



## **Midwestern Utilities Partner on EHV Transmission Study for Renewables**

A group of Midwest utilities including American Transmission Co. (ATC), American Electric Power, and MidAmerican Energy are partnering on a comprehensive study to identify the transmission infrastructure needed to tap the region's rich wind resources and transport the power to consumers in markets to the east.

The group, which also includes Exelon Corp. and NorthWestern Energy, has retained Quanta Technology, LLC, to evaluate extra-high voltage transmission alternatives and provide recommendations for new transmission development in North Dakota, South Dakota, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Quanta will conduct an analysis of transmission alternatives, analyzing the impact and quantifying the economic benefits of various options.

The Strategic Midwest Area Renewable Transmission Study (SMARTransmission Study), which gets under way immediately, is scheduled for completion in January. The results are to be shared with the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) and PJM Interconnection, the two regional transmission organizations operating in the above-mentioned states.

"The region under study has some of the richest renewable wind potential in the U.S.," said ATC President and CEO John Procaro. "Harvesting this Midwestern wind potential and bringing the resulting electric generation to market requires an upgrade to the transmission system in the heart of the nation. Studying the transmission options at the regional level is key to identifying the most economic options."

While the SMARTransmission Study will identify generally how new transmission facilities should interconnect with the existing system, it will not specifically identify any of the physical geographic routes. The outcome of the study, however, will be used in combination with other studies currently being performed by MISO as input to the regional transmission planning processes and result in transmission projects being identified, ATC said. Ultimately, RTOs and states must approve the scope and timing of any new transmission projects, the utility noted.

Other studies include the Upper Midwest Transmission Development Initiative and the Joint Coordinated System Plan (JCSP). Released in February, the JCSP found that an investment in the power grid to enable wind to supply 20% of the electricity needs of the eastern U.S. would save consumers \$12 billion annually.

"The results of the SMARTransmission Study could further provide an input into the Upper Midwest Transmission Development Initiative and other studies—efforts we also support for determining the best options for transmission facilities to help states and the region meet

renewable energy goals,” said Procaro. “And by participating in this and other studies, we can identify projects that will benefit all energy users in the Midwest.”

The partners will provide opportunities for interested stakeholders to engage in the study, said ATC.

*Source: Wind Energy Weekly, 21 August 2009*