

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE: AMES MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC SYSTEM	DOCKET NOS. E-21743 E-21744
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**ORDER CONSOLIDATING DOCKETS AND
ASSIGNING TO PRESIDING OFFICER**

(Issued February 8, 2007)

On January 23, 2006, Ames Municipal Electric System (Ames) filed with the Utilities Board (Board) electric line franchise petitions, identified as Docket Nos. E-21743 and E-21744, for 19.75 miles of 161,000 volt electric transmission line in Polk and Story counties. The proposed transmission line originates at MidAmerican Energy Company's northeast Ankeny substation and terminates at the Ames substation located within the Ames city limits. The proposed route is primarily on private right-of-way and is generally along and adjacent to the east side of Interstate 35. Eight miles of the proposed line are in Polk County and 11.75 miles in Story County.

Board staff reviewed the petitions and notified Ames of deficiencies and additional information requirements by letters, e-mails, or direct contact on January 31, February 3, February 23, September 21, November 14, and December 19, 2006. On February 17, March 1, August 8, October 9, November 27, and December 20, 2006, Ames filed revisions to the petitions and provided additional

information. On February 5, 2007, a Board staff report (Staff Report) was filed concerning the electric transmission line petitions and proposed transmission line route.

The Staff Report recommends that Ames provide additional information in prefiled testimony or at hearing regarding a number of issues and questions. Among the issues identified were those related to line crossings, reliability, interference with land use, easement width, and alternative routes suggested by objectors. The Staff Report also recommends that certain documents informally provided to staff be filed in the docket, including a routing study, drawings, and maps. In addition, the Staff Report noted that Ames had not yet submitted a proposed notice to be served on owners of record and parties in possession of property over which the right of eminent domain is sought. Iowa Code § 478.6 and 199 IAC 11.5(3).

Iowa Code § 478.6 (2007) requires the Board to set a hearing on a franchise application if an objection is filed or eminent domain requested. Ames requested eminent domain for three properties in Polk County (E-21743) and five in Story County (E-21744). In addition, objections have been filed in each docket. Therefore, a hearing will be required. Because the two dockets are segments of a larger project and are interrelated, they will be consolidated for purposes of hearing and procedural schedule.

Section 478.6 requires that when the proposed transmission line is more than one mile in length and a hearing is required, the hearing must be held in the county

seat of the county at the midpoint of the line. The proposed line is located in two counties. The midpoint of the line is in Story County, so the hearing will be held in Nevada, Iowa.

The Board will assign this docket to its administrative law judge, Amy Christensen, as presiding officer. The presiding officer will be directed to set a procedural schedule, including specific dates for filing testimony and hearing.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. Docket Nos. E-21743 and E-21744 are consolidated for purposes of hearing and procedural schedule.
2. Pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.11(1)"b" (2007) and 199 IAC 7.3, Docket Nos. E-21743 and E-21744 are assigned to the Board's administrative law judge, Amy Christensen, as presiding officer, to, among other things, set a procedural schedule, conduct a hearing, and issue a proposed decision. The presiding officer shall have the authority provided under 199 IAC 7.3.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ John R. Norris

/s/ Curtis W. Stamp

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper
Executive Secretary

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 8th day of February, 2007.