



08-14-08 500kv Line Proposed Through Lincoln County

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*Photo by Dave Maxwell
Luke Papez of LS Power at Commissioners meeting.*

By Dave Maxwell, Staff Writer

Great Basin Transmission LLC, an affiliate of LS Power Development, LLC, St. Louis, Missouri is proposing constructing and operating a 500 kilo-volt electrical transmission line from Clark County to White Pine County. Associate Project Manager Luke Papez, appeared at the August 4th regular meeting of the Lincoln County Commissioners asking for either approval of a prepared resolution or a letter of support of the project specific to the company's application to the Public Utilities Commission.

Known as the Southwest Intertie Project, Papez said the 500kv transmission line would be located between the Harry Allen Substation, northeast of Las Vegas, and the proposed Thirtymile Substation in White Pine County. The line would cross about 110 miles in Lincoln County.

The full length of the transmission line, said Papez, is from Midpoint, Idaho, just

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north of Twin Falls, south to the Allen Substation. In 2005, LS Power acquired exclusive rights to the Southwest Intertie Project and the right-of-way along BLM land. He said the final Environmental Assessment of the route in Lincoln County, along with Robinson Summit near Ely, and near the Allen Substation, was approved in a Record of Decision issued by the Bureau of Land Management in late July.

As all three counties would receive a benefit from the transmission line, Papez said Great Basin Transmission is seeking adoption of the resolution or letter of support from each County Board of Commissioners. He said he believes the transmission line will be “very beneficial to the areas, including Lincoln County, directly through sales and use and property tax revenues, and indirectly by benefits of construction crews utilizing local businesses to purchase goods for the construction.” He said also, “Once in existence, the transmission line would provide a lot of opportunities for additional economic development by other companies wanting to come into site baseload or renewable energy generation projects and additional electrical capacity in the area.”

If, at some time in the future, Lincoln County were to have renewable energy generation facilities, Papez said they could be linked with the Southwest Intertie line, “although it can be rather expensive to do...It has to make commercial sense.”

LS Power is still planning to build a coal-fired White Pine Energy Station north of Ely. Papez said while the transmission line “can exist without the coal plants, if the line did not exist, the amount of development of the White Pine station could be limited.”

Poulsen said essentially what the 500kv transmission line would do is to “tie the north grid in with the south grid.” Papez added the project will also “go a long way toward meeting the goals of the state and the utility of being able to efficiently share resource generation and move renewable energy currently produced in the geothermal and potential wind generation projects in the northern portion of the state, energy that cannot yet be moved to the load centers in Las Vegas and the Southwest.” Likewise, the transmission line would enable solar developers in the south to move their energy to utilities or load centers north.

District Attorney Greg Barlow recommended Lincoln County seek a development agreement with LS Power covering items of concerns such as the route to be followed; sales and use taxes; creation and access of roads; mitigation for disruption of forage, grazing, and other things; construction permits; and where the water for construction is to come from.

Commissioners approved the resolution with an added clause requiring the execution of a development agreement between LS Power and Lincoln County, to cover to items of concern and to ensure a timely and satisfactory completion of the project.

Papez later said his company accepted the amended resolution and would be willing to sit down at the negotiating table, offering also to bring their Construction and Operation Maintenance Plan he felt would cover many of the County’s concerns.

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