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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Eastern Half of Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Energized

*Major transmission line project begins providing significant benefits to electric consumers*

MADISON, Wis. – Following more than two years of construction by the co-owners – ATC, ITC Midwest and Dairyland Power Cooperative – the eastern half of the 102-mile Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Project has been placed in service. This segment of the line in Wisconsin, built and operated by ATC from the new Hill Valley Substation near Montfort to the Cardinal Substation near Middleton, became operational on Dec. 7.

The majority of the new 345,000-volt (345-kV) Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission line in Wisconsin – more than 95 percent – was co-located with existing infrastructure rights-of-way like roads, railroads and transmission lines. Throughout the project, the co-owner utilities strived to avoid, minimize and mitigate environmental impact through best management practices, including restoration of any areas affected by construction activities.

“After more than a decade of work including ample opportunities for public input, robust regulatory and environmental review, and construction, we are pleased the eastern segment of the Cardinal-Hickory Creek line has been placed in service. This allows the

project to begin to provide numerous benefits for electric consumers,” said ATC Project Manager Jake Valentine. “We are especially grateful for the support of the landowners and local officials along the route who made this project possible, along with our construction crews for safely building the line.”

While litigation delayed some of the work of the federal agencies involved in the project, the favorable July 19 decision from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit to reverse and vacate the judgment of the Federal District Court cleared the way for the agencies to work on remaining authorizations. Since then, the co-owners of the Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Project have continued to work closely with the federal agencies to support their final authorizations to allow for project completion.

The co-owners expect that construction on the western half of the project being built and operated by ITC Midwest – from the Hickory Creek Substation in Dubuque County, Iowa, to the Hill Valley Substation – will be completed and placed in service by June 2024. In fact, this entire segment is finished except for approximately 1.5 miles of the line, which extends from a location near the Nelson Dewey Substation westward across the Mississippi River to near the Turkey River Substation in Clayton County, Iowa.

“We look forward to constructing the short segment yet to be completed and getting the entire Cardinal-Hickory Creek line in service by June 2024,” said ITC Midwest Project Manager Shawn Mathis. “Once the line is energized from ITC Midwest’s Hickory Creek Substation in Iowa to ATC’s Cardinal Substation in Wisconsin, electric consumers will receive the full benefits of this major infrastructure project, including access to lower-cost generation, improved reliability and flexibility of the region’s transmission system, and support for the interconnection of renewable generation across the Upper Midwest.”

The Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Project will provide a vital pathway to help ensure the cost-effective, renewable and reliable energy that consumers are seeking is available and affordable. As of October 2023, there are 161 renewable generation projects in Wisconsin, Iowa and other Upper Midwestern states representing more than 24.7 gigawatts dependent upon its completion – enough to power millions of homes and businesses with clean energy.

Additional project information is available at [www.cardinal-hickorycreek.com](http://www.cardinal-hickorycreek.com).

### **Project background**

The Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Project was approved in 2011 as part of a set of Multi-Value Projects (MVPs) by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, the independent, not-for-profit regional transmission grid planning agency and transmission system operator that oversees the regional electric transmission grid in portions of the Upper Midwest. As an MVP, the project is designed to improve transmission system reliability and provide a wide range of benefits, including relieving congestion on the transmission system to reduce energy costs and providing greater access to lower-cost renewable generation sources.

Following years of study and thorough environmental review, including extensive opportunities for public input, state and federal regulatory agencies granted approvals for the project based on the benefits it provides. The project was approved by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in September 2019, and by the Iowa Utilities Board in May 2020.

Generation and distribution utilities are depending on the Cardinal-Hickory Creek project to facilitate the region's transition away from fossil fuels. Traditional baseload generation plants are being retired throughout the Upper Midwest at an unprecedented pace, especially coal plants. Requests to interconnect new renewable generation sources with the transmission system are at an all-time high.

The Cardinal-Hickory Creek Transmission Line Project is the essential bridge that enables renewable energy to be brought to market, resulting in a significant reduction in carbon emissions. Governments, corporations, other organizations pursuing sustainability goals and electric consumers are fueling the demand for clean, renewable energy. The federal government and states including Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota have all adopted policies to promote the development of renewable energy resources. These goals can only be accomplished by building the necessary electric transmission infrastructure to connect renewable energy production with consumers, notably the Cardinal-Hickory Creek project.

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#### **About ATC**

*ATC is a Wisconsin-based company that moves energy along the regional electric grid in parts of Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Illinois, serving more than 5 million electric consumers. We are experts at what we do: planning, maintaining, operating and protecting the grid. As the electric industry moves toward renewable generation sources, we are transforming our system to continue delivering energy reliably and safely. We proudly support STEM education programs that empower youth with the skills needed to succeed in tomorrow's energy workforce. For more information, visit [www.atcllc.com](http://www.atcllc.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X \(Twitter\)](#).*

#### **About ITC Midwest**

*ITC Midwest LLC is a subsidiary of [ITC Holdings Corp.](http://www.itc-holdings.com), the largest independent electricity transmission company in the U.S. ITC Midwest operates more than 6,600 circuit miles of transmission lines in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri, and holds utility status in Wisconsin. ITC Midwest is headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and maintains regional operating facilities in Dubuque, Iowa City and Perry, Iowa; and Albert Lea and Lakefield, Minnesota. For further information visit [www.itc-holdings.com](http://www.itc-holdings.com). ITC is a subsidiary of Fortis Inc., a leader in the North American regulated electric and gas utility industry. For further information visit [www.fortisinc.com](http://www.fortisinc.com).*

#### **About Dairyland Power Cooperative**

*Dairyland Power Cooperative, with headquarters in La Crosse, Wisconsin, provides wholesale electricity to 24-member distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. A Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Dairyland's service area encompasses 62 counties in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois. For more information, please visit [www.dairylandpower.com](http://www.dairylandpower.com).*