

# Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

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**Harney County Project Advisory Team Meeting #3**

**Summary**

**Jan. 20, 2010**

**4 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

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Harney County Community Center

484 N. Broadway

Burns, Oregon 97720

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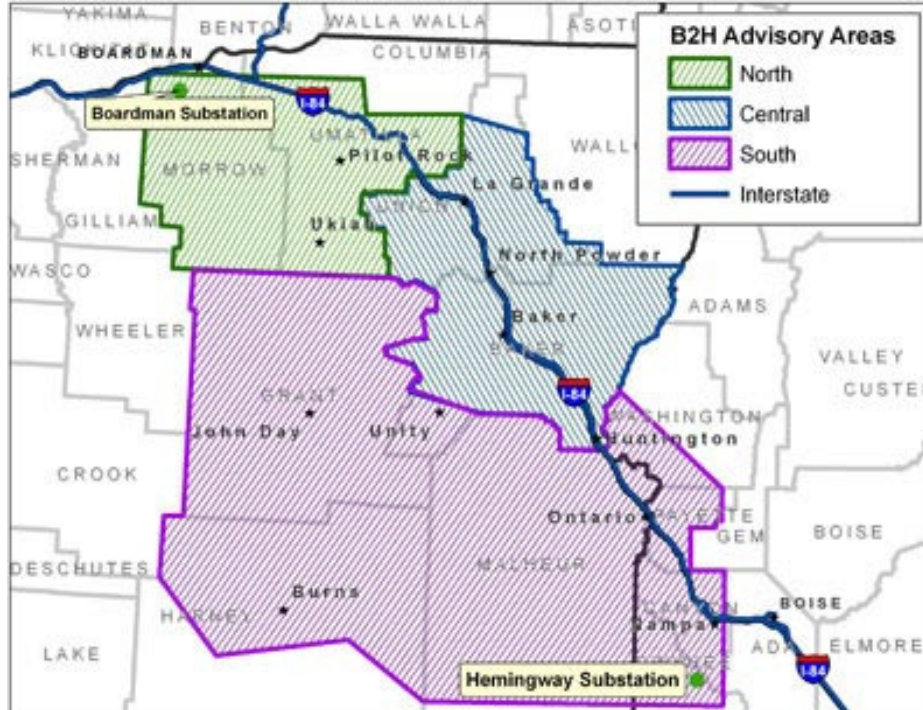
## Introduction

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 is conducting 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. *(Continued on next page)*



*(Introduction continued)* 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.

Idaho Power invited community leaders from Grant and Harney counties to participate in the CAP in Spring 2009. Community leaders attended the Central and South PAT meetings and stated that if these PATs ultimately recommended routes that affected their counties, then PATs should be formed in Grant and Harney counties.

At the Central, North and South mapping workshops in Fall 2009, PAT members asked Idaho Power to evaluate possible routes in Grant and Harney counties. As a result, Idaho Power 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 teams will work closely with Idaho Power and technical experts to recommend proposed and alternate routes for the transmission line.

## **Harney County Project Advisory Team (PAT) Background**

On Oct. 22 Public Meeting #1 was held in Burns, Oregon for Harney County residents. The purpose of the public meeting was to:

- Give the public an overview of the project.
- Allow the public to ask questions and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.
- Identify community members who wanted to join the Harney County Project Advisory Team.

The public meeting was conducted in an open house format. Attendees were given a meeting guide and comment sheet. Attendees were encouraged to view the nine display stations with information about the project. Idaho Power representatives were available to answer questions.

### **PAT Meeting #1**

The first Harney County Project Advisory Team meeting was held Nov. 4, 2009 in Burns, Oregon. The Harney County PAT includes community leaders, business owners, landowners, elected officials and residents in Harney County.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review project background, status and the Community Advisory Process (CAP).
- Discuss purpose and need for the transmission project.
- Provide overview of Boardman to Hemingway permitting process.
- Give update on CAP work.
- Identify community concerns and suggestions.

Team members were presented the regulatory and engineering criteria that would be used when developing possible routes for the transmission line. These criteria include state and federal regulations, policies and other standards that are applicable to development of a route. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Oregon Department of Energy-Energy Facility Siting Council (ODOE-EFSC) will use these criteria when reviewing proposed and alternate routes and determining whether they should authorize the project.

Community concerns and suggestions that were identified at the first PAT meeting were developed into community criteria. These community criteria will be used with the regulatory and engineering criteria to site potential routes for the proposed transmission line. These community criteria were presented to team members at the second PAT meeting for review and comment.

### **PAT Meeting #2**

The second Harney County PAT meeting held on Nov. 18, 2009 in Burns, Oregon.

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 Harney County PAT developed two routes at their mapping workshop. Overall, 49 routes were developed by the South, Central, North, Harney County and Grant County Project Advisory Teams.

**PAT Meeting #3**

The purpose of the third Harney County PAT meeting was to present the analysis conducted to date of each PAT-proposed route and present the method used to conduct that analysis. A full summary of the third Harney County PAT 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](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).**

## **Harney County Project Advisory Team Meeting #3 Overview**

### **Introduction**

In Fall 2009, Idaho Power hosted five mapping workshops in each advisory area of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project: South, North, Central, Harney County and Grant County. The purpose of these workshops was for team members to work closely with technical experts to propose routes for the transmission line.

Overall, the five Project Advisory Teams developed a total of 49 routes. The Harney County PAT developed two of these routes.

When the mapping workshops concluded, Idaho Power's engineering firm, Tetra Tech, began the process of analyzing each route proposed by the PATs. Between September and December 2009, the engineers 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 while honoring the original intention of the route.

In January 2010, the status of the analysis was presented to Harney County residents at the third set of PAT meetings. The complete analysis will be presented to team members at the fourth set of Harney County PAT meetings, which are anticipated to be held in early 2010. The complete analysis will include the ease and likelihood of permitting, constructability and cost for each PAT-proposed route. When the analysis is complete the PATs will begin to select which routes will be advanced into the NEPA process.

### **Meeting Agenda and Format**

The purpose of the third Harney County PAT meeting was to:

- Present the analysis methods.
- Present the status of analysis for each PAT-proposed route.

The meeting was held Jan. 20, 2010 at the Harney County Community Center in Burns, Oregon.

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

### **Presenters:**

- Kent McCarthy – Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader
- Rosemary Curtin – RBCI, Facilitator

### **Handouts:**

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

- Harney County PAT meeting #3 agenda
- “Planning evaluation of PAT routes S13, S6, S25 and C13” handout
- Idaho Power PowerPoint presentation
- Tetra Tech PowerPoint presentation

- “Table of All Community Criteria and Idaho Power Criteria” handout
- “Table of CAP Community and Idaho Power Company Criteria Importance” handout
- “Route Analysis” comment form

A CAP and PAT Route Analysis Map Book was developed for this meeting. One book was provided at each table. A copy of the contents of this book can be found in Appendix 4. The CAP and PAT Route Analysis Map Book included:

- Maps of each original PAT-proposed route.
- Maps of how each original PAT-proposed route was revised to avoid constraints.
- Tables listing the constraints of each original PAT-proposed route.

### **Team Input**

- No team members completed the “Route Analysis” comment form at the meeting.

## **Presentations**

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

McCarthy welcomed participants, asked everyone to introduce themselves and reviewed the agenda. McCarthy reminded team members that the objectives of the meeting were to discuss the analysis methods and present the status of analysis for each PAT-proposed route. He also provided the following background information about the analysis:

- Idaho Power is committed to taking the input from the community and incorporating it into the revised application that will be submitted into the NEPA process.
- Idaho Power will not present a detailed analysis of each route at this meeting. This is a mid-term meeting to discuss the status of the analysis on the routes proposed by the PATs. The complete detailed analysis will be presented at the next meeting, which is anticipated to be held in early 2010.
- Thus far in the analysis, Tetra Tech has recorded and labeled all routes received from PAT meetings. The constraints have been determined for each proposed route. Tetra Tech has revised the PAT-proposed routes to avoid these constraints. Later in the meeting, representatives from Tetra Tech will discuss in more detail how each PAT route was revised.
- Idaho Power has made no decisions about the PAT-proposed routes except for routes S13, S6, S25 and C13. The reasons for not advancing these routes will be explained in this meeting.
- There is a CAP and PAT Route Analysis Map Book on every table. This book outlines the analysis of each route.
- The analysis process is not completed. The complete analysis will be presented at the next meeting, which is anticipated to be held in early 2010.

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

Curtin thanked everybody for attending the meeting and reviewed the following team business:

- Some meeting materials are being shared at the tables. All meeting materials will also be posted on the project's Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com). If you would like a hard copy of any of the materials mailed to you, please contact Amanda Edge at RBCI, [Amanda@rbc.net](mailto:Amanda@rbc.net), (208) 377-9688.
- Summaries of the third set of North, Central and South PAT meetings are posted on the project Web site.
- Comment sheets will be provided during the presentations so team members can submit feedback about the analysis process.

## **Input from Grant and Harney Counties – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader**

In September 2009, the South and Central PATs proposed routes in Grant and Harney counties. In October and November 2009, Idaho Power hosted meetings in Grant and Harney counties to get their input on the PAT-proposed routes. McCarthy presented the outcome of these meetings to the South PAT. His presentation included the following information:

- In October two public meetings were held in Grant and Harney counties, one in John Day and one in Burns. The purpose of these public meetings was to present the PAT proposed routes to the citizens of Grant and Harney counties and identify potential PAT members.
- After the public meetings, a Project Advisory Team was formed for each county. These PATs have met two times. The purpose of the first meeting was to gather concerns and suggestions so community criteria could be formed for each PAT. At the second meeting, PAT members had the opportunity to develop routes and comment on the routes that were proposed by the South and Central PATs.
- Summaries of all PAT meetings and public meetings held in Grant and Harney counties are available on the project Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).
- The citizens of Harney County had the following concerns:
  - A route through Harney County is not practical.
  - A route through Harney County would be much more expensive.
  - A longer route will be more expensive and this will mean higher rates for Idaho Power customers.
  - Environmental groups will not allow a route through Harney County.
  - Benefits to Harney County are uncertain. Any economic benefits to Harney County would likely be short-term.
  - The line will not benefit Harney County unless it can be connected to nearby wind farms.
  - The transmission line will negatively affect the environment.
  - The transmission line will require construction of new access roads.
  - Undeveloped areas should be protected.
  - The line could create adverse effects to views, protected environmental areas and wildlife.
- The citizens of Harney County had the following suggestions for siting the transmission line:
  - Use existing corridors.
  - Follow the I-84 corridor.
  - Shadow an existing line.
  - Site on public land.

- Avoid Exclusive Farm Use land.
- Consider wildlife areas.
- Use the most direct route between Boardman and Hemingway.
- Use Idaho Power's original route.
- The following community criteria were developed for Harney County. These community criteria were based on the concerns and suggestions identified by the citizens of Harney County:
  - Placement Opportunities:
    - Existing energy corridors
    - I-84 corridor
    - Areas with potential for wind power
    - Direct route between Boardman and Hemingway
  - Avoidance Areas:
    - Wildlife habitats (especially sage grouse leks)
    - Undeveloped or wilderness land
    - Riparian areas (strips of land that border creeks, rivers or other bodies of water)
    - Exclusive Farm Use land
    - Private land
    - Forests and timberland
    - Roadless areas
- The citizens of Grant County had the following concerns:
  - 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 and Idaho Power would use Idaho crews for maintenance.
  - Tax benefits to the county would be minimal if the line were built in Grant County.
  - Building the transmission line so far to the west of the center route is not practical.
  - It would be less expensive to use the shorter route that is closer to the I-84 corridor. Higher costs for Idaho Power will translate into higher costs for power users.

- Residents of Malheur and Baker counties pushed the line over to Grant County because they did not want it in their own counties.
- 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.
- The citizens of Grant County had 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 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.
- The following community criteria were developed for Grant County. These community criteria were based on the concerns and suggestions identified by the citizens of Grant County:
  - Placement Opportunities:
    - Existing energy corridors
    - I-84 corridor
    - Direct route between Boardman and Hemingway
  - Avoidance Areas:
    - Undeveloped areas
    - Wilderness areas
    - Rural areas
    - Roadless areas
    - Riparian areas (strips of land that border creeks, rivers or other bodies of water)
    - Scenic areas (i.e., the cedar grove, fossil beds, view sheds)
    - Recreation areas
    - Wildlife habitats (i.e., sage grouse leks, big game winter range)
    - Forest land and old growth
    - Private property
    - Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) land

- Harney County PAT members proposed two line segments in Malheur County. The main objective of these proposed routes was to avoid EFU land. Grant County PAT members did not propose any routes or segments at their mapping workshop; however, they did submit numerous comments on routes proposed by the other PATs. The Grant County Court submitted one route several weeks after the mapping workshop.
- The Grant County PAT members were unanimous in stating that they did not want the transmission line to be built through Grant County. Many citizens in Grant County also criticized Idaho Power for not forming a PAT earlier in the process and not notifying them of the meetings in a timely fashion.

### **Route Analysis Process – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader**

Idaho Power's engineering firm, Tetra Tech, began analyzing all PAT-proposed routes between September and December. The analysis is expected to be complete in early 2010. McCarthy presented the methods that are being used to analyze the PAT proposed routes and also presented the status of the analysis. Their presentation included the following information:

- Forty-six routes and segments were proposed by the Central, South and North PATs in Fall 2009. The routes and segments make up about 2,000 miles. The route analysis process began in early October 2009. Each route and segment is being given equal consideration in the analysis process. A map of all the PAT proposed routes is available on the project Web site, [www.boardmantohemingway.com](http://www.boardmantohemingway.com).
- In October 2009 mapping workshops were held in Grant County and Harney County. The Harney County Project Advisory Team proposed two routes. The Grant County Project Advisory Team did not propose any routes at their mapping workshop. However, several weeks after the mapping workshop one route was submitted for analysis by the Grant County Court.
- The goal of the analysis is to find several routes that are permissible, buildable, and cost-effective. These routes will go into Idaho Power's resubmitted application for the NEPA process. Idaho Power and Tetra Tech are continuing to collect data and refine routes. The routes that have been proposed by the PAT members provide valuable information about areas that should be avoided and areas that should be considered placement opportunities.
- Thus far in the analysis, Tetra Tech has recorded and labeled all routes received from PAT meetings. The constraints have been determined for each proposed route. Tetra Tech has revised the PAT proposed routes to avoid these constraints.
- At the mapping workshops team members completed a Route Record Form. On this form the developer of the route could provide a description of why the route was chosen and list specific features the proposed route avoids. Tetra Tech reviewed the PAT members' proposed routes and suggestions very closely.
- Tetra Tech has prepared a CAP and PAT Route Analysis Map Book that includes a map of each PAT proposed route. The constraint table lists the constraints of each route and includes the total mileage of each route and segment.

- After determining the constraints of each route from the data, Tetra Tech examined each route from aerial photos and made adjustments based on the features that were shown in these photos. The aerial photos gave detail that wasn't available on the GIS mapping, such as farm buildings and homes.
- When revising the routes, Tetra Tech attempted to move the routes to the edge of agricultural fields, or to areas not developed for agriculture. Steep mountainous areas were also avoided because building the transmission line in these areas would require more maintenance. Mountainous areas also create a larger environmental impact and it is more expensive to build the line in these areas. Access roads would have to be constructed for the parts of the line cross mountainous areas; three miles of access roads are factored in for every mile of transmission line.
- During the analysis, Tetra Tech has received input from:
  - The Nature Conservancy – Tetra Tech wrote to the Nature Conservancy and asked for comments on the PAT proposed routes. The Nature Conservancy replied with a 20-page letter discussing some of their conservation easements. The Nature Conservancy's response will be integrated into the analysis.
  - The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife – Sage grouse leks are a primary constraint to routing. New information has been released about which leks are occupied and which aren't.
  - BLM Prineville District – Tetra Tech met with the Prineville District in November to discuss routes in Grant County and the John Day Basin.
  - BLM Burns District – Tetra Tech met with six to eight staff at the Burns District office. The parties discussed resource impacts and possible concerns about the PAT proposed routes.
  - Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla and Malheur National Forests – Tetra Tech met with these branches of the U.S. Forest Service in October to educate them about the project. Previously, Tetra Tech had only discussed the project with the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest staff. It was important to also inform the Umatilla and Malheur Forest Service departments because Forest Service land occupies a large part of the area between Boardman and Hemingway. The Forest Service could be key to permitting the proposed routes that are near the centerline.
  - Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs – The Confederated Tribes have a number of landholdings, some of which have been dedicated to conservation. The Confederated Tribes have helped Tetra Tech identify the properties that have been designated for conservation.
  - The Department of the Navy – Tetra Tech has applied to the Navy for a right-of-way permit to cross their bombing range in Boardman. If the bombing range can be crossed, much of the pivot-irrigated agricultural land near Boardman could be avoided.

- For the purposes of route analysis, Tetra Tech has divided the project area into four regions:
  - Northwest – This area includes Grant, Umatilla and Morrow counties. Constraints include a large amount of agricultural land, and pivot irrigation is a particular concern.
  - Northeast – This area includes Baker County up to the utility crossing through the Blue Mountains. Minor adjustments were made to the routes proposed through this area. Constraints include sage grouse leks and view sheds from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.
  - Southwest – This area includes Harney, Grant and Malheur counties and part of Baker County. Proposed routes through this area were revised significantly to reflect concerns about protected species. Natural resource considerations are significant in the Southwest area and topography is a concern. Significant changes were made to routes through these areas to avoid a wilderness study area and state wildlife management areas.
  - Southeast – This area contains Malheur County in Oregon, and Canyon, Owyhee, Washington, and Payette counties in Idaho. Constraints on the west side of the Southeast area include sage grouse leks, topography and natural resources. The large number of constraints led Tetra Tech to make revisions to the proposed routes in this area.
- The complete route analysis will determine the following three factors for each route
  - Permitting difficulty
  - Construction difficulty
  - Cost
- **Permitting difficulty** includes:
  - Meeting the state standards in Oregon
  - Meeting the standards of the various counties
  - Cooperating with the federal government
- Idaho Power provided the regulatory criteria to PAT members at previous meetings and at the mapping workshop. Input from PAT members has influenced how Idaho Power looks at the importance of resources within the regions and within the study areas.
- When routing there are three categories: placement opportunities, avoidance areas (low, medium and high) and exclusion areas.
- Tetra Tech has revised the routes proposed by the PATs at the mapping sessions. The routes have been revised so they do not cross avoidance and exclusion areas. The revised routes are the routes that Tetra Tech intends to go forward with for the remainder of the analysis. At the next PAT meeting Tetra Tech will present which routes are the most reasonable to take into the NEPA process.

- The PAT members are encouraged to comment on the revised routes and also on the method that used to analyze the routes. PAT members are also encouraged to comment on the importance ratings that have been assigned to the community and regulatory criteria. Tetra Tech will read and acknowledge comments from the PAT members. The comments submitted during the CAP will be considered all the way through the transmission line routing process.
- The Project Advisory Teams have each developed community criteria for their area. Tetra Tech developed a table that shows all criteria and rates the criterion's importance level. The table also shows how Idaho Power rates the criterion's importance level. Idaho Power welcomes comments from PAT members on the importance ratings that have been assigned to each criterion.
- In some cases Idaho Power has rated the criteria differently than the PATs. For example, all the PATs and Idaho Power rate the West-wide Energy Corridor as a "placement opportunity." However, all the PATs rate private land as "Avoidance: High," and Idaho Power rates private land as "Avoidance: Low." This is because the ratings assigned by Idaho Power have to do with regulatory concerns versus community concerns. The differences were presented to highlight the fact that regulatory guidelines may value criteria differently than the community does and that both points of view must be evaluated.
- Another example is Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) land. EFU land is considered an exclusion area by the South and Central PATs and listed as high avoidance by the Grant County and Harney County PATs. From a siting point of view, the term EFU does not represent an exclusion area. A utility or transmission line can be built across EFU land as long as there is a strong case for doing so; however, there are strict guidelines in Oregon law for building on EFU land. EFU land is a complicated issue, and Idaho Power recognizes that it is a significant matter of concern for the PAT members.
- Throughout the CAP, team members have voiced concern that private lands should be considered as high avoidance areas and federal lands should be considered opportunities. When siting, the issue of private land will be examined on a case-by-case basis.
- **Construction difficulty** has many implications for environmental impact and for cost. If there is a choice between two routes that seem to have the same permitting difficulty, construction difficulty or cost might be the deciding factor. The path of easiest construction is advisable from a constructability point of view. Some examples of construction difficulty include:
  - Steep terrain
  - Proximity to major roads
  - Tree clearing
  - Access roads
  - Stream crossings

- It is possible to site the transmission line across a stream if you do not cut the riparian habitat on either side.
- Construction of a culvert might be necessary.
- If the area has a significant profile, the tower might need to be built up on one side, which will mean more roadwork.
- Biological seasonal restrictions
  - Biological and seasonal constraints might require an additional year to build the transmission line.
  - Big game closures are common.
  - Often there are places where the contractor cannot get into the location from the first of the year until July. That causes work to be delayed.
- Severe weather
  - Snow or rain can be more of a problem with some areas than others.
- **Cost** is also an important factor that is considered when siting a route. There will be an absolute difference in cost between any of the proposed routes and segments. The proposed route and alternative routes must be within a reasonable range of cost. Some examples of cost factors include:
  - Route length
  - Construction difficulty
  - Mitigation requirements (i.e., big game winter habitat is often Category 2 and requires mitigation.)
- Proposed and revised routes will be compared within each region. Routes in each region will be combined to create complete routes. Idaho Power cannot yet say which proposed routes are the most reasonable. The PAT proposed routes that are the most reasonable would likely be advanced into the NEPA review process.
- When the NEPA review process begins, ODOE and BLM will hold a series of scoping meetings. After the scoping meetings, ODOE will evaluate the proposed and alternative routes against the ODOE-EFSC standards, and BLM will develop a range of alternatives that will be studied in detail.

### **Idaho Power Recommendations – Kent McCarthy, Idaho Power, Community Advisory Process Leader**

McCarthy reviewed the Project Order and Idaho Route meeting that had been held in Parma on Nov. 30, 2009. Team members had requested this meeting to discuss the Oregon Department of Energy's project order and speak with resource agency representatives from Idaho.

At the Project Order and Idaho Route meeting, Idaho Power presented four PAT proposed routes that will not be further advanced. Idaho Power has chosen to not advance routes S13, S6, S25 and C13 because they would require too much infrastructure to build and would present risk to the Boardman to Hemingway Project and the Gateway West Project. McCarthy's presentation included the following information:

- Idaho Power re-evaluated the project area. The original project area went into Canyon and Washington counties, but not east of Boise. At the mapping workshops Idaho Power told team members that they could develop routes anywhere they preferred, even outside of the project area.
- Idaho Power recognizes that prior to the mapping sessions, several team members said they planned to propose routes east of Boise. These team members said their intention of developing the routes east of Boise was to join the Boardman to Hemingway 500 kV line with the future planned 500 kV line for the Treasure Valley Electrical Plan.
- Every route, at any time, first goes through a planning-level evaluation. Therefore, Idaho Power undertook a planning-level evaluation of the routes that were developed east of Boise outside the project area. The planning-level evaluation does not consider the ease of permitting for the routes.

### **Treasure Valley Electrical Plan**

- Idaho Power produced the Treasure Valley Electrical Plan (TVEP) in 2006. The timing for construction of the TVEP 500 kV loop is dependent upon load growth and will not occur all at once. The completed TVEP system would be capable of serving 1.6 million people.
- According to the TVEP, there are two alternatives to reinforce the Treasure Valley's electrical system in the near term without bringing in a new energy source from outside:
  - Tapping an existing Boise Bench – Brownlee 230 kV transmission line in the Pearl area.
  - Tapping the Midpoint – Summer Lake 500 kV transmission line near Melba. Idaho Power is in the process of tapping the Midpoint – Summer Lake 500 kV line at the Hemingway Substation, which replaces the planned tap near Melba.
- In 2006, Idaho Power informed project managers it was important to have one of these projects built as soon as possible. Project managers were informed that the project that would go forward first would be the one that was most likely to get permitted first. Tapping the existing Midpoint – Summer Lake 500 kV line turns out to be the most feasible, so it is the one being carried forward.
- Currently four 230 kV lines run from the Brownlee Power Plant and Hells Canyon Complex to the Boise Bench substation. The planned 500 kV line that is part of the TVEP is planned to be built much further in the future, not in the initial stages of the TVEP.
- The TVEP identifies four to five future 500 kV substation facilities that will need to be built to serve the Treasure Valley when the population has reached saturation. Each one of these substations is designed to be able to provide approximately 1,000 megawatts of capacity.
- The Hemingway substation will tap into the existing PacifiCorp 500 kV transmission line that runs through the southern Treasure Valley. This project is the first stage of the 500 kV loop.

- The triggering event for the second 500 kV substation will be when the peak load can no longer be served. This is estimated to occur in about 25 years. Idaho Power's present plan is to build the South Ada Substation and associated 230 kV transmission line into the valley at that time.
- The planned 500 kV loop around the Treasure Valley will not go into the Boise Bench substation. The Boise Bench substation is a mature substation and there is no room for Idaho Power to put 500 kV equipment in that substation. Currently the only connections into the Boise Bench substation are 230 kV supply lines.
- Idaho Power does not intend to connect the future 500 kV line and the Boise Bench substation; it plans to replace one of the existing 230 kV lines. The replacement of this 230 kV line would remove one 230 kV line that is presently feeding into Boise Bench.
- Replacing the 230 kV would require Idaho Power to redirect the power from this line somewhere else in the valley. As planned, Idaho Power would build the Pearl substation and the South Ada substation to inject power into the valley.
- The Treasure Valley now has about 500,000 people. Idaho Power forecasted load growth when analyzing the Hemingway substation and determined this would be the first 500 kV substation built to bring energy into the Treasure Valley.
- Idaho Power examines the reliability of the system and determines whether the Treasure Valley could still receive power if a transformer in the Hemingway substation were to go out of service in a peak loading condition. When the load of the Treasure Valley gets to the point that an outage in this substation would cause the loss of power, another substation will be constructed.
- Originally, the substation that was planned to be constructed after Hemingway was the Sand Hollow substation. However, when Langley Gulch was built, 300 megawatts of capability were added and the plans to build the Sand Hollow substation were deferred. Sand Hollow will be completed someday to complete the TVEP loop.
- Currently, the next substation that is planned to be built after Hemingway is the South Ada substation. This substation is planned to be built between 2035 to 2040. Both Pearl and Sand Hollow would be built some years after South Ada.

### **Boardman to Hemingway and Gateway West**

- The Gateway West Transmission Project is a proposed two-circuit 1,500-mile 500 kV transmission line between Wyoming and Idaho. Gateway West is a joint project between Idaho Power and PacifiCorp. The northern portion of the Gateway West line will form the southern leg of the Treasure Valley 500 kV loop.
- The permitting process for Gateway West is currently under way; the BLM is developing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project. The draft EIS is evaluating several alternative routes for the northern section of the Gateway West Project.
- Idaho Power and PacifiCorp purposely did not include the Boardman to Hemingway Project as part of the Gateway West Project. PacifiCorp plans to build transmission lines down to the California/Oregon border and does not plan to build transmission lines to the Boardman area.

- The routes that the PATs proposed east of Boise would link a section of Boardman to Hemingway line with the Gateway West line. Linking the two projects would present risk to the Boardman to Hemingway project. For example, if the permitting process for the 1,500-mile Gateway West Project were delayed, this could delay the progress of the Boardman to Hemingway line. Conversely, if the Boardman to Hemingway project is slowed, this could adversely affect the Gateway West Project. Idaho Power is not willing to take the risk of having the two projects affect each other in such an adverse way.
- Currently, Gateway West and Boardman to Hemingway are on the same timeline; both are expected to be in-service in 2015. However, Gateway West is dependent upon resource development in Wyoming and this could delay the project.
- The purpose of the Boardman to Hemingway Project is not to complete the TVEP. It is to connect Hemingway to Boardman. Tying the Gateway West and Boardman to Hemingway projects together is undesirable because it would expand the scope of both projects.
- The scope has already been established on Gateway West and Idaho Power is not willing to re-establish the scope on Gateway West. Tying the Gateway West and Boardman to Hemingway projects together would put both projects at risk and Idaho Power believes that risk is unacceptable. When routing the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line, it is Idaho Power's preference to stay west of Boise.
- In January, Idaho Power can provide the PAT more information about the risks and concerns about combining the Gateway West and Boardman to Hemingway projects.

## Questions and Answers

Team members were given the opportunity to ask questions of Idaho Power representatives during and after the presentations. Below is a verbatim transcription of the questions asked by team members and answers provided by Idaho Power and RBCI.

**Tetra Tech is expected to complete the analysis on a possible route, and all the difficulties, before the next meeting?**

Yes, we expect them to be finished by the end of this month so that we can hold the next meeting around the middle of next month. We would like to put the results of the analysis up on the Internet seven days before you come to the meeting so you can have it, look at it and come prepared. That is our goal. We don't want you to have to come see the results at the meeting and be forced to make a comment within 15 minutes. Our goal is to get that information out in advance.

**So, let's say it did go up I-84 as a preferred route. This new route would be different than the one in the original Notice of Intent from a year ago because it will incorporate the input that has been provided over the past year, correct?**

Yes, let me tell you how that is coming out. Last year when we did our initial proposed route it came west then went back east into the Sand Hollow substation. Then it went back out west and went across a lot of EFU land. Now the proposed routes that were developed by the South Project Advisory Team don't touch any EFU and they are very viable routes. Also, it now looks like we might be able to go behind the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. That would dissolve a lot of the opposition that was set up against this transmission line. There will still people that are opposed to it in principle, and it will affect some people with their view shed and it will go through some private property. But every step we have taken we have tried to minimize the private property as much as possible. Once we get up north there is no public land to cross, it is all private land. But we have landowners in that area that are actually welcoming it across their ranches.

**This is a tough one for me. Because so far in the communities I don't hear anything real supportive of building it in Harney County. I see the economic advantages of it, but from a community view, it makes no sense. When you apply common sense, it is more logical to run it up I-84.**

Well, actually, to tell you the truth, the I-84 route is really good, but coming over this direction might be okay. Judge Webb proposed a route, we didn't get any routes proposed out of Grant County last month, but Judge Webb proposed a route at our Central meeting. It has some major problems too, he also gave three alternatives. We adjusted those routes because we thought there were some major problems with the routes. There is a problem in an area that has a scenic byway that parallels for a ways. Another adjustment takes it over into the Baker City side of the mountains and there would likely be a whole new set of opposition if we wanted to put a transmission line through those mountains.

**Special designations are becoming a real big issue for us in Harney County. I've got a map that our GIS guy put together that shows all the special designations within Harney County and part of the county is black, there are so many special designations on top of each other. When you start adding sage grouse leks, we find that there are no more opportunities for**

**us to build anything. It is stopped every time by something. I don't know what we are going to do. We are going to have power, we are going to have transmission, and we are going to have opportunities; somewhere we have to get through all this. So I feel for you guys and other power companies, everything is just stymied by these special interest groups.**  
It is hard to try to get through anyplace.

**We have all this job potential, we have people willing to invest money, we have a guy who is right now ready to put a billion and a quarter into Harney County. And we can't get past the special interest groups. We have special interest groups that can use this very process to stop everything. Sometimes it is appropriate, I know not everyone in the community supports this thing, so let's help you find the right route. But, it is tough.**

Are the special designations mandated? Do they hold legal standing?

**Oh yes, every one of them has a handbook from half-an-inch to four inches thick and they all have conflicting rules. ONDA has an area that has 13 special designations, it is about 12-13 acres, it has all kinds of things, sage grouse, special management areas, wild horse designations, the list goes on. It's tough.**

**What will this project cost in the end?**

I've seen numbers upwards of \$600 million. But I've also been told that once we get through all the litigation and right-of-way costs, it may be a billion dollars. Of course we are not a big enough power company for that. We will have partners in this. Once we come up with a route, we will have some other power companies sign on for capacity. They will sign on for partnerships but they won't sign on until we actually have a route.

Right now our time schedule is pretty aggressive. It says that if we start the NEPA process next month and finish with it in 2013 when construction starts, the line will be in-service in 2015.

That is really aggressive. The average NEPA document for a transportation project takes seven years. The one thing we have going for us is the administration in Washington is really pushing renewables and they know that they must have transmission to do that.

**So the short of this is that you are going to narrow it down to some routes and then come back to us and give us the opportunity to comment on them? And then you are going to start the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process?**

Yes, we are going to keep in touch with you throughout the entire process. After our meeting next month we will likely hold another community meeting, like we did when we started, that will show the results. Then we will go into the BLM scoping process again and they will start to have meetings. Then it will go through the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and then the Environmental Impact Statement. Probably during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement period is when the environmental organizations will start submitting their lawsuits.

**For those of us in the community, when they get down to the route, and I have a feeling it is going to be somewhere around I-84, I'm going to argue strongly that we in the Harney County community send letters of support for that route. If we are going to oppose this route going through here, let's also support it if we see that they have a route that we think will work.**

Some of the issues that the people east of here brought up is that they are a little bit worried that as it gets into the environmental process, some of the environmental groups would force the BLM to move the route back over toward the EFU land in Idaho. Along those lines, if BLM knows about support elsewhere that would help. I honestly think that with the BLM knowing about the process we have gone through, the BLM is going to try to stick with our results. But then again, if they have enough lawsuits in one particular area, they might try to skirt around and put it back on farmland. And we are going to try to stay ahead of that. We are going to reach out to the environmental organizations, we are going to take them the maps of the proposed routes and we are going to be so present with them and try to get them to communicate solutions before we get into NEPA.

We had a forest supervisor who told us we need to show that we have done due diligence with the environmental organizations before it gets to the Draft Environmental Impact stage, so that they do not have as much standing in court because it is almost always procedure that we would be sued on.

**Correct me if I'm wrong, but when they did the original scoping meetings, there was a route that came this far west, right?**

There was an initial route that came this far west that was analyzed and determined to be non-feasible and did not go forward in the EIS. But it was part of the scoping documentation. The original Notice of Intent that was filed in the registry, Route 3, or Alternative 3 was the Harney County route that goes out west of Hines and then north. There was an analysis discussion that was provided in that Notice of Intent document that said it had been considered, but it had been rejected because of cost, access roads, etc.

It is important to remember that as this progresses and it appears to be moving in a different direction, don't be negligent, we will keep you informed, but there is always the possibility that as this analysis is done, those routes could come back. I'm not saying it will, but don't feel that it isn't worth your time to continue to watch this. And again, we will continue to do our best to keep you informed. You will still continue to get emails and documents from us, we want to make sure that you are informed all the way through the NEPA process. If something happened that started to move it this way, we will notify you right away.

**Do you think you can go far enough with this that when you do scoping and the environmental assessment you will be able to use these comments in the BLM scoping?**

We were hoping we could. The BLM says they may abbreviate scoping, but they will have to hold scoping meetings again. When we do have our community meeting after our final PAT meeting, if the scoping meeting happens soon enough, we could possibly combine the scoping meeting with the final CAP meeting.

**I have a suggestion. I'll submit these from the county's perspective and submit your entire report as part of the scoping process. There is no sense for us to do the same work twice and you can't ignore the work that has been done in this process.**

The BLM has said that they will take all the comments and everything received in the Community Advisory Process and include them in the scoping documentation. It is not as if we have to do everything twice, it is just procedural.

**Going back to the earlier comment, it is a fact that these environmental groups will prevail, but generally under a procedural issue. So if you do not go through the scoping procedure that is defined by the NEPA process, you are risking that one of those groups could come back and hit you with that later. What the judge suggested would be a valid tactic – that his input in that public NEPA process scoping session is the submission of the entire work that has been done by these Project Advisory Teams up until this point.**

Scoping is procedural, but there is discretion within agencies, there are levels, they are not so prescriptive on how many meetings, etc. Hopefully, the meetings we have done will make the scoping period smaller and more manageable. If any issues were to arise from scoping, we will have hoped to already flushed them out and addressed them. I think in our review of what we have done, “outside the NEPA process,” we will do it again.

**Vale is the lead BLM agency correct?**

Yes.

**Have they gone through a recent NEPA process recently? For the experience? If they have gone through the process before, and have gone through successfully, then they will know and probably be more efficient in what they prescribe for the process. If they have not had any recent experience with that process, and are not sure, then they will probably be very tentative and want to make sure every “i” is dotted and every “t” is crossed.**

That is actually unknown to us right now because we have a new Vale district manager and we have a new BLM project manager for Boardman to Hemingway.

**I would like to make the suggestions that Idaho Power has their legal staff go back and analyze the appeals on the most recent, major NEPA documents. You should look at what they appealed on. The most recent one that ONDA was involved in out here, there were 257 processes that they said were done wrong. All they have to do is win on one. They shotgun this thing incredibly. You can see since 1993 ONDA has appealed against the BLM district here and gotten into full-blown lawsuits 87 times. But you should look at analysis of the most recent ones – Vale just lost to ONDA – it might be really helpful to look at those ones. Thank you, that is a really good idea.**

**Are the wilderness study areas designated as exclusion?**

There is a wilderness study area down in south Malheur County that is going to be difficult for us to get through and around. It might be more of a high avoidance, there might be some mitigation we can do, but it will be hard.

**I don't know the difference between a wilderness study area and designated wilderness areas. Which are exclusion areas?**

The biggest challenge for a wilderness study area is that the law says the study areas have to be kept just as they are until the decision is made to take them off the list or make them designated areas. So it is almost worse. But if you already have a transmission line in a wilderness area it can stay. One of our 230 kV lines goes through the Hells Canyon area, which is now a wilderness area, but it was there before it was designated as a wilderness area.

**Can you expand that line?**

We have people ask us why we can't run the 500 kV through there. We can't expand that corridor because we would have to expand the width of the right-of-way.

**What is there now, a 230 kV line?**

Yes, so the right-of-way is probably about 120 feet.