria for evaluating possible routes and integrate community criteria with regulatory requirements.
- **Develop** a range of possible routes that address community issues and concerns. Routes will be identified through mapping sessions; routes not meeting the regulatory and community criteria will be removed from consideration.
- **Recommend** proposed and alternate routes, which will be carried through the permitting process.
- **Follow through** with communities during the state and federal permitting process.



Project Advisory Team (PAT) Background

The Central Project Advisory Team (PAT) includes representatives from Baker and Union counties in Oregon. Since Spring 2009, Idaho Power has hosted five PAT meetings and one round of public meetings in the Central advisory area.

PAT Meeting #1

The first Central PAT meeting was held June 4, 2009 in Baker City, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review work to date, project status and how the Community Advisory Process would proceed.
- Discuss the purpose and need for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- Identify community concerns and suggestions for siting the transmission line. The concerns and suggestions were developed into community criteria.

PAT Meeting #2

The second Central PAT meeting was held July 29, 2009 in Baker City, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to give team members a better understanding of:

- The federal, state and public processes involved in the project.
- The regulatory and engineering criteria that would be used to develop routes for the transmission line.

The second PAT meeting provided team members with an opportunity to learn more about regulatory criteria and ask questions directly of the federal and state agencies involved with the authorization of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. Team members also refined the community criteria at the second Central PAT meeting.

Public Meetings

In August 2009, seven public meetings were held in the North, Central and South project advisory areas. In October 2009 two public meetings were held in Grant and Harney counties. The public meetings were held after the Project Advisory Teams met to formulate community criteria for siting possible routes for the transmission line.

Public meetings for the Central advisory area were held in Baker City, Oregon on Aug. 12, and La Grande, Oregon on Aug. 13.

The purpose of the public meetings was to:

- Give the public an overview of the project.
- Share the outcomes of the PAT meetings with the public

Concerns and suggestions of the general public were closely aligned with those of the PAT members.

- Allow the public to ask questions and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.

Comments submitted at the public meetings indicated the public generally agreed with work completed by the Project Advisory Teams and the criteria that would be used to site the transmission line.

PAT Meeting #3 and Mapping Workshop

The third Central PAT meeting was held on Sept. 15 and Sept. 16, 2009. The meeting began with an evening session and ended with an all-day mapping workshop.

The purpose of the meeting and mapping workshop was to begin to identify a range of possible routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line.

Overall, 49 routes were developed by the South, Central, North, Harney County and Grant County Project Advisory Teams. The Central Project Advisory Team developed 14 of these routes.

PAT Meeting #4

The fourth Central PAT meeting was held on Dec. 17, 2009 in Baker City, Oregon.

The purpose of the meeting was to present the status and analysis for each PAT-proposed route, and present the analysis methods. In the months before the meeting, staff from Idaho Power and Tetra Tech recorded and labeled all PAT-proposed routes; determined the opportunity, avoidance and exclusion areas crossed by each PAT proposed route; and revised the routes to avoid exclusion and avoidance areas.

PAT Meeting #5

The fifth Central PAT meeting was held on March 3, 2010 in Baker City, Oregon. A complete summary of the meeting is included in this document.

Detailed summaries of all Project Advisory Team meetings can be found on the project Web site www.boardmantohemingway.com.

Central Project Advisory Team Meeting #5 Overview

Background

Overall, the five Project Advisory Teams developed a total of 49 routes (3,184 miles). On Sept. 16, 2009 the Central Project Advisory Team (PAT) developed 14 routes at the mapping workshop held in Baker City, Oregon.

Between September and December 2009, engineers from Idaho Power and staff from Tetra Tech, Idaho Power's environmental consulting firm, recorded and labeled all PAT-developed routes; determined the opportunity, avoidance and exclusion areas crossed by each PAT-developed route; and revised the routes to avoid exclusion and avoidance areas. The original PAT-developed routes were combined and revised to encompass 1,984 miles.

Idaho Power presented the revised routes at the fourth Central PAT meeting in December 2009. Throughout early 2010, Tetra Tech continued to analyze each revised route for the following factors:

- Permitting difficulty – Community criteria and relative difficulty of gaining necessary permits from the federal, state and local governments.
- Constructability – The relative difficulty associated with building the line in a given route. Considerations include terrain, road construction, clearing, equipment movement and accessibility.
- Mitigation cost – The relative cost associated with mitigation actions required by permitting authorities necessary to permit a route.

The route analysis determined three route alternatives that could be the relatively least difficult to permit and could be constructible; these three routes were labeled the eastern alternative, central alternative and western alternative.

In order to re-start the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, Idaho Power is required to submit one proposed route in its revised application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Idaho Power recommends that either the eastern, central or western alternative be submitted as the proposed route. Alternate routes may be submitted in addition to the proposed route.

Central PAT meeting #5 agenda and format

The purpose of the fifth Central PAT meeting was to:

- Review progress of the Community Advisory Process and discuss next steps.
- Present analysis of revised routes and route alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western).
- Give PATs the opportunity to give input on the route alternatives.
- Give PATs the opportunity to give input on a possible proposed route.

The meeting was held March 3, 2010 at the Community Connections Senior Center in Baker City, Oregon.

Forty-eight people attended the meeting. A copy of the invitation letter, list of invitees and list of attendees is available in Appendix 1.

Presenters:

- Vern Porter – Idaho Power, Vice President of Delivery Operations and Engineering
- Kent McCarthy – Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader
- Dave Angell – Idaho Power, Manager of Delivery Planning
- Rosemary Curtin – RBCI, Facilitator
- Dave Perry – Tetra Tech, Routing and Siting Manager
- Jim Nickerson – Tetra Tech, Vice President, Energy Services

Handouts:

The following handouts were provided to team members at the meeting. Copies of these handouts are available in Appendices 2 and 3.

- Central PAT meeting #5 agenda
- Idaho Power PowerPoint presentation
- Tetra Tech PowerPoint presentation
- A map of the three route alternatives (Eastern, Western and Central)
- Maps of the potential route alternatives that show evaluations of permitting difficulty, construction difficulty and mitigation cost.
- Mileage summary tables and data tables for each route that identify the number of miles that have:
 - Permitting difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
 - Construction difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
 - Mitigation costs (low, moderate and high)
- Comment forms:
 - “Alternative Routes” comment form
 - “Eastern Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form
 - “Central Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form
 - “Western Alternative Route Likes/Dislikes” comment form

- “Proposed Route” comment form

PAT Input

Team members were provided a series of comment sheets that asked for input on:

- The route analysis
- The three route alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western)
- A possible proposed route

To ensure team members had sufficient time to review the analysis and route alternatives, team members were given until March 25, 2010 to return their comments to Idaho Power via mail or e-mail.

Next Steps

Idaho Power intends to submit their revised SF-299 application to the BLM at the end of March or early April.

After the March 25 deadline Idaho Power plans to:

- Review and summarize all comments.
- Distribute summaries to PAT members and post summaries to the project Web site www.boardmantoemingway.com.
- Communicate results back to the communities.
- Hold public meetings throughout the project area in Spring 2010.

Presentations

Below are summaries of the presentations that were given by Idaho Power and Tetra Tech staff. Team members were allowed to ask questions throughout the presentations. After each presentation summary are the questions asked by team members and the answers provided by Idaho Power and Tetra Tech staff. The questions and answers are presented in the order they were asked.

Welcome and Meeting Agenda – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator

Rosemary Curtin welcomed team members, asked everyone to introduce themselves and reviewed the three objectives of the meeting:

- Present the analysis of the revised routes.
- Present the three route alternatives (Eastern, Central and Western).
- Collect input from team members about:
 - The route analysis
 - Likes and dislikes of each for the three route alternatives
 - A possible proposed route

Curtin also reviewed the following information:

- The meeting will be tape-recorded and transcribed. After all comments are collected, a meeting summary will be developed for each PAT meeting. The summaries will be distributed to team members and posted to the project Web site, www.boardmantoheatingway.com. Summaries and materials from all previous meetings are currently available on the project Web site.
- Idaho Power posted the route analysis materials to the project Web site one week prior to the meeting. Team members were notified by e-mail that these materials were available on the Web site and were encouraged to review the materials before the meeting.
- Between March 2 and March 10, Idaho Power is holding five Project Advisory Team meetings in Central, North, South, Grant County and Harney County areas. The main objective of each meeting is to gather input about the route alternatives and a possible proposed route.
- Team members will be provided a series of five comment sheets. The comment sheets ask for input on the three route alternatives and a possible proposed route. Team members will be asked to complete their comment forms when the presentations conclude. When filling out their comment forms, team members will have the option to work in small groups or individually.
- Team members have the option of submitting their comment forms at the meeting or returning them to Idaho Power via mail/e-mail by March 25, 2010.

- No decisions will be made until all five PAT meetings have been completed and all comments have been collected and reviewed by Idaho Power.
- Idaho Power would like to submit its revised SF-299 application to the BLM at the end of March or early April. Submitting this application will restart the NEPA process.
- Idaho Power plans to hold public meetings for the Community Advisory Process in early Spring 2010. Scoping meetings will also be held in 2010 for the NEPA process. Idaho Power encourages team members to attend all meetings and stay involved in the process.

Project Update – Dave Angell, Idaho Power, Manager of Delivery Planning

Angell thanked team members for coming to the meeting and explained there were several updates on participation in the Boardman to Hemingway Project. Angell's presentation included the following information:

- Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) was submitted on Dec. 31, 2009. The IRP calls for the Boardman to Hemingway line to provide 250 megawatts (MW) of power in 2015 and an additional 175 MW in 2017. The line will have additional capacity available and it is expected that other power companies will participate in building the line.
- Throughout the Community Advisory Process, several other entities have shown interest in becoming partners on the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- Idaho Power has recently received permission to announce that the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and PacifiCorp are currently evaluating partnering with Idaho Power on the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- BPA provides energy to La Grande, Quartz and Baker City. BPA also provides energy to the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative and eastern Idaho.
- BPA services the La Grande area with a 230 kV transmission line that comes from the McNary Dam area. Currently, when BPA needs to service its McNary transmission line, it cannot use another route to directly provide power to its Oregon customers. If transmission is available, BPA must schedule the power to circulate across Montana and then come back into Oregon. Participating in the Boardman to Hemingway line would give BPA an alternative for supplying power to its Oregon customers, if needed.
- BPA is expected to present information to Idaho Power executive management regarding the decision of its Boardman to Hemingway participation at the end of March.
- PacifiCorp is also considering participating in the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. Currently, PacifiCorp and Idaho Power are jointly proposing a development called Gateway West that starts in Wyoming, crosses southern Idaho, and ends at the Hemingway substation.

- In February 2010, Mission West Properties, Inc. and CDH Consulting announced they will be developing a new data center property in Ontario, Oregon. The state of Oregon has provided incentives for the data center to locate in Ontario. The data center will use approximately 62 MW of power. The Boardman to Hemingway transmission line will help Idaho Power expand its capacity in order to serve large users, such as this data center.

PAT member: When you say, “Upgrade the line from La Grande,” are you changing the line or making it bigger?

Angell: There are no changes to this transmission line here. When it is out of service, when they do maintenance on the line, when a tower structure fails and they have to put it back together, BPA really has no access to La Grande at that point. That sets the stage as to why BPA would be interested in this particular area.

PAT member: The Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative does have a way to get the Bonneville Power over to the back part of our property, right?

Angell: It's very limited in its service capability.

PAT member: It's to keep us an extra place to come in.

Angell: As far as the Integrated Resource Plan...previously we were talking about 225 megawatts of energy coming out of the Northwest. That's been increased to 250 megawatts in 2015. And then another 175 megawatts in 2017. So that's what our plan is today.

PAT member: The call for this additional transmission – how much of it is a result of wind farm generation?

Angell: Zero.

PAT member: So this really has nothing to do with the wind farms being constructed?

Angell: The energy we are looking to access with the transmission line is the energy coming out of what is known as the “mid-Columbia trading hub,” also known as the “Mid-C.” That would take wind energy up there when that is available – hydro, nuclear, gas plants – out of Canada. All those are traded at that center. So Idaho would be purchasing out of the Mid-C and importing energy down to this area.

PAT member: Dave, I'm not sure how to ask this, just today I got the publication Clearing Up and they were talking about an intertie selling to California. Where is that taking place?

Angell: I haven't read last week's Clearing Up.

(Later in the meeting, Vern Porter, Idaho Power's vice president of engineering and operations, said that he had pulled up the latest version of Clearing Up on the Internet and the project referred to in the question was an upgrading of the California-Oregon Intertie Project.)

PAT member: It seems foolish to get involved in finding a way to get the energy to California if there is such a need here. Does that make sense to you? It makes money for you.

Angell: For Idaho Power? An intertie to California? Not that I'm aware of.

PAT member: It's Bonneville then. I'm asking.

PAT member: They're evaluating to see if they want to get involved with participating?

Angell: That is correct. At this point, we can't say anymore than that.

PAT member: The Dalles, is that the intertie?

Angell: It's too early to say what form of transmission they use, whether it be another AC intertie or DC intertie, but essentially it's all the participants in the existing California-Oregon intertie too. That's BPA, PacifiCorp, all the California utilities, including ones in northern California out of Redding and Pacific Gas & Electric. And they are in the very early stages. They don't plan to have anything from the assessment until late this year. That's their goal, to just think about options, but Idaho Power is not a participant.

PAT member: Is PacifiCorp involved in the other line, Gateway West?

Angell: They are involved in Gateway West, yes.

Community Advisory Process Review – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator

Curtin explained to team members that the Community Advisory Process began almost one year ago. She reviewed the objectives of the past four Central PAT meetings. Her presentation included the following information:

- In Spring 2009, Rosemary Curtin and Kent McCarthy conducted one-on-one interviews throughout the project area. They listened to the issues and concerns that community members had about the transmission line. The community members who participated in the one-on-one interviews were asked to be a part of the Central Project Advisory Team and to recommend others for inclusion on the team.
- Idaho Power hosted the first Central PAT meeting on June 4, 2009 in Baker City, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to:
 - Review work to date, project status and how the Community Advisory Process would proceed.
 - Discuss the purpose and need for the B2H Project.
 - Identify community concerns and suggestions for siting the transmission line.
- At the first Central PAT meeting, team members formed small working groups to discuss and identify community concerns and suggestions about the project. The

community concerns and suggestions identified by team members were developed into community criteria.

- The community criteria were used throughout the siting process, along with environmental, engineering and regulatory criteria, to help develop potential routes for the transmission line.
- The second Central PAT meeting was held July 29, 2009 in Baker City, Oregon. The purpose of the meeting was to give team members a better understanding of:
 - The federal, state and public processes involved in the project.
 - The regulatory and engineering criteria that would be used to develop routes.
- For the second Central PAT meeting, Idaho Power invited representatives from the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Energy – Energy Facility Siting Council and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to participate in a panel discussion. As part of the panel discussion, each representative gave a presentation that outlined their agency’s review process and addressed key issues that could arise as the processes work together. Team members were given the opportunity to ask the representatives questions about the regulatory criteria that would be used during the siting process.
- Public meetings were held in Baker City on Aug. 12, 2009 and La Grande on Aug. 13, 2009. Overall, 108 people attended the two public meetings in the Central advisory area. Other public meetings were held throughout the project area. The purpose of the public meetings was to:
 - Give the public an overview of the project.
 - Share the outcomes of the PAT meetings with the public.
 - Allow the public to ask questions and provide input on the criteria for siting the transmission line.
- In September 2009, Idaho Power held mapping workshops for the Central, North and South PATs. The purpose of the meeting and mapping workshop was to begin to identify a range of possible routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line.
- The Central mapping workshop was held on Sept. 16, 2009 in Baker City. The evening before the mapping workshop, Idaho Power held a meeting for team members to explain the regulatory criteria, routing constraints and the Geographic Information System (GIS). During the mapping workshop, team members had the choice of mapping their routes on paper maps or working with GIS operators to lay out routes at computer stations. Team members at the Central mapping workshop developed 14 routes.
- Idaho Power kept a detailed record of all routes developed by PAT members. Additionally, team members were asked to provide a written description and comments for each route they identified. This documentation helped Idaho Power understand the location and reasoning behind each route.

- The fourth Central PAT meeting was held Dec. 17, 2009 in Baker City. At this meeting, Idaho Power presented how the routes developed at the mapping workshops had been revised to avoid exclusion areas and significant constraints.
- The purpose of this meeting, the fifth Central PAT meeting, is to present the analysis of the revised routes and gather input about the three route alternatives and a possible proposed route.

Community Criteria and CAP-Developed Routes – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Leader

McCarthy reviewed the community criteria that Idaho Power and PAT members developed at the beginning of the Community Advisory Process. He also presented how the PAT-developed routes were revised and analyzed. McCarthy's presentation included the following information:

- In Spring 2009, Idaho Power determined there was a large amount of opposition to the original route for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. In order to gather more public input, Idaho Power paused the NEPA process and implemented the Community Advisory Process.
- Idaho Power recognized that the location of the transmission line would have an impact on local communities. Community and regulatory criteria were given equal weight by Idaho Power and community members when proposing and considering routes.
- In September, PAT members were asked to develop possible routes for the transmission line. Idaho Power evaluated all 49 of the routes proposed by the five PATs based on permitting difficulty, construction difficulty, and cost.
- Tetra Tech tried to maintain the original routes developed by the PATs in the mapping sessions as much as possible. Tetra Tech then combined routes with similar purposes in similar geographic regions.
- Idaho Power determined which routes were the most reasonable. The purpose of the fifth Central PAT meeting is to ask for input on the eastern, central and western route alternatives recommended by Idaho Power.
- Idaho Power will submit a proposed route as part of its NEPA application. The submission of the revised application will restart the NEPA process.
- In Spring 2009 Central PAT members raised the following concerns at the first Central PAT meeting:
 - The transmission line would negatively impact the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Baker County has built an economy based on tourism revenue from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.
 - Agriculture is a major source of revenue for the area.
 - A transmission line could allow invasive species.

- A transmission line might make it more likely that wind farms are built.
- The transmission line would have a negative impact on scenic beauty and wildlife.
- Scenic areas should be taken into consideration with siting the lines
- Sage grouse would be affected.
- Idaho Power is not providing enough accurate information.
- It's not clear how Baker County would benefit from the transmission line.
- Central PAT members also provided suggestions for siting the transmission line. The suggestions included:
 - Consider view sheds.
 - Avoid Exclusive Farm Use land.
 - Avoid private and irrigated land.
 - Avoid water resources and wetlands.
 - Build the line on public and federal land.
- Idaho Power developed the concerns and suggestions provided by team members into community criteria for the Central area. When Idaho Power made adjustments to the 49 routes suggested by PAT members, it followed the community criteria closely. Below are the Central PAT's community criteria:
 - *Placement opportunities* include: Existing energy corridors; West Wide energy corridor; public land (federal and state); transportation and rail corridors.
 - *Avoidance areas* include: Exclusive Farm Use land; areas of tourism (specifically the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center); irrigated agriculture; bisecting fields; aerial spraying activity areas; rangeland; scenic view sheds; areas that have potential for residential and/or business development; historic landmarks (specifically the Oregon Trail); narrow valleys with agricultural operations; private resource land (i.e., timber); sensitive wildlife areas (i.e., sage grouse leks); water resources and wetlands; schools; private residences; medical facilities; airports; developed areas for recreation (Wolf Creek, parks); south La Grande and Powder River Valley; designated scenic highway routes; high priority noxious weed sites; below Thief Valley and Howard Meadows area.
- During the route analysis, all revised routes were evaluated for constructability, permitting difficulty, and mitigation cost.
 - Permitting is the first concern.
 - Construction difficulty is often related to terrain. Building the transmission line in the forest requires that the 250-foot right-of-way be clear-cut.
 - The construction of a power line requires the construction of many roads.

- Mitigation will be required if wildlife or another resource is affected.

Introduction of Vern Porter, Idaho Power, Vice President of Operations and Engineering

Vern Porter, Idaho Power, Vice President of Operations and Engineering, formally introduced himself to the team members and thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meetings.

- Porter has been with Idaho Power for 20 years and was appointed Vice President of Engineering and Operations in October 2009.
- Idaho Power is committed to working with communities to find a route for the transmission line.
- Not all the conversations with community members throughout the CAP have been easy, but Idaho Power values the time and effort that team members have committed to the process.
- The Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line is a regional project that will bring benefits to many people in Oregon, Idaho and Washington.
- When the PAT meetings conclude, the federal and state regulatory processes will restart. These review processes will take several years to complete. Idaho Power encourages all community members to stay involved when the federal and state processes restart.

Revised Routes and Proposed Route Alternatives – Dave Perry, Tetra Tech, Routing and Siting Manager

Perry introduced himself as a landscape architect and explained that Tetra Tech has been assisting Idaho Power for almost two years with the siting process for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. He presented information about the process of determining the most reasonable route by comparing the factors of permissibility, constructability, and cost. Perry's presentation included the following information:

- During the mapping workshops, PAT members developed 49 routes that covered 3,184 miles. The Central PAT developed the most miles of routes.
- During the analysis, Tetra Tech divided the project area into 14 regions. The routes in each region were evaluated for difficulty of permitting, constructability and mitigation costs. After these three factors were determined for each route, the routes in each region were compared and the most reasonable route for each region was identified. Some of the regions had small lengths of route; others had 130 to 180 miles.
- For each region Tetra Tech developed a map of the revised routes and mileage summary tables and data tables for each route that identify the number of miles that have:
 - Permitting difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)

- Construction difficulty (low, moderate, high and exclusion)
- Mitigation costs (low, moderate and high)
- The permitting analysis takes into account constraints and opportunities. The analysis of construction difficulty considers terrain, road construction, equipment movement, forest clearing and other variables. Mitigation cost is more abstract than construction cost and permissibility.
- The following five regions are in the Central area:
 - Weatherby
 - Lime
 - Burnt River
 - Oregon Trail Interpretive Center
 - Onion Creek

Perry reviewed the permitting and constructability analysis for each of the five regions in the Central area. Below is a summary of the information he presented. After each regional summary, the questions that were asked by team members and answers that were provided by Idaho Power and Tetra Tech are listed. The questions are presented in the order in which they were asked.

Maps and data tables for each region can be found in Appendix 3. The maps and summaries of the permitting, construction and mitigation factors are also available on the project Web site, www.boardmantohemingway.com.

Weatherby

- The Weatherby region includes two alternative routes: an eastern route and a western route. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty, and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the eastern route to be more reasonable. .
- Permitting difficulty factors:
 - The western route had more miles of high permitting difficulty.
 - The eastern route has a lower impact on the Oregon Trail, deer wintering area and elk wintering area. The eastern route also crosses less private land.
- Construction difficulty factors:
 - The western route has more miles of high construction difficulty.
 - The eastern route is 1.1 miles shorter.
 - For 61 percent of its length, the western route would cross slopes greater than 25 percent, which would add to construction cost.

PAT member: Are the lines you have now on the same side as you identified Weatherby?

Perry: They are on both sides.

PAT member: But the east side was your preference?

Perry: It was. Part of the reason we are here is to find out if there are any issues. When you go along I-84, one of the things you run into are these places where they have incredibly steep slopes, way more than 25 percent, and really tight construction areas. So there really isn't any other place to go, there are other places where the valley spreads out; my guess is the valley is probably tight and sidewalls steep in there. One thing everybody should understand too is whatever happens tonight, this is the transition from the CAP process to the NEPA process under the federal government, and the EFSC process in the state. This routing is going to go on and on probably until the day they start pouring concrete. And there will be several other places where everybody can come in and speak, but if there is something we've missed in one of these analyses, we'd rather get it right and be corrected.

Lime

- The Lime region includes two alternative routes: an eastern route and a western route. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the western route to be more reasonable.
- Permitting difficulty factors:
 - The western route avoids 1.6 miles of 1200-foot historic trail buffer zone.
 - The western route avoids 3.1 miles of 1200-foot nationally designated scenic byway.
 - The western route crosses 1.8 fewer miles of slopes that are greater than 35 percent.
- Construction difficulty factors:
 - The western route had no areas with high construction difficulty, but the eastern route had 4.3 miles of high construction difficulty.
 - The western route avoids 1.6 miles of Historic Trail Buffer Zone.
 - The western route avoids 3.1 miles of Nationally Designated Scenic Byway.
 - The western route runs parallel to an existing 230 kV transmission line.

PAT member: Does that correlate with the little red numbers?

Perry: The little red numbers? That one I don't remember.

PAT member: Does that correlate with the little red numbers that say, for example, BA14 and BA15?

Perry: That's just one of the nodes. What we did on that was between these various points – we had so many – like this is node called BA16, and that just means Baker County 16. And this up here is BA14.

PAT member: So what information do those numbers tell us?

Perry: When you go to the table, and you look for routes, this one is BA14, and it goes all the way to BA16. When you look at the other route, the one on this side, it goes BA14, BA15, BA16, so it's just the way people can follow the routes. So in this particular case from a permitting and construction point of view, the western route looked like the preferred route for us.

PAT member: I can understand construction problems. I don't understand permitting difficulty. Can you give us a little feel for what you meant by high permitting difficulty?

Perry: It has to do with what we think the agencies would be interested in, what the regulations are, and how difficult it would make the permitting of the line. Just about every resource you cross, whether it be a special status stream, a scenic byway or irrigated land, all has some type of regulation or you can translate it into some kind of difficulty.

High permitting difficulty would be things like the Oregon Trail; especially intact portions of the Oregon Trail. And either impacting them directly or even being close to them, could impact getting a permit for the project. There are other things that are kind of in the moderate category, and that might be some of the deer wintering areas, that we can mitigate and we can minimize distance through, and high might even be an exclusion area. For example, if you look at the sage grouse two-mile leks, the two-mile radius buffers, those are what they call Category One habitat with the Oregon Fish and Wildlife; it's an exclusion area.

So it's those factors, if you look at factors like erosion, you can define it by soils, but it's something you can control. So it'd either be a moderate or low factor.

PAT member: The lek thing has been a point of a lot of discussion. I don't know how to say this but I know the state, whomever, puts the circle around the site and says no, no. But there are mitigation things that could be done. Is this process kind of doing away with common sense and maybe some mitigation approaches?

Perry: You mentioned a very special and unique factor, common sense, sometimes that just can't come into play. When you deal with the sage grouse issue, there are factors that can come into play on whether it's a high permitting difficulty or exclusion or moderate difficulty. And one of those factors is existing transmission lines. If you had a lek, and we had an existing transmission line between the proposed line and the lek itself, you'd get relief. Potentially you'd get relief. You'd get enough relief that you could go and discuss it with Oregon Fish and Wildlife. So is it absolute in every case? No. And you're going to see later on tonight that we have a route in Baker County and we plan to talk more about sage grouse leks. When you get into NEPA they try to balance all the impacts, and there's at least one route that we think the balance is not balanced.

PAT member: Would it help your permitting difficulties if you partnered with Bonneville Power?

Perry: I don't know the answer to that. I've never done a project with them. They are a federal agency. I'm not sure whether that would help you entirely or not. I can't see where it would hurt you, but quite frankly NEPA is NEPA and the facts are the facts, and what we're doing is the way most anybody would do it. I think the whole thing on the agency is finding somebody who will help to move it along.

PAT member: It bothers me about what these gentleman said about the Bonneville Power partnering with you people. They're not going to partner with you unless you go through La Grande. You know that, I know that, everybody knows that, and that means that this line is pre-determined to be sited through Baker County, and all the rest of the sitings aren't even coming into play. Am I wrong?

Angell: What Bonneville needs is to get connected to Idaho in a location besides La Grande, and besides the weak interconnection at Hines. So the transmission line as proposed, doesn't plan to stop anywhere until it gets to Hemingway.

So it doesn't matter the route it takes to get from Boardman to Hemingway; the intent is to go all the way to Hemingway, and then Bonneville will have access to Idaho's system to be able to send energy back up towards La Grande if necessary. It doesn't mean we would put the 500 kV line in this area, and put a substation in this area to deliver.

PAT member: You're saying they could get power back to La Grande from Hemingway?

Angell: That is correct. Again, on that map we showed, there were transmission lines owned by Idaho Power coming up to La Grande. As long as they get to our system, they can get in and serve energy to La Grande.

PAT member: They can't do that now?

Angell: Right now they have problems doing that. When the line is out of service that comes to La Grande directly, they have to schedule energy around through Montana, into southeastern Idaho and back around. And sometimes they have trouble negotiating that. The other option would be to go down into Nevada and to come around through Utah. And that would be very difficult. BPA needs another interconnection with Idaho to benefit them.

PAT member: Does the BPA have eminent domain rights?

Angell: I can't speak to what BPA does or does not have. I don't know.

PAT member: Nobody here knows that?

Porter: One thing to keep in mind, too, is that PacifiCorp is the company that we just recently announced we're partnering with. BPA is analyzing their potential participation now; they haven't committed to it yet. They're just looking at it.

Angell: I think it's a fair assumption that they have eminent domain rights, but I can't speak for BPA.

PAT member: What does it cost to tap into the 500 kV line? What does it cost to build a substation in La Grande? I've heard that BPA is going to put tens of millions of dollars into building a substation to serve La Grande? That doesn't sound right. But I don't know.

McCarthy: The intent is not to build a substation.

PAT member: The way I understand it is that to serve power to La Grande, it would require a \$10 million substation. They're not going to tap in, in La Grande, to give La Grande power off this line. That's irrelevant. The line has nothing to do with serving power to La Grande. The existing lines do.

Angell: Sorry to provide a little more confusion at this late stage; all along we've mentioned that other utilities are interested in participating. We're at a point where we can announce two companies that are looking to participate in the line. That is the Bonneville Power Administration and PacifiCorp. And one of the reasons Bonneville Power is interested is so they can improve their service in eastern Oregon. But that does not mean they would build the line here and build a substation here. That's not being considered.

PAT member: What is the feasibility in the future of tapping into this 500-kv line once it is where it is for supplying power to these larger metropolitan areas?

Angell: Once the line is in place, if there is a request for service – if you're a large generator and you want to get your power out, or a large load you want to deliver power to – you can build a substation at that time if it's economical.

PAT member: Are you referring to the data center in Ontario?

Angell: This line would provide much more energy than what the data center would require. It will provide more than 10 times that amount.

PAT member: This line is going to take power from there to Hemingway in order to get power back from Hemingway to La Grande. How long is the power line from Hemingway back to La Grande going to service the metropolitan areas and the power needs that are there?

Angell: Very good question. We currently have existing transmission lines at 230 kV, 138 kV. The question is, "How long are they going to be able to serve this type of area?" They will be able to serve the area for a very long time; your growth rate isn't astounding. It's not growing real fast.

PAT member: Are you talking about Idaho Power serving this area?

Angell: Yes, the 138 kV lines and 230 kV lines would be able to serve this area for a while.

PAT member: Does “a long time” mean about 20, 30 or 50 years?

Angell: From what I know about growth rates in eastern Oregon, I would say yes. Things are growing, but it's not super rapid. If you were to site some industry here that was hundreds of megawatts I would change my answer immediately. But we haven't seen that type of activity. But again, maybe projects such as the data center in Ontario will come here too. We will have to see.

Burnt River Analysis

- The Burnt River region includes two alternative routes: an eastern route and a western route. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the eastern route to be more reasonable. The eastern route is longer but it was found to be the more reasonable because access to the transmission line for construction and maintenance would be easier.
- The permitting factors for the eastern and western routes were relatively similar.
- Construction difficulty factors:
 - The eastern route is five to six miles longer.
 - The eastern route has more miles of low construction difficulty.
 - The western route crosses the Burnt River Canyon, which has extremely rough terrain.

PAT member: When you look at the Burnt River map, the analysis stops at the point BA14. But your Weatherby analysis goes from BA11 to BA14. That area was already covered in your Weatherby analysis. Your Lime analysis goes from BA14 to BA16, which is not included in the Burnt River analysis. And Burnt River goes east over to MA2.

Perry: Yes. One of them happened to be part of this route. The other one was a part of another route. But they both happen to be in Baker County.

PAT member: But you basically have the connection from Burnt River, BA10, and you start off with Burnt River. Are you saying that when you get to BA14 you are not going to be going down the highway heading out to MA2? Or will you cut part of this off?

Perry: We're going to tell you that in a little bit. I'm covering the separate regions now. Jim will present later how the routes in each region were connected to form complete routes from Hemingway to Boardman.

PAT member: So you're throwing away the Lime analysis then?

Perry: The Lime analysis? No. Not yet. It's just not part of that loop. It's part of a route further south. It's the same question.

Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

- The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center region includes three alternative routes: an eastern route, a central route and a western route. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the central route to be more reasonable route. The central route would relocate a 230 kV line that goes behind the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and replace it with the planned 500 kV line.
- Permitting difficulty factors:
 - The eastern route could be the most reasonable, but it has lek issues. It is not certain that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife would authorize construction near active sage grouse leks.
 - The central route crosses 3.3 less miles of view shed areas.
 - The central route crosses 5.9 fewer miles of sage-grouse core area 1 habitat.
 - The central route crosses 7.5 fewer miles of prime farmland, 11 fewer miles of EFU and 11.4 miles of private land.
 - The central route crosses 3.5 fewer miles of deer winter range.
- Construction difficulty factors:
 - The central route is 11 miles shorter.

Route alternatives for the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center region

- There are three clear options for building the transmission line in the vicinity of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center;
 - Building the 500 kV line behind the Interpretive Center
 - Moving the 230 kV line to behind the Interpretive Center and putting the 500 kV line in the former location of the 230 kV line.
 - Building the 500 kV line farther from the Interpretive Center around Virtue Flats.

PAT member: How far behind the Interpretive Center would the transmission line be?

Perry: It's about a mile away at the closest We've got to work out some more of the details, but it would be about a mile. We are thinking about replacing the existing line with the 500 kV line so there would be only one set of structures in front, and then the smaller line would be behind the Interpretive Center. Intact portions of the Oregon Trail are behind the Interpretive Center, and maybe that would be reasonable in terms of visual impact there.

PAT member: Did you just say you're putting the 500 kV line *in front* of the Interpretive Center?

Perry: We did.

McCarthy: Remember, that is just an option.

PAT member: I'm going to breathe here. I'm going to keep breathing.

McCarthy: Dave, don't say we did that.

Perry: We haven't done it yet.

McCarthy: That is just one of the alternatives.

PAT member: That's where we started a year ago. That was one of the big problems with the old route.

Perry: The west route has about six miles of high construction difficulty. If you look at the central route it actually doesn't have any areas that fall in that category. The eastern route has about three miles of high construction difficulty. So based on those factors, the central route would look more reasonable than the others.

PAT member: Actually wouldn't the eastern route look better than any of those than you've got marked?

Perry: Jim's going to cover it in detail, but if you look at the eastern route, there's several exclusion areas.

PAT member: That page differs with the previous page considerably...

Perry: The previous page showed constructability. What we've got here is occupied sage grouse leks with two-mile buffers around each one. At our last meeting in December, we told you we had received a set of data that showed there was a route available behind the Interpretive Center. However, in January, we got another set of data that told us that route probably wouldn't be possible.

PAT member: What made it not possible? The sage grouse?

Perry: The leks don't move around; they stay pretty much where they are. But the way the data is interpreted changes. Jim is going to get into more detail on that topic.

PAT member: Can you give me some land reference, as far as roads, exactly where the point BA18 is in the valley?

Perry: This is Virtue Flats right here, and that's that 230 kV line.

PAT member: That is the road going down to Keating, the one on the east side?

PAT member: So the line is basically going to be on the tops of the mountains. From here we will be getting a really good view of it. All of it.

Perry: I'm not sure how much you'd see of it.

PAT member: It is going to also be all on private land.

Perry: There's only so much you can do to avoid private land. There are so many rules trying to route these transmission lines that they push you back and forth; if we could put it all on private land, we would. On public land, pardon me.

PAT member: Freudian slip. I want you to speak again, because I probably got it wrong. I'm looking at the map and what you call the "reasonable routes" that would

go below the Interpretive Center. Did I hear you say you were going to take out the 230 kV line and put the 500 kV line in its place?

Perry: Yes.

PAT member: Where?

Perry: Right where it is right now. We'll try to match it as much as we can.

PAT member. So you would put the line right under the Interpretive Center.

PAT member: I don't think we like that.

PAT member: Oh, I don't think so.

PAT member: But those are three different alternatives, right?

Perry: Yes. But there are also windows on the other side of the Interpretive Center from where the view shed of the valley is. The one we have highlighted is the east route; it would put the 500 kV behind the Interpretive Center. It is the eastern route.

PAT member: I think Fred said that would work. He walked over there.

Perry: That's the one we think is most reasonable at this point. But my guess is over the next two years, there will be all kinds of detailed analysis for sage grouse leks. We would have to do a very detailed cultural study and a very detailed visual study to pick out the best location for each structure. To build this route you would have to know every structural location beforehand.

So there we are. That's the best route we've got right now. Jim is going to tell you a little later that we are going to keep working on this one too. The east route would get the line further away from the Interpretive Center and pretty much away from everything.

PAT member: The view shed behind the Interpretive Center is better than the view shed of the whole valley? Where you've got your highlighted line.

Perry: Yes.

PAT member: Can you define that view shed please?

PAT member: It's right above the rim above the Interpretive Center, which in terms of view sheds, is way better than where the Interpretive Center itself...

Perry: There is a ridge right in here, and I don't know how much that would screen being able to see the line. I can't tell you right now. That would come out of more detailed studies. But I think you would try to drop it to screen it from the Interpretive Center and from Baker City. You can go with shorter spans and shorter structures. You wouldn't want to do it for 100 miles, but if there were a critical area there are things you can do to reduce visibility.

PAT member: What's the difference between a taller structure and lower structure? What's the height mean where lines run in conjunction with the ground?

Perry: What they like to do is get something within the range of 1300, 1400 or 1500 feet for a distance between. To do that, you would have structures in the 140-foot to 150-foot range.

If you wanted to go and have 100-foot structures, or 120-foot structures, you couldn't go 1,300 feet, but you can shorten it up and get greater tension and go down to maybe 120 feet.

The structures out there right now are – I'm just guessing – they are 230 kV lines and they may be 70 or 80 feet tall. So they might be a little taller, but I would guess there would not be many more structures, or any more structures, depending on what the final studies showed.

So they can range all over the place. If you happen to get a place where you have nice topography and can get a longer span, you might have a 120-foot structure and a 140-foot structure down here. The topography makes up for the difference. So depending on where it is in the final design, you could have a whole family of different heights and different types of structures.

PAT member: But the line itself from the ground to where the conductor is....

PAT member: Isn't it 80 feet?

Perry: I can't remember, but I think it is more like 40 or 50.

McCarthy: It's about 35 or 40 feet.

Perry: And the National Electrical Safety Code has certain standards they have to meet. Depending what the use is under the line, there are lots of things that go into figuring out what the final sag and height above the ground should be.

Pike Engineering: Dave, just to chime in on that one, the minimum route clearance, typically over ground that can be traveled by vehicles, is typically 35 feet for a 500 kV line. But of course that is just in the lowest portion of the sag.

PAT member: If you look at the topography of the line coming up from the 205 road clear up to the top...when you come down from BA4 to BA18...that is the highest part of that mountain ridge. By putting the line on that mountain ridge, it is just like setting a flag up; you'll be able to see that line all the way down the interstate, all from that mountain range, all from that mountain range, from Eagle Caps. It is really high.

Perry: And you know, like I said, this is about kind of getting the general location.

PAT member: I know. I'm just saying that is a red flag, because yes, you might hide it from the Interpretive Center, but the rest of Baker will have to see it.

Perry: We wanted to see where we could site it so the line will minimize visibility from the valley entirely.

Earlier in the project we actually did some really preliminary simulations. We did one of what the line would look like from the Interpretive Center. It showed different kinds of structures we would use for the towers. We also did one of what the line would look like

from I-84 so you get an idea of the visibility from here. And with the technology we've got today, and good typography, you can make a good estimate of what's going to be seen. You can use the simulations to shift structures up and down, or left and right, to find out where it would fall to minimize visibility.

PAT member: All the transmission lines around our place are very visible. They go straight through there..

Perry: I started doing this about 1970, and back then they did build just straight lines. The first few years working with transmission engineers it was straight lines, a to b.

PAT member: I wanted to ask you about the “Baker View Shed Boundary” that is shown on the map. Is that something you guys came up with? I’ve never heard of it, was it defined by somebody else?

Perry: Sometime in recent history there was a zone just shown, not a zoning district, just an area defined on the ground. That when something will be proposed in front of or behind the Interpretive Center, it's required that the BLM is notified. There is an area of environmental critical concern in front of the Interpretive Center and the Oregon Trail. The BLM runs the Interpretive Center so they just wanted to be notified.

PAT member: That’s the view shed of the Interpretive Center?

Perry: No, the view shed is much more expansive than that. That's kind of the “near view shed.”

PAT member: Where the map shows the “Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife two-mile lek buffer,” it says the red areas are within two miles of a known lek?

Perry: Yes.

PAT member: I apologize because I know you’ve probably answered this question, but I’m wondering why don’t you consider going underground?

Perry: I can tell you there are a number of reasons. For the total length of the line it's not really a reasonable option. For short segments it may be feasible engineering-wise, but it's very expensive and it's also very much more difficult to maintain. Lower-voltage lines, 138 kV and 230 kV, are more conducive to being put underground. The 500 kV lines are really high voltage and have a lot of construction that goes along with it. It's not a simple matter. That's a landscape architect's answer. We also have some engineers who could tell you some more details about that.

Onion Creek

- The Onion Creek region includes two alternative routes: the eastern route and the western route. The Onion Creek area is at the intersection of Union County, Grant County and Baker County. Through a comparison based on construction difficulty, permitting difficulty and mitigation cost, the analysis determined the eastern route to be more reasonable than the western route.
- Permitting difficulty factors:

- The western route includes several state scenic waterways that cannot be crossed. It also includes wilderness study areas, roadless areas, and other features that would prohibit the construction of the transmission line.
- The western route is not reasonable because it crosses designated USFS visual quality objective retention lands and parallels in close proximity to a nationally designated scenic byway.
- The eastern route crosses 4.8 fewer miles of the buffer of the Nationally Designated Scenic Byway.
- Construction difficulty factors:
 - The western route has approximately 43 miles of high construction difficulty.
 - The eastern route crosses 6.5 fewer miles of high erosion hazard lands.

PAT member: That looks like good farmland on the south end.

Perry: I'm not sure we'd go through any farmland.

PAT member: If you were around Wingsdale? You would have to jump over it.

Perry: We've been trying to miss irrigated farmland wherever we could.

Proposed alternative routes – Jim Nickerson, Tetra Tech, Vice President, Energy Services

After Dave Perry concluded his presentation, Nickerson presented the Eastern, Central and Western route alternatives. He explained how the routes were narrowed down to these alternatives. Nickerson's presentation included the following information:

- There are three categories of why routes were not advanced:
 - Routes that did not meet the project's purpose and need.
 - Routes that were contrary to government or private-sector management plans or to the law.
 - Routes that had combinations of high permitting difficulty or another single factor.
- One specific route that did not meet the project's purpose and need is the route that would have gone east around Boise through Idaho, and north into the state of Washington. The route was considered not reasonable for the following reasons:
 - The route would be 100 miles longer than any other route or combination of routes.
 - Residents of Idaho are just as likely to be concerned about natural resource protection as residents of Oregon are.
 - Washington residents would likely argue the transmission line does not need to go through their state to connect Boardman and Hemingway.

- Power is projected to be needed on the west side of Boise, not the east, in the near term.
- In the long term, routing the transmission line east of Boise would require Idaho Power to build two substations and more transmission lines.
- Another factor that eliminated some routes from consideration was a barrier in the middle of the project area consisting of state scenic waterways, federally designated wild and scenic rivers, roadless areas, wilderness areas and other protected and scenic areas.
- Some routes were not advanced because they would be very difficult, if not impossible, to permit.
- Some areas near Boardman present high permitting difficulty issues:
 - The Naval bombing range must be avoided. Two flight paths into the bombing range have 100-foot height restrictions on towers.
 - Several areas around Boardman are under management by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Nature Conservancy for the Washington ground squirrel, a Category One habitat.
 - In general, a transmission line would have to go around the bombing range from the north or south.
 - A western route from Grant County or Harney County must work around the Nature Conservancy managed area and must take into account another 500 kV line planned for that area.
 - There appears to be a path for the transmission line around the bombing range but the routes that go through the bombing range will not be advanced.
- The Baker Valley area includes some key resources such as pivot irrigation and sage grouse leks.
 - Several sage grouse leks are concentrated at the southern end of the study area, affecting two of the routes.
 - The Baker Valley also includes a Wildlife Management Area and residential development.
 - Further study could possibly reveal more sage grouse leks in the Baker Valley area.
 - Several routes have been eliminated from consideration in the Baker Valley because of their potential impact on agriculture.
 - Idaho Power wants to avoid building the line through Exclusive Farm Use land or through irrigated farmland.
 - A route that closely followed I-84 through the Baker Valley was eliminated because it included an airport exclusion area that would prohibit construction of the towers.

- One route would create a new corridor across the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.
- Several routes around the Snake River Valley will not be advanced for the following reasons:
 - Several of the routes proposed by the South PAT crossed both irrigated agriculture in Idaho and Exclusive Farm Use land in Oregon.
 - There is a 300-foot buffer around residences where the transmission line cannot be built.
- Many team members have suggested siting the Boardman to Hemingway line along the same corridor as the existing PacifiCorp Summerlake to Midpoint 500 kV line.
- Eliminating all the routes with high permitting and construction difficulty produced three route alternatives: Western alternative route, Central alternative route and Eastern alternative route.

Western alternative route

- The Western alternative route is 275 miles long, making it the shortest of the three route alternatives. However, the Western alternative route would require creating the most amount of new transmission line corridor.
- The Western alternative route is characterized by natural resource issues:
 - High quality streams
 - Two national forests with no existing utility corridors
 - Rugged terrain
- The Western alternative route crosses Grant County. Throughout the Community Advisory Process, residents of Grant County have commented that they are strongly opposed to having the transmission line built in Grant County, especially through the John Day Valley.
- The Western alternative route would require crossing two national forests that do not have any existing utility corridors.
 - The Umatilla National Forest management plan does not address transmission lines. It was written in the 1980s and is in the process of being updated.
 - The Malheur National Forest management plan does not address transmission lines. The plan was written in the 1980s and is in the process of being updated.
 - The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has a designated utility corridor. The management plan contains very clear language concerning the placement of transmission lines. A new transmission line will not be

considered across the forest unless the capacity within the existing utility corridor has been exhausted.

- It is not clear to Idaho Power where the transmission line could be routed through the National Forest. The Forest Service would be required to accept an application from Idaho Power for any of its routes under their Federal Land Policy and Management Act and other regulations. It's unlikely the Forest Service would approve a new corridor through a national forest if the corridor through the Wallowa-Whitman Forest still has capacity for transmission lines.

Central alternative route

- The Central alternative route is 284 miles long. The route crosses rugged terrain and more streams than the western route.
- The main difference between the Western alternative route and the Central alternative route is that the Central alternative route is located within the Baker Valley.
- The Central alternative route has a high level of construction difficulty.

Eastern alternative route

- The Eastern alternative route is the longest of the three proposed alternative routes by approximately 25 miles.
- The Eastern alternative route would run parallel to I-84 for 44 miles and also run parallel to existing transmission lines for 111 miles. The eastern route would require the least amount of new corridor (188 miles) and would be the least difficult route to construct.
- A disadvantage of the eastern route is that it could create concerns about the view shed from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

Comparison of alternative routes

- The Western and Central alternative routes would use more public land than private land.
 - The Western alternative route would use 137 miles (50 percent) of public land.
 - The Central alternative route would use 110 miles (39 percent) of public land.
 - The Eastern alternative route would use 93 miles (31 percent) of public land.
- The Western and Central alternative routes would require more new corridor than the eastern route.
 - The Western alternative route would require 229 miles of new corridor.

- The Central alternative route would require 224 miles of new corridor.
- The Eastern Alternative route would require 188 miles of new corridor.
- The Eastern alternative route would possibly require crossing more irrigated farmland, but it would require less forest clearing.
- The Western alternative route would have the highest construction difficulty.
 - The Western alternative route would include 117 miles of high construction difficulty.
 - The Central alternative route would include 99 miles of high construction difficulty.
 - The Eastern alternative route would include 65 miles of high construction difficulty.

Maps and data tables for each region can be found in Appendix 4. The maps and summaries of the permitting, construction and mitigation factors are also available on the project Web site, www.boardmantohemingway.com.

Central PAT Summary of Comments

A series of five comment forms were provided to team members at the meeting. The comment forms asked the following questions:

- 1. Is there a revised route that you believe is permissible and constructible that should be considered? Why?**
- 2. What are your “Likes” about the Western alternative route?**
- 3. What are your “Dislikes” about the Western alternative route?**
- 4. What are your “Likes” about the Central alternative route?**
- 5. What are your “Dislikes” about the Central alternative route?**
- 6. What are your “Likes” about the Eastern alternative route?**
- 7. What are your “Dislikes” about the Eastern alternative route?**
- 8. Based on the analysis, is there an alternative you support as a proposed route?**

Team members were encouraged to complete all comment forms and return them to Idaho Power before March 25, 2010. Several team members wrote letters or e-mails rather than filling out comment forms. Overall, 97 comment sheets and 28 e-mails and letters were submitted from the Central PAT.

All input provided throughout the Community Advisory Process will be used when Idaho Power submits its revised application to restart the NEPA process.

The following pages provide a summary of all comments collected from comments forms, letters and e-mails that were submitted by residents of Baker and Union counties. Comments are listed in order of the frequency. Judgment was used to categorize comments submitted in the form of letters and e-mails.

The summary is an overview of the themes and opinions expressed by the Central PAT members. The information is not intended to be statistically reliable. Verbatim transcriptions of all comment forms, letters and e-mails can be found in Appendix 4.

Summaries of comments from all five PATs (Central, South, North, Grant County and Harney County) are available on the project Web site, www.boardmantohemingway.com.

Question 1: Is there a revised route that you believe is permissible and constructible that should be considered? Why?

The following additional routes were suggested:

- A route across Malheur and Harney counties into Lake County should be considered to tie into existing corridors in Christmas Valley area.
- Route the line east of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center so it would be hidden behind the hills.
- There should be better utilization of existing corridors.
- Avoid Oregon altogether.
- If you decide to go through Virtue Flat, center the line evenly between the two homesteads on Virtue Flats. Moving the line through Virtue Flat approximately one and 1.3 miles west would be fairer and less intrusive to the view shed.
- Swing east between North Powder and route BA18, staying west of Medical Springs and Keating. Cross extreme northern end of Virtue Flat from West to East, behind the hills from views of the Interpretive Center, then drop south to come back into near Pleasant Valley, near existing 138 KV line.
- Consider route C3 around Baker that goes west of I-84

Question 2: What are your “Likes” about the Western alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- Affects fewer people and property owners. (
- Fewer visual impacts along corridor.
- Impacts less Exclusive Farm Use land.
- Utilizes more public/federal lands.
- The line would not be in Baker County.
- Crosses less private lands.
- Shortest route.
- Most direct route between Boardman and Hemingway.
- Would require less transmission line to be constructed.
- Less negative impacts to wildlife.
- Less negative impact to tourism.
- Avoids Union County.
- Permitting will be less difficult.
- Would reduce the industrialization of northeast Oregon.

- Would benefit Grant County economically.
- Least disruptive to Baker and Union counties.

Question 3: What are your “Dislikes” about the Western alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- Negative impact to environmental resources and view sheds.
- “There is nothing I dislike about the Western Alternative route.”
- Many private landowners would be impacted.
- Too many permitting and construction issues to be feasible.
- Negative impact to uninhabited wilderness areas.
- High permitting difficulty through U.S. Forest Service lands.
- Clear-cutting in Malheur Forest would be required.
- Crosses John Day Valley.

Question 4: What are your “Likes” about the Central alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- “There is nothing I like about the Central Alternative route.”
- Avoids sage grouse habitat.
- More direct than the Eastern Alternative route.
- Less conflicts with the Interpretive Center than the Eastern Alternative route.
- Avoids the Virtue Flats area.
- Forest clear-cutting would not be visible from populated areas.
- Utilizes public and private lands.

Question 5: What are your “Dislikes” about the Central alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- Negatively impacts view shed of the west side of the Baker Valley.
- More impact on people and residential areas than the Western or Eastern Alternative routes.
- Negative impact to wildlife (i.e., elk, mule deer, bald eagle, bull trout and big game habitats).
- Negative impact to property owners and property values.

- Potential wildfire hazards.
- Close proximity to the Baker City Municipal Watershed.
- Negative impact to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.
- Negative impact to agricultural and irrigated lands.
- Crosses streams.
- Limited access for maintenance.
- High construction difficulty.
- Close proximity to BLM administered Hunt Mountain area of environmental critical concern.
- High potential of lawsuits from residences and groups in this area.
- Does not utilize existing utility/transportation corridor.
- Impacts U.S. Forest land.
- The route is not feasible.
- Would require more access roads than the Eastern Alternative route.
- Noxious weeds.

Question 6: What are your “Likes” about the Eastern alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- “There is nothing I like about the Eastern Alternative route.”
- Follows existing utility and transportation corridor.
- Impacts little Exclusive Farm use land.
- Easier access for fire protection.
- Less impact on wildlife, specifically sage grouse.
- Avoids most watersheds.
- Alternative east of the Interpretive Center would avoid population and view sheds.
- Route overlaps with human occupation and infrastructure.

Question 7: What are your “Dislikes” about the Eastern alternative route?

The following comments were provided:

- Negatively impacts view shed of the Baker Valley.
- Negatively impacts wildlife habitat, specifically the sage grouse.

- The transmission line would be visible from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.
- More impact on property owners in Baker and Union counties than the Central or Western Alternative routes.
- Longest of all the three route alternatives.
- Crosses private property.
- Negative impact on property values.
- Crosses the Oregon Trail.
- Negative impact to the tourism industry in Baker and Union counties.
- Negative impact on county land use plans.
- The transmission line would run along the entire length of the Baker Valley.
- Close proximately to farmlands and populated areas.

Question 8: Based on the analysis, is there an alternative you support as a proposed route?

The following comments were provided:

- The route alternative most often supported as the proposed route by Central PAT members was the Western Alternative route.
- The second route alternative most supported as the proposed route by Central PAT members was the Eastern Alternative route.

Other comments:

- The cost to purchase easements for the Central and Eastern Alternative routes will be high.
- The routes through Baker County are still the same as Idaho Power's original route, with only minor modifications.
- The idea to replace the 230 kV line with the 500 kV line seems ineffective and doing this would violate all Interpretive Center view shed issues.
- Idaho Power should consider private land as if it is "prohibited by management plans on law," or "special status."
- The route west of Interpretive Center will have strong opposition from Baker County.
- The maps provided by Tetra Tech are hard to use because they don't have distinctive roads or any topographic features.

- Idaho Power should do more energy conservation to reduce demand and implement more regional and local power generation to reduce the need for transmission lines.
- The Eastern Alternative route would be more acceptable if it went around the east side of the Interpretive Center.
- The Eastern Alternative route seems to be the most appropriate route.
- The Eastern Alternative route has many conflicts of interest.
- This transmission line, in addition to the wind farms proposed for Union County, will be disastrous to Baker and Union counties.
- The line could cause safety and health hazards from electric and magnetic fields.
- Idaho Power worked with select landowners and community leaders outside the public process to develop a route that would avoid those landowners' properties and benefit the county.
- Idaho Power didn't listen to the community criteria of "avoid the Interpretive Center."
- Not enough data was provided to clearly understand why certain routes were removed.
- Route GR3 to MA4 is too invasive to the John Day Valley.
- Oregon does not need more power until 2030 per the Northwest Power Council.
- Proposing the Central Alternative route has damaged the credibility of Idaho Power in its ability to listen, learn, reason and propose thoughtful alternatives to seeking a transmission corridor through this region of Oregon.
- The good listening and patience of the facilitators at the Baker Project Advisory Team meeting is a good reflection on the image of Idaho Power.

Q&As and Discussion

Below is a transcription of the discussion between team members and staff from Idaho Power and Tetra Tech that occurred after the presentations.

PAT member: You said before that you had to get to Sand Hollow substation. This route doesn't go to Sand Hollow.

Nickerson: Last year when the study started there were really good planning reasons to try to combine a specific Boardman to Hemingway project that had its own purpose to see if it could also start to accomplish a more far-reaching planning goal of contributing to a ring of transmission that ultimately has to be built around Boise. The need for the ring around the Treasure Valley is really 20 to 30 years out.

Angell: It was determined that the Sand Hollow substation was no longer necessary because Idaho Power is building a natural gas plant in that area. The natural gas plant, Langley Gulch, will be a 300 megawatt natural gas plant that deferred the need for energy out there.

Nickerson: So Sand Hollow, if it is a need, it is a need way out in the future now and is no longer a part of the Boardman to Hemingway project.

PAT member: The Forest Service, as you describe it, is prescribing what you do on their lands that they administer. The BLM is prescribing what you do, even off of their land.

Nickerson: Why do you say that? I wouldn't agree.

PAT member: They are the biggest stumbling block about going in front of the Interpretive Center, or even behind it, in case they build an eastern window.

Nickerson: They will only make a decision on BLM-owned land for this transmission line. They have to study the whole route under their NEPA regulations, but they don't make decisions.

PAT member: That is not what I'm talking about. If I'm wrong, I'm wrong, but it seems to me that the BLM is extending themselves into a kind of county planning role. They don't want to see the line out of the window and that's important.

Angell: Are you referring to the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center?

PAT member: Yes I am. The Forest Service doesn't care what you do off their land. The BLM does.

Nickerson: With regard to the Interpretive Center, they have it located on BLM land. They can't make decisions about use off of BLM land. They have to say, they have to consider the fact that when they look at the National Historic Preservation Act responsibilities, they have to consider the impact on the Oregon Trail, whether it's on or off public land.

PAT member: Off public land is off BLM land. And that's what I'm saying.

Nickerson: All they can do in that case is disclose what the impacts are in the NEPA process and encourage, through the National Historic Preservation Act, a mitigation program that would document and, maybe in some way, protect or enhance the interpretive aspects of how the trail could be viewed as a way of offsetting, say, the impacts of the transmission line.

PAT member: Isn't that almost the exact route that Idaho Power proposed initially?

Nickerson: It is similar. But it is different on the southern end.

PAT member: Where is it different? It follows I-84 down to Hemingway and that was originally where you people drew your favored route through there, and what's changed? Nothing.

Perry: When you get down south of Durkee and swing west, it will now go west of Vale. The old route went east of Vale and then up I-84. The first 100 miles is pretty different.

PAT member: So? What's that got to do with us? Doesn't make any difference from what I've seen in the first meeting that I attended here. Why waste our time?

Nickerson: You know, if you want to...I think it's a mistake to think we worked back toward it. We didn't. We've tried to go about this and figure out what's what, but for those of you who have been struggling through the last two years...

PAT member: Waste of time, has not changed a bit. Period. They need to have an earthquake or something to change their mind.

At this point Nickerson displayed a slide that showed a comparison between the route that was filed in Idaho Power's original Notice of Intent and the current eastern alternative route.

PAT member: Isn't that basically the same route that you're following?

Nickerson: This is exactly the difference between two years ago and today. The yellow is the route of two years ago.

PAT member: So not much has changed. Ontario is out of it.

Nickerson: I wanted to answer a couple of these sage grouse questions. Last night I said it's a moving target.

PAT member: If they declare the sage grouse an endangered species, will that change everything?

Nickerson: It's hard to tell. They are going to make some kind of decision, it should be coming out this coming Friday. We are also working on a project that's going across three states and each state is handling it differently.

PAT member: It'll be federal at that point. Right now they agree, but if it becomes a federal listing won't that change?

Nickerson: There's guessing. Is there anybody that's got facts? It's probably going to be a political decision. In Wyoming, where most of the sage grouse are, they're in direct

competition with the biggest revenue producer in the state which is oil and gas. There will not be two-mile buffers around sage grouse in Wyoming. It would put Wyoming out of business.

In Idaho they are kind of all mixed up; they are trying to decide whether they want to have exclusion areas, they want to manage key habitat, they haven't really put a stake in the ground. Oregon and ODFW feel very strongly about two-mile buffers around leks. They're trying to refine that policy. Dave talked about how if it's near another transmission line, it could get a variance, or if it's intervening terrain, you could get another. The decision on sage grouse, everybody – BLM, the state Fish and Game agencies, the Fish and Wildlife service – have all been trying to work out interim solution so there is not a listing of sage grouse. My guess is you can check it out on Friday; it is going to be very much a mixed bag that probably will result in it not being listed in some blanket manner. Luckily, I'm also a landscape architect, so I don't have any credibility in what I'm saying about the sage grouse issue.

PAT member: You're kind of wearing us down here. I'm at a loss to understand why taking that 230 kV line away from the west side of the Interpretive Center and putting that 500 kV line where it is, is even an option. That would defeat every purpose we've had about that Interpretive Center. Why are you even talking about it?

Nickerson: Now I can put my landscape architect hat on...we have, last year, not recently, did a lot of, some of may have seen it, did some pretty high-tech simulations of what the line would look like.

PAT member: Atrocious.

Nickerson: Using different kinds of steel poles, and this is really from a professional point of view, it can be placed in that foreground in front of the Interpretive Center and organized in relation to the existing line with really a minimal amount of visibility. The reason I'm saying this is because I don't believe, professionally, it will be as visually impacting as people feel it's going to be.

PAT member: I never saw these simulations, when did you show those?

Nickerson: I think we showed them to Fred one time.

PAT member: Of course. Is Fred not here?

PAT member: I think he had another meeting.

Nickerson: It didn't matter, because it was during the January time frame last year when everything was stopping. People wanted to back up and think about things again.

PAT member: I want to see them. Have you got them?

Nickerson: I'd be glad to show them. We probably have them here.

PAT member: Maybe after the break. That would be great.

PAT member: So by relocating that line you can use that corridor without anyone objecting to it?

Nickerson: No, certainly when it comes to visual impact, everybody has an opinion.

PAT member: There's already a line there. So you can go ahead and put this 500 kV line there, because it's already there.

Nickerson: I think you can put it there in an environmentally acceptable way. There is no inherent right to put it there. You have to go and get all of your permits first.

PAT member: Hasn't a line been permitted through there? What's the difference?

Nickerson: The difference is this would be a second line and it would be larger. If you remove the 230 kV line, you are still transferring the impact to someplace else; it doesn't go away. The other line doesn't have to be in front, we would move it to the backside of the Interpretive Center. Because it's a wood pole line, it's smaller and many people don't notice the wood pole lines that are throughout the landscape.

Curtin: I hear you say we are wearing you down. Do you want to take a break, have some dinner, and then come back and finish this up?

The PAT members decided to take a break and resume the discussion after dinner. PAT members requested to see the video simulation of the proposed transmission line that was created about one year ago. The video simulation shows what the transmission line would look like from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center and from the main exit off I-84 toward the Interpretive Center.

PAT member: What would be the advantage of putting the 230 kV line behind the Interpretive Center? Is it the type of poles?

Perry: Just not to have two sets of structures in front, just one. And what we try to do is locate it close to where the structures are now, so that we take advantage of the topography that is there.

PAT member: So what is the advantage of running the 230 kV line versus the 500 kV line behind the Interpretive Center? What is the advantage of that?

Perry: I think the big thing is that there will be a lot of concerns from some of the historic agencies about impacting the view behind the Interpretive Center. Whether it be from the Interpretive Center or whether it be from the road, it's pretty untouched. And you have an intact portion of the Oregon Trail, and for some reason that's a very high priority and very important.

If you put the wood pole structures in the back, and they are smaller, shorter structures, it would seem to have less potential impact than the taller, larger 500 kV ones.

Nickerson: We had representatives of the Oregon Trail Association come out and look at different parts of the trail. They were actually more concerned with the view from the back of the Interpretive Center than the front, from a historical standpoint.

PAT member: How is it that a 160-foot tower isn't visible?

Perry: Not all of the towers will be screened.

PAT member: How tall are the current towers on the 230 kV line?

Perry: We are just guessing, but we were saying 70 to 80 feet. When you have the tool like simulations, you can actually move structures around in the view, and move them accurately, so you can get an idea about whether adding another stand and shortening the structures might reduce the potential visible impact.

PAT member: What finish will the towers have?

Perry: For lattice structures, in a lot of cases, we use dull finish and they really pick up the background. We would use steel poles, and they stand out a little more. With a lattice structure you have to really make sure you have the right color, the right tone. You want to make sure you're not underestimating the visibility. There are so many things that go into it. Once you get the correct location and the right structure, then it's getting the right color. But the first and most important thing is to see how much you can backdrop it. The worst thing you can do is to have things that go along the top of the ridge; that's what we try to avoid as much as possible.

PAT member: How high is the 230 kV line? About crossing the 230 kV line, how high does it have to be to cross?

Perry: What we would do in that particular situation is find an advantageous place to cross, where the 230 kV line is lower, so you don't actually have to make them any higher. You look for the place along the span, the best location to cross.

Nickerson: In this case, we actually crossed it back before you got into the view, we relocated and crossed it.

Perry: We'll show you the steel poles and then we can kind of inch through it. Now this is going to show it with steel pole H-frame structures. They have what they call Corten steel finish, and it's brown.

PAT member: How tall?

Perry: 100 feet.

PAT member: Is there a possibility of using those?

Perry: I'm sure Idaho Power would consider that, but you've got to look at it from a lot of different directions. I'm sure they might consider steel poles in short locations; they wouldn't want to do it for the entire length of the line.

PAT member: You cross the canyon, get them further apart.

Perry: Oh lattice, you can go just as far. The thing with steel poles is they have very deep foundations and require a lot of concrete, whereas these lattice structures have smaller foundations and you can build them much easier.

PAT member: I think that the bright steel is hidden better because you're looking against that almost ever-present inversion layer, which kind of makes it a hazy place, right?

Perry: Certainly in that picture.

PAT member: It's there a lot of the time.

PAT member: Is that keeping the 230 kV line also?

McCarthy: Previously when we were going to have the 230 kV line and the 500 kV line beside each other, this was previous to us pulling all the routes off the map.

Perry: What we would be doing there is looking at the current alternatives and trying to get them accurate. One of the reasons we were trying to think about moving the 230 kV line is so we could slide the 500 kV line closer to the hills to come down and screen a little bit more of the structures.

PAT member: Is there any place along this route where the structures would have to be lighted?

Perry: You have to light structures when they are over 200 feet. I think our plans are not to have any lighted structures. They won't have any red flashing lights.

PAT member: Can the lattice be 190 feet tall? I got between 130, 140 and 190 for lattice.

Perry: Yes. What this is going to do is show you a view from I-84 and Highway 86. And what we're seeing here is that these lattice structures are backdropped. They pick up a lot of the earth tones behind it, but the key thing is not to break the skyline.

PAT member: The key thing is to go where it's least visible.

Perry: I think they're kind of one and the same. That the steel pole H-frames.

PAT member: Do the H-frames have to have a 250-foot right-of-way or 125 foot right-of-way?

Nickerson: For the 500 kV line it would require a 250-foot right-of-way.

PAT member: No matter how you construct it?

Nickerson: It's the same right-of-way.

PAT member: The portrayal on this simulation makes it look desolate, like there's no homes or anything out there.

PAT member: They erased the homes, put green stamps on them.

PAT member: Must be a sign.

PAT member: Is there a road built between each one of those towers?

Perry: Typically, yes.

PAT member: You would build a road from tower to tower?

Perry: They need to have access to every structure for maintenance.

PAT member: What we saw what the power line without the access roads, right?

Perry: I don't remember. We wanted to make sure it was as accurate as we could get it.

PAT member: You can actually dial in the color of the lattice structure?

Angell: Just to get the reflection and all that for the lighting, it's one color, you don't change it typically.

PAT member: As I'm looking at these, they seem fairly indistinct, in simulation. But when I compare it to driving by the freeway to Boardman, those things are close. You can still see them from a distance. I'm curious what you might say about that.

Perry: When you drive down Highway 86 and head toward the Interpretive Center under the 500 kV line, the towers are going to look big. On I-84 from a mile away, they will be mostly backdropped so they won't be as intrusive. When you drive by Boardman and you've got three sets of high voltage lines on flat terrain with no screening, no vegetation at all in front, they are very visible.

PAT member: In this simulation, looking from the Interpretive Center, what horizontal distance is it supposed to represent in this simulation?

Perry: Emily could give you a reasonable distance on that.

PAT member: To me, those towers are going to be visible from Baker City. And I think it's going to be a really tough sell. So the options are going around behind the hill, or putting it underground. I've heard that you can put it underground; it's just that it is a very costly process. And you outlined some other difficulties. But for just a couple miles, is that a reasonable thing? Because to me, from what I've seen here, what you are showing now, the towers through the valley is not a viable option to me.

Perry: How about the towers behind the Visitor's Center?

PAT member: From what I see here, this is not a good option on the west side.

Perry: We share your concerns. You know we have been looking at this routing for two years and there are just so few places that you can go. We started out looking at this whole huge area to the west and we found one thing after another. It kept pushing us around. If it's going to wind up here in Baker County, we should work together to find the best solution. I'm not sure who should speak to undergrounding.

Angell: I can speak to undergrounding.

PAT member: We need to see what it's going to look like behind the Interpretive Center. I think we need to do a pretty thorough evaluation of what it would look like if you had a couple miles of that underground if it's got to be on the west side.

Angell: Undergrounding on the west side of the Interpretive Center? Our preference is to stay overhead and find a route that will work in an overhead manner, and we're going to continue to do that to avoid the underground. Because the underground comes with many headaches.

Perry: My guess is during the course of NEPA that question will be asked.

PAT member: What are some of the headaches? I've always heard it stopped at that. I've never heard it explained further.

Angell: You've got a transition from over to under. Imagine a tower that's bigger and has even more stuff on it. It's almost twice as bad as single overhead towers. Start with that, and you've got to have one on each end. Then you have to go underground and this is going to be encased in concrete the whole way, wherever that's going, whatever route that's going, you are probably going to be farming. If it's overhead you can still farm under it, but if goes underground you probably won't be able to use the land anymore.

PAT member: How far under the surface would it be?

Angell: I'm not sure how far you would go under. You could have some topsoil over it, typically not very much topsoil, maybe a foot or so.

Pike: It would be a few feet underground. The steeper you get, the hotter the cables get, the bigger the cables need to be, the more sensitive the insulation needs to be. You have to protect that line under where the line is buried. It could limit things like farming, those types of activities. It's generally more impactful. We're not underground engineers. It would likely be a pretty large duct bank.

Angell: Six to ten feet is what I'm thinking.

PAT member: If the route going down the interstate is off the table, undergrounding would alleviate the airport issue.

Angell: We would look at overhead options first, but you are right.

PAT member: How close is your central route to residential areas in the back of Baker Valley? It's hard to tell on the maps.

Nickerson: It would be further up the slope than where the development is occurring, but not so far up that it would be too difficult to build. The ground rises pretty quickly all along there, so the line would be backdropped. But as you're coming from the feeder roads from Baker and other parts of the valley, you would be driving towards the transmission line. You would see it, but it would be backdropped. I can't tell you right now how many feet it would be from peoples' homes.

Perry: It still has to be studied. Over Hunter Mountain the slopes are precipitous. I'm not sure how far up that slope they could ever get. It might be where the slope meets the flat of the valley, which would put it right by residences.

PAT member: That's one of your routes? You say you are giving us three choices, but you're not really giving us three choices. If you look at your permitting analysis, the western route is best for permitting. I know it goes over the most forestland, and it is a little bit more steep, but as far as permitting goes, there are only a few areas where you have some issues. Whereas the eastern route is the worst for permits;

that's the one causing the most problems for you. I get the feeling this whole meeting is still pushing us all around the Baker corridor.

Perry: We've been to meetings in the past and early on we looked at a route over to the west.

PAT member: I'm talking about your western route alternative.

Perry: I know.

PAT member: Which route affects the most people?

Perry: I'd have to think about that.

PAT member: I can speak to the central route through Pine Creek, Salmon Creek, Goodrich Creek and up through the foothills. There are about 2,000 people. We protect that as part of the fire district. You are looking at a fairly densely populated area there, one of the biggest in eastern Oregon.

Perry: On the Central route?

PAT member: On the central route.

PAT member: If you take the western route versus the central versus the eastern, I can assure you, the eastern route affects more population than any other route you have on the table there. Why is that? When you have that many people who are so offended by this power line, why don't you choose the route that affects the least amount of people?

Perry: There are people in Grant County who feel the same way. A lot of people live in the John Day Valley on both sides. Does it matter if there are 50 more people in Baker Valley than in John Day? It's an issue for anybody who has a home who is going to have to look at it.

PAT member: The eastern route around Baker has not varied within a mile from the original proposed route. This western route was a route which all of us chose at a much earlier meeting. At this point that western route is not being considered at all, and you continue to revert back to this eastern route that you proposed earlier on. As I understand it, the western route is not being considered.

Curtin: That is why we are here tonight. We need to hear your opinions on these three routes. That is the type of information we want to document and look at.

PAT member: This is not a personal attack on you or anyone else. I have a hard time understanding why we had all these meetings early on, and all of us drew alternative routes. This eastern alternative route through Baker is the one you had on the table from the get-go. Many of us in this room were opposed to that and as an outcome of that opposition to that route, the western route was drawn. But we keep coming back to this eastern route, and we keep coming back to you putting the line in front of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

Perry: I think it's constraints and opportunities. And if you looked at the existing transmission line on I-84, for a long way, it's a great opportunity.

PAT member: Explain that.

Perry: Constraints are areas that you try to avoid, and opportunities are what you try to use. Constraints are places that have various degrees of avoidance attached to them.

PAT member: Where does the voice of all of us play into this?

Perry: We didn't pick any of these routes. All of these routes were drawn by CAP members.

PAT member: This route you're proposing in front of the Interpretive Center was drawn by who?

PAT member: We have said putting it in front of the Interpretive Center was off consideration from the beginning.

Perry: We didn't put that on there at all.

Curtin: We can go back and look at the original routes.

PAT member: There's a mouse in your pocket.

Perry: There's no mouse in my pocket, ma'am. The only one we put on there is the route far east of the Interpretive Center, but the sage grouse are a big factor with that route.

PAT member: Because it had so many leks on it?

Perry: Whether you look at things in balance, all the categories of potential impact – that route that is the farthest east of the Interpretive Center still, to us looks like the best route.

PAT member: There is a 500 kV line that runs over toward Burns and then drops south a little bit. One of the proposals we all talked about was paralleling that line and then going up toward Boardman, similar to that western route.

Perry: I can't remember all the issues related to every route, but the one that went further to the west wound up to be about 60 miles longer. And it had a lot of construction issues that has to do with the extra 50 to 60 miles of length. It crossed a wild and scenic river and there were other wildlife things that went along with it. But what we had picked was, there were four of them that kind of came together and we picked the one that was furthest to the east because it avoided those issues.

PAT member: I wasn't here when a lot of these routes were drawn. But just looking at where you have whittled things down to now, it just seems to me, and I've done GIS for 20 years, I have worked for the Forest Service, it seems like it would have been easier to take out the "absolute-no" areas, take out the construction difficulty areas, and give us a map that showed where the possibilities were, and let us draw lines. Because it makes us feel like we are getting an opportunity to have a choice, but really we are not.

PAT member: It's not our choice. This route in front of the Interpretive Center that we are speaking about now has never been our choice as far as I know.

PAT member: It just seems like a lot of money and effort has been wasted.

Perry: I don't think it has been wasted at all. We brought a lot of information on exclusion areas and high permitting difficulty areas and many, many other factors.

PAT member: You guys ought to be complimented for the fact that you have put together an incredible program here. I compliment you guys on the amount of work you have all done. This is impressive. But what I'm not impressed about is that you are simply not listening to the people in Baker County. And that doesn't go over well with me particularly. I think we're being unheard. I think this format you've drawn up is basically no different from the original format that you tried to sell us in the first place.

Nickerson: I appreciate what you're saying about Baker County. We had the same discussion with Grant County last night.

PAT member: Yes, but you listened to Grant County.

Nickerson. No, they said, "You're not listening to us, we told you that you need to go over and put it in the I-84 corridor where there are existing transmission lines and there are existing highways and not be putting it through our mountains and valleys."

We have criteria that the Grant County folks put forward, that you folks put forward, and it resulted in right now three routes: one that is in the west, and one that is in the east, and one that's kind of an evolutionary route that reflects what folks have said in each of these PAT meetings.

We're not here to draw a judgment. We're here to say, 'Do you agree with the routes we got rid of?' And of the routes that are remaining, Idaho Power is trying to get comments on those routes. Then they have to make a decision about what a proposed route will be that they're going to submit to the Bureau of Land Management in the next few weeks. I don't know what route will be the proposed route, what route will be an alternative or whether they'll submit just one route.

But Idaho Power thinks, and we've been helping them, we're all part of the team, that they have gotten to the point where we have found three feasible, but difficult, routes to get from Hemingway to Boardman. There are no easy solutions here.

Idaho Power has to make a choice to take it forward to the next series, here the BLM will start taking those routes. The BLM has to accept the one Idaho Power proposes, because that's the rules, but the BLM can add other routes or subtract routes. And then they bring them back to the public again through the scoping process. All that we're doing is a very detailed precursor siting study to get back to a route that takes the best of some very difficult choices and says, "Idaho Power thinks that out of all the constraints that are out there, this is the best place to build a transmission line. We're willing to build it here. Now BLM, let's start the two-year dialogue of where it should be."

PAT member: I understand that Idaho Power is not in business to be out of business. I understand the business aspect of that, believe it or not. But, with all due respect to what you're telling me, if it's 60 miles longer to go the other route, and the other route affects people less, I'm talking about the western route, if it's 60 miles longer ... with all due respect to Idaho Power I'm sorry but you will recoup your money over time and you'll have less of an impact on the people in the state of

Oregon by doing that. To me that's a win-win situation. You guys will still get the money. It will cost you more, but that's a cost of doing business in my opinion. You cannot expect to put a line through Baker Valley, or adjacent to Baker Valley, or Grant County, or John Day Valley, and have it not affect people. You're going to get people pretty upset. But I think what you're telling us is that Grant County and Malheur County don't want it, so you're coming into Baker County. I'm sorry but that's not acceptable to me. If you guys want power put it where it's going to least affect the people, in spite of the fact it'll cost you 60 miles more. You will, Idaho Power will recoup their money. I guarantee it.

Perry: We still have a Western route.

PAT member: It's not been ruled out?

PAT member: Can I get a clarification? You have a western route, and an eastern route with a spur, a central spur.

Nickerson: We're not arguing that. That's the way it evolved.

PAT member: And two of those go through Baker County, two of the three go through Baker County.

PAT member: Is the western route going through point GR3. I tried to figure it out. It seems to me when we're talking of the western route we're talking about going through GR3 all the way to the MA4 and MA5. So it actually doesn't affect, it's going through the John Day Valley but going between Dayville and Mount Vernon, and then cutting out above Seneca and then below Canyon City and John Day.

Perry: Right, but where it comes over the Aldrich Mountains is right about where John Day is. Then it angles west and follows the valley for a number of miles.

PAT member: John Day is quite a bit east though from where this transmission line is supposed to be coming.

Perry: I actually went down and drove it yesterday, and I looked at it. It's about 10 miles parallel. I don't want to argue about the exact location, but there are a bunch of people down along the John Day Valley who are concerned, not just in the valley, but up on the side hills.

Angell: He's talking about the John Day Valley, not the city of John Day.

PAT member: He's talking. It looks like it does parallel halfway between Dayville and Mount Vernon. I've driven that road, I drive it almost weekly. They have their hills also. You're not going to be on the actual highway, you're south of the highway, you've got those visual blocks that you're talking about in Baker Valley. They exist there too.

Perry: Absolutely.

PAT member: So, I'm sure it doesn't go over well; none of us want it where they can see it.

PAT member: How are you really going to decide? Let's say for example that all of us in Baker County say, "We want the western route." Grant County says, "We want eastern route." Malheur County says something else. So how are you going to make that decision?

Angell: Rosemary, do you want to answer that question?

Perry: I'm not exactly sure. We've got a bunch of facts, and I think we're going to get a bunch of comments from Grant County. And then we'll see what the information is, and at the end we'll try to make the best decision we can. My guess is we'll have at least one route, maybe more than one route.

PAT member: Is the Siting Council still involved?

Perry: Yes, the Siting Council will have just as much to say about this, if not more... they'll definitely have a big hand in this the whole way.

Angell: It's the Energy Facility Siting Council.

Perry: They have their own set of criteria. It's 19 criteria and it's pass/fail.

PAT member: One of those commissioners was here at a previous meeting.

Perry: We can submit routes as long as the Siting Council and NEPA recommend something that is constructible. So you try not to submit routes that you wouldn't be willing to build. When they bring alternates on, they're going to inquire about that because they don't want to propose alternatives that nobody would want.

PAT member: I'm assuming that you also have the same possibilities with the western route that you offered us, and that they could use the lower towers. This is assuming you go that way. You can use the 100-foot towers, the brown, they might blend in better or they may not. But all those options are available.

Perry: Once you get it down to a couple of routes, you get down to a much greater level of detail. Whichever will be complete surveys, cultural surveys, biological surveys, a visual survey, engineering, it just goes on and on. You keep moving on and on to greater and greater levels of detail.

PAT member: What takes precedence of the three? You have permitting difficulty and construction difficulty. Those are the two you said were more important than the mitigation. Of the two, permitting and construction, which one trumps the other?

Perry: Well, think about it. If you don't get a permit you don't construct anything.

PAT member: I don't want to beat a dead horse, but if you look at your map, the permitting is much easier along the western route. You have a lot less little red marks, but the whole Baker Valley basically has permit issues, whereas on the western route you just don't have that many.

Perry: Except that you go through 44 miles of national forest. And if that happens to be all forested then it's two square miles of clearing. I think that the Forest Service may have an issue with that. They probably haven't cleared two square miles in a while. They

also may look at it like there's a corridor available, so use it. We can't tell you what they're going to do.

Nickerson: We're oversimplifying the permitting. You take either route you have streams with TDML issues, you have to get wetland permits from the Corps of Engineers, and you have to get rare plant surveys. I wouldn't say there is any less or more permits on one route versus another.

PAT member: I'm using your own maps that are saying it, and the western route is mostly green with little spots of some red or purple. And both of the eastern routes that we call central and eastern are not.

PAT member: Shouldn't you treat the private land owners with as much respect as you said the Forest Service deserved? That's the part I wish Idaho Power would consider, the private. We have rights too. And like the public, there are 32,000 cars a day that go up and down the Interstate. There's 17,000 people visiting the Interpretive Center. That's a huge amount of humans seeing this power line every day versus going the west route.

Perry: Is 17,000 a daily number?

PAT member: No, a year. I know there are 32,000 cars going up and down that interstate.

Perry: I came here for the first time and went to the Interpretive Center and it's a very impressive view.

Curtin: I'm going to intercede here and I'm worried about time. It's 8:15 and I know people are busy. Adam Bless from the Oregon Department of Energy would like to say a few comments.

Bless: I heard a misconception and I don't want people to walk out with that misconception. The question was, "What is the role of the Siting Council? We went over this way back in October of 2008, it was a long time ago and a bit of a different group of people.

The Energy Facility Siting County (EFSC) reviews a proposed route that is proposed by the applicant. EFSC doesn't choose a route. If EFSC sees three alternatives it doesn't pick one. The applicant's responsibility is to propose a route and show reasons why their route meets the standards. EFSC can either say yes, it meets the standards, or no, it doesn't meet the standards. That's the decision that EFSC makes.

In terms of where the line goes, EFSC doesn't decide where the line goes. The best analogy I can make is if you wanted to build an addition onto your home and you wanted to go to the county and get the building inspector, the county wouldn't tell you what to build or where to build it. They would just review your blueprints for conformance with code. That's what we do. EFSC does have a tremendous thing to say, it says yes or no, but it doesn't say where.

PAT member: So there's a meeting with the PUC March 29 at 5:30 in Ontario and we can make comments, and what should are comments be there?

Bless: I'm not sure about the March 29 meeting because the hearing officer of the PUC just emailed out a schedule today, and since I'm on the road and have trouble getting e-mail, I'm not sure if the date has slipped or not. It hasn't moved up. If anything it has moved to April.

That meeting will be about the question of whether the line is needed, which is an economic question. The PUC is a different agency and they have a different question in front of them. But you're right to be paying attention, because the question of "is it needed at all" is a PUC question, I know there's hearing in Ontario.

PAT member: We're going to go to Ontario and make our comments there.

Bless: That makes sense. Those questions, those comments, are on reviewing a very important document called the Integrated Resource Plan. And in order to comment on the Integrated Resource Plan, it has to be on the plan itself. It's not a plan about where the line should go; it's looking at just a generic question of, "Should Idaho Power's portfolio of power for meeting their demands include a certain amount of purchased power from the mid-Columbia area, which is basically a hub from all over the Columbia River Dam system, to the Boise area?" And it has nothing to do with the route, it just decides if they should build a line from Mid-C to the Boise area

PAT member: But it does affect what EFSC does because it's one of the 15 points.

Bless: That's correct. If the PUC doesn't acknowledge Idaho Power's Integrated Resource Plan, then basically Idaho Power doesn't have a way of proving need in front of EFSC. So we look to the PUC for that expertise, because it's really an economics question. We kind of defer to them on that question, but Idaho Power has to prove its case in front of them in order to get past us, you're right there.

Curtin: There's one thing that we really need to get tonight, which is your comments on these alternatives. We need them in writing.

PAT member: I just want to poll the group here. How many of you would like to have another meeting to be able to make a recommendation to these guys? Where we have a chance to discuss that a little more? This is just for us. You can come and join us.

PAT member: I would like to suggest that we meet and maybe you join us after an hour, an hour and a half, whatever. Have some of the Idaho Power folks come.

Angell: My schedule is very full in March, but the week of the 15th I can make myself available sometime.

Curtin: Do you want the GIS data?

PAT member: This is a lot to be given to us, and two of those three routes are for us to be looking at.

Angell: That's correct. Agreed.

PAT member: Is it possible to get this map poster on the Internet?

Rosemary Curtin: We want to get you exactly what you need. If you would like to meet as a community, talk first, and then Idaho Power will join you after. You would like us to bring the GIS capacity to that meeting. I'm not going to do the breakout discussion groups... those that want to submit comment sheets please get them in, please stay the night to do it.

PAT member: Before you break up, Dave, are you the highest-ranking Idaho Power person here tonight?

Angell: Vern Porter is.

PAT member: Come on up here, Porter. Vern, I've got a big interest in this that goes back a lot of years.

I'm just going to make a statement now. I'm not asking you questions. It seems to me that the people in this room are dissatisfied with where we've gotten. I decided early tonight doesn't matter, they're going to do what they want to do. There's a lot of history. Have you been working for Idaho Power very long? There's a lot of history about what's happened between our county and Idaho Power, and it hasn't always been great.

For example, 15 years ago or so, it might be 20, you gave us a seven-year notice that you would no longer provide the wholesale power to this area, not just here in Baker, but for four counties of eastern Oregon. Nobody at Idaho Power ever asked us how we felt about that. They didn't care. They were going to go off and do what they want.

What have you got, 17 dams up and down the Snake River? You know what? We sit on one side of the Snake River; I've always believed we own half that water. I don't see one thing in this for us, the people that live here. The county is going to receive some tax money, and God bless them they need it so that's OK. But what is in it for us? What are you willing to do for us? Put your money on the table, I want to know, we want something out of it.

Vern Porter: What everybody gets is the benefit of transmission. What that gives everybody in the region is the ability to access markets and move power back and forth. That keeps rates low. We will be able to share in the diversity that happens between the Pacific Northwest and the Intermountain West; there's about 8,000 megawatts of diversity between the two. They peak in wintertime and we peak in summertime. What happens is that since they peak in the wintertime and have extra energy in the summertime, that's a huge thing. Also, as utilities, we provide emergency assistance to each other, help provide reserves, on the side waiting, in case we have an outage of a generator. We have got to have spinning generation waiting to take the place of a generator that just went down, we have a reserve sharing pool.

PAT member: Why did you quit selling to us? If we called you'd share with us?

Vern Porter: That happens through Bonneville Power. A lot of great things happen because of transmission, it makes the grid more reliable, it just provides better service and a lot of things. Probably there were contracts that we entered into in the past with

utilities such as OTEC or CALPAC. What probably happened was that Idaho Power's load grew to the point where they couldn't provide the power on a firm basis all year round

PAT member: So they said, 'Baker, you're out.' We are 40-year customers; I don't think it should happen.

Vern Porter: Unfortunately I wasn't working at Idaho Power at that time and I apologize, but I'm not certain on the specifics of the contracts or the details of what exactly happened.

Curtin: Everyone, please take the time to fill out your comment sheets and be sure to turn them in before you leave this evening. Thank you for coming and staying involved.

Meeting dismissed.