

# Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

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## Grant County Project Advisory Team Meeting Summary

November 5, 2009

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Canyon City Community Hall

131 Washington Street

Canyon City, OR 97820

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## **Introduction**

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, U.S. Forest Service and Oregon Department of Energy–Energy Facility Siting Council. 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 response, Idaho Power initiated a process to engage communities—from Boardman, Oregon to Melba, Idaho—in siting the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. This process is called the Community Advisory Process (CAP). Idaho Power will conduct a comprehensive and inclusive public process to locate proposed and alternate routes for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.

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

As part of CAP, Project Advisory Teams (PATs) have been formed throughout the project area. Initially, one PAT was formed in the Central area, one in the North, and one in the South. Each PAT includes local officials, property owners and community representatives. The PATs are identifying community issues and concerns and working closely with technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes.

Idaho Power invited community leaders from Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP in Spring 2009. Community leaders responded that they would become involved in the CAP if the other PATs proposed routes in Grant and Harney counties.

The Central, North and South PATs have met three times since Spring 2009. The third PAT meeting was a mapping workshop, in which PAT members identified potential routes for the transmission line. Idaho Power recorded these routes for evaluation.

At the Central, North and South mapping workshops, PAT members asked Idaho Power to evaluate possible routes in Grant and Harney counties. As a result of the routes Idaho Power has asked communities in Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP.

Idaho Power hosted two public meetings in Grant and Harney counties in October 2009. The purpose of these public meetings was to give Grant and Harney counties the same opportunity as the Central, North and South advisory areas to learn about the project, see the routes proposed by the other PATs, and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.

Idaho Power used input from the public meetings and community leaders to form a Harney County Project Advisory Team and a Grant County Project Advisory Team. All Project Advisory Teams will work closely with Idaho Power and technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes for the transmission line.

## **Overview**

### **Invitation Process**

Idaho Power developed the Grant County PAT by:

- Reviewing previous public involvement activities for this project.
- Identifying community leaders.
- Interviewing community leaders for suggested members.
- Asking public meeting attendees if they would like to participate on the PAT.

This information was used to assemble a list of invitees, which generally included elected officials, property owners and residents within Grant County. Please see Appendix 4 for the letter of invitation, list of invitees and list of attendees.

At the first meeting, Idaho Power also asked PAT members to identify who was missing from the team. Idaho Power will review these names to invite others to the PAT.

### **Meeting Agenda and Format**

Idaho Power hosted the first Grant County meeting in Canyon City, Oregon on Nov. 5, 2009 at the Canyon City Community Hall.

The meeting objectives were to:

- Review project background, status and the CAP.
- Discuss purpose and need for the transmission project.
- Provide overview of Boardman to Hemingway permitting process.
- Give update on PAT work in other areas.
- Identify community concerns and suggestions.

An organizational binder was provided to each team member. The binder contained the following handouts, which can be found in appendices 5-7:

- A handout that describes what materials are available online from previous meetings (App. 5)
- Map of routes proposed by PATs (App. 5)
- Two comment sheets:
  - Meeting Evaluation comment sheet (App. 5)
  - Concerns and Suggestions comment sheet (App. 5)
- Handout that outlines the CAP (App 5.)
- Grant County PAT Meeting #1 Agenda (App. 5)
- CAP fact sheet (App. 5)

- Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project Siting Process Background Paper (App. 5)
- NEPA process background paper (App. 5)
- EFSC process background paper (App. 5)
- PowerPoint presentation (App. 6).
- Regulatory and engineering criteria (App. 7)

The meeting began with the following presentations:

- Welcome – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Project Leader
- Introductions – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator
- Community Advisory Process – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Project Leader
- Purpose and Need – Dave Angell, Idaho Power, Manager of Delivery Planning
- Permitting Overview – Stacy Baczkowski, Idaho Power, Senior Biologist

All PowerPoint presentations can be found in Appendix 6.

After the Idaho Power presentations, team members participated in a working group discussion to identify concerns and suggestions for siting the transmission line. Idaho Power staff were available to the working group to answer questions. Rosemary Curtin facilitated the working group.

The questions and answers from the Grant PAT meeting have been transcribed and are available in Appendix 2.

## **Team Member Input**

In addition to the working group discussion, Idaho Power asked team members to complete a Meeting Evaluation comment sheet and a Concerns and Suggestions comment sheet.

Transcriptions of both comment sheets are available in Appendix 3.

- Thirty-nine team members attended the meeting. A list of meeting attendees is available in Appendix 4.
- Three team members completed the Concerns and Suggestions comment sheet. Responses included:
  - Concern about effects to the environment, wilderness areas and recreation areas.
  - Concern that Grant County was not included in the CAP from the beginning.
  - Suggestions to keep the line out of Grant County.
- Three team members completed the Meeting Evaluation comment sheet. Responses included:
  - “Idaho Power demonstrated strong desire to answer questions.”
  - “You all did a fine job of presenting and dealing with us in a fairly hostile situation.”

Idaho Power asked PAT members to identify whether anyone from the area was missing. Idaho Power would invite these people to the next PAT meeting.

The date for the next meeting was set for Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009. PAT members requested that a session be held in each the morning and evening. The purpose of the second meeting is to begin identifying possible routes for the transmission line.

## **Presentations**

### **Welcome and Introductions – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Project Leader**

Kent McCarthy welcomed participants, thanked them for attending the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. McCarthy recently traveled to Grant County to talk to community leaders and community members about the proposed transmission line. Those visits helped McCarthy assemble an invitation list for the first Grant County PAT meeting.

### **Team Business – Rosemary Curtin, RBCI, Facilitator**

Rosemary Curtin thanked team members for attending the meeting.

Curtin emphasized the importance of communication between team members and Idaho Power. She asked team members how they had learned of the meeting, for example by e-mail or by regular mail, and then went over the following housekeeping items:

- Team members should make sure Idaho Power has their correct contact information before they leave the meeting, so they can receive correspondence in the future.
- The meeting is being tape-recorded.
- Three PATs, the North, South, and Central, have been meeting since Spring 2009 and their handouts and meeting summaries are online.
  - All the CAP meetings are public. Information about them is available.
  - Summaries of the CAP process to date are available on the project Web site at [www.boardmanto hemingway.com](http://www.boardmanto hemingway.com).
  - Team members who do not have computer access can inform Idaho Power, and can receive CAP process documents by mail.

Curtin then explained that Idaho Power is providing binders for team members to hold all the documents they receive at PAT meetings. She made the following comments about the binders:

- The binders will be continually updated as the PAT has more meetings.
- Extra PAT binders are available. Contact Amanda Edge at RBCI, [Amanda@rbcinet](mailto:Amanda@rbcinet) or (208) 377-9688.

Curtin also outlined the process that Idaho Power uses for developing community criteria. The community criteria:

- Will be taken into account along with regulatory criteria when analyzing the possible routes developed by the PATs.
- Are developed separately for each PAT.

- Are developed from information given by team members in the working group discussions. The working group discussions are structured around three questions:
  - What are your concerns about the proposed transmission line?
  - What are your suggestions for siting the proposed transmission line?
  - Other comments?

Curtin told team members a detailed summary would be developed for each PAT meeting. These summaries will be available online.

- The summary for the first PAT meeting will be distributed before the mapping session.
  - The summary will include the information that would be used to develop community criteria for the PAT.

Curtin then briefly outlined the next meeting, which will be a mapping workshop similar to those carried out in the South, Central and North PATs.

- The mapping workshop will be held Thursday, November 19, 2009. One workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and a second workshop will be held from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Mt. Vernon Grange Hall.
- The mapping workshop will give team members the opportunity to map potential routes for the transmission line. Technical assistance will be available at the mapping workshop.

## **Project Overview – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, CAP Project Leader**

McCarthy said the objective of the first PAT meeting was to:

- Provide an overview of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project.
- Discuss the purpose and need for the line.
- Provide information about the permitting process for siting the line.

McCarthy also reminded PAT members that Idaho Power would use the meeting to identify the PAT members' questions and concerns as part of the CAP. McCarthy outlined the CAP process for PAT members. PAT members will get a chance to make specific comments during a facilitated working group discussion at the end of the evening.

McCarthy outlined the steps Idaho Power has taken so far to obtain permits for the project. His presentation included the following information:

- Idaho Power has applied for right-of-way and special use permits from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service to cross federal lands.
- Idaho Power has filed a Notice of Intent to submit an Application for an Energy Site Certificate with the Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council (ODOE-EFSC) for land use permits in Oregon.
- Idaho Power has commenced the scoping process with BLM.
- Those processes are on hold now as Idaho Power undertakes the CAP process. The company will resubmit its application to the BLM with a new proposed route.

- The BLM is the lead agency for the project, although other federal agencies are involved.
- General timeline of the project to date:
  - 2006 – Project identified as part of Idaho Power’s Integrated Resource Plan, which is produced every two years
  - 2007 – Boardman to Hemingway project announced
  - 2007 to 2008 – Data collection and route mapping
  - 2008 – Right-of-way applications submitted to federal agencies
  - Summer 2008 – Notice of Intent submitted to ODOE
  - Fall 2008 – BLM and ODOE sponsor scoping and public information meetings
  - 2009 – BLM issues scoping report
  - 2009 – ODOE issues Project Order
  - Spring 2009 – CAP begins
- Idaho Power has initiated the CAP process to involve communities in siting proposed and alternate routes for the transmission line. Idaho Power has removed its original routes from consideration.
- Idaho Power is using the CAP process to work with members of the public and elected officials to develop routes that the company can re-submit to the BLM, USFS and EFSC for review.
- When the CAP process is completed:
  - Idaho Power will submit an amended right-of-way application to the BLM and Forest Service with a proposed route and alternate routes that have been developed by the PATs.
  - Idaho Power will inform ODOE of any routes developed in the CAP.
- The BLM and U.S. Forest Service will use the NEPA process to make decisions regarding federally managed lands. The State of Oregon’s ODOE will use input from counties and other state agencies to make decisions regarding state-owned land and private land in Oregon. In Idaho the decision will be made by the individual counties.
- During the early stages of Idaho Power’s transmission line siting process, Idaho Power had planned to build the Sand Hollow Substation. Last spring, the company decided not to build the Sand Hollow Substation, substantially changing the requirements for the transmission line.
- For the CAP, Idaho Power has divided the area that will likely be affected by the transmission line into five advisory areas: North, Central, South, and Grant and Harney counties:
  - South Advisory Area: Malheur County in Oregon, Washington, Payette, Canyon, Owyhee counties in Idaho.
  - North Advisory Area: Morrow and Umatilla counties

- Central Advisory Area: Union and Baker counties
- Grant County in Oregon
- Harney County in Oregon
- The public will be involved in every step of the process through Project Advisory Teams and public meetings.
- The CAP process will have four steps:
  1. Identify community concerns and suggestions, which will become the community routing criteria.
  2. Develop a range of possible routes that address community concerns and suggestions.
  3. Recommend proposed and alternate routes through a series of mapping sessions. These routes will be submitted by Idaho Power to the federal and state agencies.
  4. Maintain contact between Idaho Power and the PATs during the NEPA and EFSC reviews.
- Idaho Power has been in contact with community leaders in Grant and Harney counties since the CAP process began. Leaders in these counties said they did not want to be included in the CAP process unless routes were sited through these counties.
- Idaho Power began the CAP with only the North, Central and South PATs. Those PATs asked Idaho Power to evaluate possible routes in Grant and Harney counties. As a result of these possible routes, Idaho Power has invited community members in those counties to participate in the CAP.
- Regarding the Grant and Harney County routes:
  - All of the routes identified in the CAP have been developed by PAT members. Idaho Power has not proposed any routes.
  - A more direct, shorter route would cost less to build than a longer route if the cost of going through national forest land is not included.
  - The transmission line is expected to cost \$1.5 million to \$2 million per mile to build.
  - Some of the routes proposed by PAT members are similar to the original route proposed by Idaho Power.
- The anticipated timeline for the CAP is:
  - 2009: Project Advisory Team Meetings
  - 2009: CAP public meetings
  - Late January to early February 2010: Resubmission of applications to BLM

## **Purpose and Need – Dave Angell, Idaho Power, Manager of Delivery Planning**

Dave Angell provided an overview of the purpose and need for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project. Angell's presentation included information about the existing transmission system, existing problems, integrated resource planning and regional transmission planning.

### *Background*

Angell told participants that Idaho Power's leaders are often asked why they are undertaking the CAP process. Angell said Idaho Power has used similar processes in 80 percent of the company's service territory and believes the CAP process to be the best way to reach agreement on siting transmission facilities.

Angell said Idaho Power uses the information gathered at each PAT meeting to produce a proposed route and alternative routes.

Angell also discussed the time frame for the project.

- The company's goal is to have the CAP process completed in early 2010.
- The proposed date of completion for the transmission line is 2015.
- Idaho Power started the siting process for the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line in 2007.

### *Transmission Overview*

- Idaho Power generates, transmits and distributes electricity within the Western Electricity Coordinating Council region. The power system in the western United States is operated independently of the eastern United States.
- A transmission map of the western system was displayed. The map was scaled down to southeastern Oregon and southern Idaho. Idaho Power owns and operates a majority of these transmission lines with others, such as PacifiCorp and the Bonneville Power Administration, which own and operate lines as well.
- Idaho Power is responsible for providing transmission for Idaho Power's customers, electrical cooperative customers, municipality customers, direct service loads, the Bureau of Reclamation generation and independent power producers.
- When Idaho Power first began, hydropower was the primary generation source. It was followed by coal-fired plants as the electrical use grew. These generation sources are not close to the load source; transmission is needed to get the energy from these systems to the users. Recently, Idaho Power has added natural gas, geothermal and wind power generation and expects a substantial amount of wind generation to develop in eastern and southern Idaho.
- Additional transmission lines are needed to move power from available and planned resources to the load. On the western side of Idaho, three 230-kV transmission lines reach into the Pacific Northwest and a single 500-kV line enters southern Oregon. These four

lines are important for meeting the electrical needs of customers in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon.

- The electrical use reaches the full capability of the generation and transmission system every summer. Energy demand varies seasonally and Idaho Power's service area experiences peak electrical use in the summer due to irrigation and air conditioning loads. No additional capacity is available during these summer peaks. The Pacific Northwest peaks in the winter so has energy available during the summer when Idaho and eastern Oregon need it.
- Reliability becomes an issue when peak electrical use occurs in the summer. Many years ago, western utilities identified areas where seasonal needs varied and generators in the west and northwest developed a sharing agreement. This agreement keeps rates low and allows utilities to operate without having to build as many generation facilities. Therefore, if a coal plant on the eastern side of the system can't stay online, Idaho Power replaces that energy from the Pacific Northwest.
- If transmission lines from the Pacific Northwest are full, Idaho Power is not able to replace the missing energy and must reduce the electrical use. Reducing electrical use requires removing service from several of the distribution lines that supply energy to homes and irrigation systems. Idaho Power has previously relied on the disconnection of electrical users to maintain the reliability of the transmission system. These conditions may occur anytime during the summer peak usage until additional resources are available.
- Electrical currents that serve electrical customers in southern Idaho and southeastern Oregon are not the only currents traveling the transmission system. When California experiences peak electrical use, energy is drawn from the Pacific Northwest. Electricity flows based on the path of least resistance, so some of the energy going to California flows around the scheduled path and increases the electrical current on Idaho Power's transmission lines as well.

#### *Integrated Resource Planning*

- In the 1990s, Idaho Power began the formal process of integrated resource planning. During this process, Idaho Power examines how the company will reliably meet existing and forecasted electrical use over a 20-year planning period. Idaho Power evaluates both supply (building more generation or transmission) and demand (reducing demand) resources. The purpose is to balance cost, risk and environmental concerns.
- In 2004, Idaho Power submitted an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) that was reviewed by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC). The IPUC mandated that Idaho Power evaluate transmission. Idaho Power incorporated transmission in the 2006 IRP and identified two options that would fit in the preferred portfolio.
- The first option, now known as the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Project, was planned as a 230-kV line. The second option was to replace the 230-kV wire on an existing line. If the Boardman to Hemingway Project is built as a 500-kV line, Idaho Power will not have to replace the wires on the second line.
- The 2006 IRP was updated in 2008 to include three projects that are now in service: Raft River Geothermal, Elkhorn Valley Wind Project, and Danskin Simple-Cycle combustion

turbine. Two projects are still planned: the 2012 Baseload Resource and the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Project.

### *Regional Transmission Planning*

- The Northern Tier Transmission Group includes several entities that have been working on regional transmission issues. The Northern Tier Transmission Group includes several companies: Deseret Power Electric Cooperative, Idaho Power, Northwestern Energy, Participating Utilities, PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric, Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems and public utility regulators from Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Utah.
- The Northern Tier Transmission Group has examined past studies regarding transmission lines, which all agreed that generation in Montana and Wyoming would be useable if transmission lines existed to get the power to the loads. Generation resources are not located in the areas with the greatest loads—Seattle, Portland and Salt Lake City. Proposed transmission lines include lines from Montana, Wyoming and Utah and lines into Washington and Oregon. Coal generation is no longer being considered.
- Several western states have adopted standards for the amount of renewable energy they will include in their portfolios. A national standard of 25 percent by 2025 is expected by the end of the year. Although Oregon and Washington have some renewable projects planned, most renewable power will come from Montana and Wyoming. New transmission lines are needed to transport this power from areas of generation to areas of need.

### *Regional Transmission Projects*

- Several transmission projects are planned for northeast Oregon. All are 500-kV lines unless otherwise noted.
- Bonneville Power Administration is building a line from McNary Dam to the John Day Dam in Oregon.
- Portland General Electric is evaluating a project across Oregon.
- PacifiCorp has a project planned from Hemingway to southern Oregon and a 230-kV line from McNary Dam, Oregon, to Walla Walla, Washington.
- TransCanada has a project planned from Edmonton, Alberta to the Columbia River.
- Another line is planned from British Columbia to northern California.
- Power transmission companies used to build transmission lines side-by-side in corridors, but after blackouts in 1996 and 2003, Congress mandated that the lines be separated to reduce the chances of a disaster, such as a fire, from creating a blackout.
- Idaho Power is obligated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and state commissions to serve electrical users, connect generation and provide for wholesale and interstate transmission uses.

## **Permitting Overview – Stacy Baczkowski, Idaho Power, Senior Biologist**

Stacy Baczkowski outlined the processes Idaho Power will undertake to meet the requirements of federal agencies, state agencies and the Idaho Power CAP. She explained that there is no single agency with the power to accept or reject a proposed transmission line route. Many agencies review the routes, and there are multiple criteria considered in the analysis.

The permitting overview presentation included the following information:

### **Review processes will be conducted by both federal and state agencies.**

- Federal agencies:
  - Application for right-of-way grant from BLM and special use permit from U.S. Forest Service. Both Idaho and Oregon offices will be included.
  - Triggers National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance.
  - The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is lead agency responsible for NEPA.
  - BLM and U.S. Forest Service will determine if the project meets with their requirements for land use plans and if amending a plan is necessary.
  - Land use plans are similar to county and city zoning and may designate utility corridors, restrictions and general requirements.
- State Agencies:
  - Oregon: Oregon Department of Energy – Energy Facility Siting Council (ODOE-EFSC)
    - Lead state agency.
    - Addresses state and private property.
    - Includes county requirements.
  - Idaho: Land use permits and guidance are provided by counties.
- Idaho Power Community Advisory Process (CAP):
  - Separate from federal and state processes.
  - Proposed and alternate routes developed by the CAP will be submitted to the BLM and EFSC.
  - The CAP is not part of the NEPA or EFSC process.

### **An overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).**

- NEPA:
  - Establishes a public, interdisciplinary framework for federal decision-making and ensures that agencies take environmental factors into account when considering federal actions.
  - Does not mandate protection of the environment.

- Requires agencies to follow a particular process in making decisions and to disclose the information/data used to support those decisions.
- Can identify impacts that are not mitigated (i.e. a net loss).
- Departs from the Oregon EFSC requirement that, dependent upon the resource, there can be no net loss (must avoid or mitigate).
- Other federal agencies are also involved in the NEPA process through consultations:
  - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA fisheries address federally listed species.
  - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) addresses cultural resources.
  - Government-to-government consultation with tribes.

**An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared for the project and will address potential impacts on private, state, and federal lands.**

- BLM is the lead agency and is responsible for preparation of the EIS and compliance with other NEPA requirements.
- BLM and the USFS can only authorize actions on federal lands.
- The Environmental Impact Statement will analyze:
  - Whether the BLM and USFS should authorize the proposed route, an alternate route, an agency preferred route, or deny the application.
  - Environmental effects of issuing an authorization.
  - Stipulations (e.g., environmental protection measures) and mitigation measures.

The NEPA process includes the following steps:

- Idaho Power submits application.
- BLM prepares Notice of Intent.
  - Notice is published in Federal Register and initiates the public scoping/comment period.
- Scoping meetings begin.
  - The meetings provide an opportunity for public and agencies to identify issues and concerns that should be addressed in the EIS.
- Draft EIS is published.
  - Proposed route and alternatives are identified and potential environmental impacts are identified; significance is assessed; and mitigation measures are identified.
  - BLM and cooperating agencies will identify which routes will be analyzed in detail in the EIS.
  - BLM may identify an agency-preferred route in draft EIS instead of or in addition to the routes developed in the Community Advisory Process.
  - Public comments will be accepted over a 45 day period.

- Final EIS is published.
  - Includes responses to comments on draft EIS.
  - Identifies agency-preferred alternative.
- Record of Decision:
  - Separate for BLM and USFS.
  - Issue right-of-way grant and special use permit.
- The BLM won't necessarily prefer the same route that was chosen through the CAP process. BLM and USFS can use the CAP route, the agency-preferred route, an alternative, or a combination of those.

**Overview of the Oregon Department of Energy –Energy Facility Siting Council (ODOE-EFSC) review process.**

- The EFSC is the primary state agency in Oregon that approves or denies the application to build the transmission line in Oregon.
- The EFSC's role is to protect natural resources, ensure public health and safety, and protect against adverse environmental impacts. It uses 14 core standards, and incorporates other standards by reference.
- EFSC incorporates other state agency and county rules:
  - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) guidelines.
  - county land use plans.
- Permits that are outside of EFSC's jurisdiction include permits the federal government has delegated to a state agency, such as Department of Environmental Quality Construction Stormwater.
- The council's route-related standards include, but are not limited to:
  - Land use standards from county plans.
  - Scenic standards about resources included in a county comprehensive plan or a tribal or federal land management plan.
  - Biology standards based on ODFW requirements.
- The EFSC process includes the following steps:
  - Idaho Power submits Notice of Intent.
    - This is not an application to construct the transmission line; it is notice that an application will be submitted. It initiates public and agency notification and comment opportunity.
  - EFSC hosts public meetings.
  - EFSC issues project order, identifying applicable statutes, rules and ordinances.
  - Idaho Power submits application for site certificate. The application:

- Describes the proposed transmission line and demonstrates how it meets EFSC's standards.
- May include one or more routes.
- EFSC issues Draft Proposed Order, including draft findings of fact, conclusions on compliance with standards, and site certificate conditions.
- Public hearing on Draft Proposed Order.
  - Opportunity to raise issues or objections.
  - Since the EFSC process also serves as the land use process, the public hearings also serve as the land use hearings.
- Proposed order.
- Contested Case Hearing.
- Formal hearing only for persons who commented on Draft Proposed Order.
- Final Order.
- Appeal period.

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) role in the EFSC review process**

- The ODFW's role is advisory to EFSC unless the project would also cross ODFW-managed lands. ODFW provides data, contributes to scoping and plan development, and requires mitigation.
- ODFW Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy is based on the premise that habitats have varying levels of importance based on overall quality, location, and the need and sensitivity of species associated with the habitat.
  - Category 1: Essential, limited, and irreplaceable.
  - Category 2: Essential.
  - Category 6: Not essential or limited.
- Mitigation is based on these habitat categories:
  - Category 1: Avoid or do not authorize project.
  - Category 2: No net loss or habitat quality or quantity, and a net benefit in habitat in habitat quality or quantity.
  - Category 6: Minimize impacts.
- Sage grouse leks, and a 2-mile buffer around them, are an example of Category 1 habitat, which should be avoided. Big game winter range, wetlands, and riparian areas are Category 2 habitat.
- Other key points about EFSC include:
  - EFSC does not select proposed or alternate routes.
  - If a proposed transmission line meets the standards, the Council must issue the site certificate.

- If the transmission line does not meet one or more of the standards, the Council cannot issue the site certificate unless Idaho Power can show that the overall public benefits of the facility outweigh the damage to the resources protected by the standards the facility does not meet.
- The Council considers its own standards and the rules and ordinances of state and local agencies.
- The Council's decision is binding on all state and local agencies whose permits are addressed in the Council's review. Those agencies must issue necessary permits and licenses subject only to the conditions adopted by the Council.
- The Council's decision does not apply to federally delegated permits.
- In the NEPA process, BLM and cooperating agencies determine which route to authorize. In the EFSC process, Idaho Power submits a route or routes and EFSC determines if they meet its standards.
- Both processes include opportunities for public involvement.

**Overview of routing and regulatory criteria, which have been divided into three categories:**

- *Placement opportunity:* Areas that should be considered for a route because land uses and designations are compatible with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a transmission line.
- *Avoidance Area:* Areas that should be avoided unless there are no reasonable alternatives. Can range from very low to high impacts and mitigation might be easily implemented, very difficult or not feasible.
- *Exclusion Area:* Areas where a transmission line is precluded by statute or regulation.

## **Working Groups**

The goal of the working groups was to identify all the concerns and suggestions of the PAT members. The information gathered through the working groups will be used to develop community criteria. The community criteria will be added to the engineering and the regulatory criteria that will be used in the siting process. Two facilitators helped the working groups as they raised concerns and identified suggestions. The two facilitators were:

- Rosemary Curtin – Working Group 1
- Kate Nice – Working Group 2

Detailed working group summaries and transcribed flipcharts are available in Appendix 1. Idaho Power staff were available to each group to answer questions; these questions and answers are transcribed in Appendix 2. Each working group member was given a comment sheet to complete. Transcriptions of these are available in Appendix 3.

## **Overall Summary**

### **Concerns**

**Grant County PAT members identified the following concerns with the Boardman to Hemingway project:**

- **The transmission line would have a negative effect on scenic areas.**
  - Grant County residents treasure scenic beauty and open space.
  - The transmission line could lower property values by damaging views.
- **There are few clear benefits to Grant County of having the line constructed there.**
  - Construction jobs might bring only a short-term benefit.
  - Idaho Power would use Idaho crews for maintenance.
  - Tax benefits to the county would be minimal if the line is built in Grant County.
- **Building the transmission line so far west is not practical.**
  - It would be less expensive to use the shorter route near the I-84 corridor.
  - Higher costs for Idaho Power will translate to higher costs for power users.
- **Residents of Malheur and Baker Counties pushed the line over the Grant County because they don't want it there.**
  - Grant County residents should have been invited into the CAP process earlier.
  - Grant County doesn't have as much influence as Malheur and Baker Counties because it has a very low population.

### **Suggestions**

**Grant County PAT members identified the following suggestions for siting the transmission line:**

- The line should be constructed close to the I-84 corridor.
- The line should be as short as possible to save Idaho Power money.
- The line should be available to be used locally for transmission if wind projects (or other alternative energy sources) are developed nearby.
- Idaho Power should seek in-state sources of energy so it doesn't have to transmit energy from Oregon.
- The line should not go through John Day Valley, where many Grant County residents live.

**A summary of the working group discussion begins on the next page.**

## Working Group 1 Summary

### Concerns

Working group participants identified the following concerns with the Boardman to Hemingway Project:

- **The transmission line is being forced on Grant County.**
  - Baker and Malheur County residents pushed the transmission line on Grant County because they didn't want it "in their backyard."
  - Grant County doesn't have as much influence as Baker and Malheur counties because it has a very low population.
  - Grant County residents should have been invited into the process sooner.
- **The transmission line would change the character of roadless, primitive areas.**
  - Transmission line construction would require new roads.
  - Forest Service won't allow construction.
  - Proposed routes pass through scenic, protected areas, John Day River and fossil beds.
  - Affecting the view from homes will lower some property values.
  - The transmission line will cause a disturbance that lasts for decades because of maintenance, spraying for weeds and road construction.
  - There are too many transmission lines in one place already.
  - People chose to live in Grant County because they don't want to be near technology.
- **Building the transmission line in Grant County is impractical.**
  - Making the transmission line much longer will cost Idaho Power extra, unnecessarily.
  - Higher costs to Idaho Power will translate to higher costs to Idaho Power's customers.
- **The transmission line doesn't belong on private land.**
- **The transmission line has no benefit to Grant County at all.**
  - Construction jobs will bring only short-term economic benefits.
  - Idaho Power will use Idaho-based crews for maintenance.
  - Tax benefits if the line is built on private land will be minimal.

### Suggestions

- **The transmission line should be built in developed areas where there are already transmission lines and other structures.**
  - The logical place for the line to be built is the I-84 corridor.
  - Building the line along I-84 will make it much more accessible.

- Emergency services can reach the transmission line much faster if it is built in a developed area such as the I-84 corridor
- People chose to live in Grant County because they don't want to be near technology.
- **The transmission line might bring economic benefit to Grant County.**
- **Idaho Power should look for alternatives such as wind, especially within Idaho.**
  - Wind energy is cleaner.
  - Use the wind power in Montana and Wyoming instead of connecting to power sources in Oregon.
- **Encourage energy conservation measures instead of transmitting more energy.**

### Comments

- **Idaho Power needs to develop a noxious weed mitigation plan.**
- **It doesn't matter how much the transmission line costs; it shouldn't be built.**

## Working Group 2 Summary

### Concerns

- **Grant County residents cherish open spaces, scenic views, wilderness areas and areas such as the John Day Valley.**
  - The transmission line would have a high impact on public lands, valuable forest, roadless areas and wilderness areas.
  - Views of Aldrich and Strawberry Mountain Ranges would be spoiled by transmission line.
- **It isn't fair that residents of other counties (e.g. Baker and Malheur) drew routes through Grant County.**
- **Putting the transmission line through Grant County would significantly increase the construction costs for Idaho Power and power rate costs for customers.**
  - Grant County terrain is rough and forested which would increase the cost of construction.
- **Grant County residents don't want to see change to their remote county.**
  - Grant County has only one stoplight and no four-lane roads or railroad.
  - Residents frequently use the words "pristine" and "unspoiled" when talking about their county.
  - Grant County residents take pride in their scenic beauty and open space.
- **The transmission line would bring no clear financial benefit to Grant County.**
  - Construction jobs or revenue gains would be short term.
  - Idaho Power hasn't provided enough information about economic benefits of the transmission line.
  - If the line is built on private property the tax benefits would be relatively small.
  - Little maintenance is required, and that maintenance would be carried out by crews from Idaho.
- **Placing the transmission line on farmland could send a message that other development is permissible on farmland.**
  - Exclusive Farm Use land should be avoided.
- **The transmission line could interfere with airplane takeoffs and landings in bad weather.**

## **Suggestions**

- **Idaho Power should make the transmission line available to future wind generation facilities built in Grant County.**
- **Idaho Power should give Grant County residents more information about exactly where the proposed lines would go.**
  - The GIS data used at the PAT mapping session in Ontario had more information about constraints in Baker and Malheur Counties than it did about constraints in Grant County.
  - The Grant County maps used at mapping session don't show protected or ecologically sensitive areas such as the John Day River.
- **Grant County residents need more specific information about the tax benefits of the transmission line.**
- **The transmission line should be built along the I-84 corridor because that area is already developed.**
  - The Federal Highway Administration should be lobbied to allow the line.
  - Building the transmission line along the highway would enable fast access to emergency services.

## **Comments**

- **Idaho Power is doing good work in involving the community in the placement of the line.**
  - Usually a utility company picks a site with little public input.