

Hailey to Ketchum 138-kV Transmission Line

Project Fact Sheet

Project Need

The north valley (between Hailey and Ketchum) is currently served by a single transmission line. A second transmission line to the north is critical for reliable electric service, and a plan is proposed to provide for that.

The Wood River Electrical Plan was developed through a collaborative process with Idaho Power and the Wood River Community Advisory Committee (CAC) in 2007. It describes the transmission facilities needed to reliably serve the valley into the future. Idaho Power is initiating the first project recommended by the CAC — a 138-kilovolt (kV) transmission line between Hailey and Ketchum.

The CAC refined the plan through 2012 based on public input, and in 2014, the plan was expanded to further explore the proposal. Additional consideration, through public meetings, has been ongoing through 2016.

The CAC, on behalf of valley customers, recognized the need for a second transmission line from Hailey to the Ketchum/Sun Valley area. This new line will serve as a second source to the north valley to help minimize the risk of a catastrophic and long-term outage to the citizens and businesses of the Ketchum and Sun Valley areas.

To enhance electric reliability for the entire valley, we've conducted extensive maintenance on the two transmission lines that come into Hailey, and we've started construction on one of them, rebuilding the King-Wood River 138-kV line. It should be complete in the fall of 2017.

Transmission Line Details

The 138-kV transmission line route will be approximately 12 miles and connect the Wood River Substation north of Hailey with the Ketchum Substation on Sun Valley Road. The line route and general design were determined through a community involvement process.

Substation Upgrades

To accommodate the new line into the substations, work must be done inside the Wood River, Elkhorn and Ketchum substations.

Project Schedule*

Community Involvement	2010–2016
Line Easements	2017
Engineering Design	2010–2018
Construction	2019–2020
Station & Line In Service	2020

Questions? Comments?

If you have questions about the project, or have information you wish to be considered, please contact:

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(attention to employee name listed above)

*The schedule identified is preliminary and based on the ability to secure permits, complete design and any other project requirements.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this power line needed?

A second transmission line to the north is critical for reliable electric service, and a plan now exists to provide for that needed reliability. A second line provides back-up for the other line — which will remain in service. An outage on the existing line during cold winter temperatures could be catastrophic without it.

Also, the Wood River Valley and customers everywhere are experiencing an increase in electricity use, which drives the demand for reliable electric service. Homes and businesses have multiple PCs, TVs, lighting, furnaces or other electronics they rely on, particularly with year-round tourism.

The Blaine County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) has recognized that a long-term interruption of electrical power to any part of the county is the most serious threat to the well-being of those in the outage area. Emergency response professionals in Blaine County recognize that the need for this second transmission line is not just a north valley issue, but that it affects all of Blaine County. Should there be a sustained power outage in the north valley, the Ketchum and Sun Valley emergency responders would need to rely on assistance from fellow responders from Hailey, Bellevue and the County. The LEPC supports the concept of a second electrical line from the Wood River Transmission Station north of Hailey to the Ketchum Substation to create a reliable power supply to the northern part of the county.

What is the project cost?

The cost of the project depends on the final route and design. The overall length of the line (including overhead and underground sections) is approximately 12 miles. A 138-kV overhead transmission line costs approximately \$350,000 to \$400,000 per mile to construct. An underground 138-kV line costs approximately 10 times as much. The overall cost for the entire project is to be determined, but the portion estimated for recovery from local jurisdictions or residents is about \$2 million.

Can the power line be put underground?

Underground construction is an option, but there are some factors to consider. As regulated by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC), Idaho Power is obligated to build its infrastructure in the most cost-effective manner possible. Idaho Power develops transmission project designs that provide for least cost while adhering to consistent standards for service throughout its service area. The IPUC allows recovery of those reasonable costs. To the extent that customers desire the company to pursue alternate designs, such as underground transmission, at a higher cost, it is the company's position, supported by the IPUC, that the customer requesting the alternate design is responsible for the incremental cost differential between the least-cost option and the desired option.

Can you add local generation to replace the need for a new line?

As a regulated utility, Idaho Power is obligated to reliably serve its customers. In fulfilling this obligation, Idaho Power forecasts energy usage by its customers and is required to have adequate resources (or access to energy markets) to reliably satisfy that demand.

Electricity is not easily stored, and for all practical purposes, the instantaneous customer demand is generated at the moment of usage. The requirement to serve all instances of demand is the reason intermittent resources, such as wind and solar are backed up by dispatchable generation. A second transmission line is the current proposal to reliably satisfy the Wood River Valley's instantaneous demand.

As part of the solution, lines and substations would still be needed to move the electricity from the local generation site to substations and customers.