

San Juan Basin

Energy Connect

Increasing electric load growth in the San Juan Basin region of Colorado and New Mexico, in commercial, residential and industrial sectors, has put a strain on the existing electrical system.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) is proposing to construct a 230-kilovolt transmission line from the Farmington area in north-west New Mexico to Ignacio, Colorado. This line and supporting electrical facilities are needed to provide the power delivery infrastructure for the San Juan Basin that will relieve transmission constraints, serve new loads and offer economic development through renewable energy opportunities.

The San Juan Basin is located in the Four Corners region. It is approximately 270 miles wide, north to south; and its five counties in Colorado and New Mexico together contain over four million acres of land. The Basin covers more than 6,700 square miles and is the second largest natural gas reserve in the United States. The abundant natural resources, scenic beauty and quality of life are bringing tremendous growth to the area.

Because of the regional significance of this project, Tri-State is working closely with the following groups:

- La Plata Electric Association
- Bureau of Land Management
- Western Area Power Administration
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- USDA's Rural Utilities Service
- Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe
- San Juan County, NM
- La Plata County, CO
- Farmington Electric Utility System

There is a concern in the region that reliable electric service is at risk if additional transmission facilities are not constructed to relieve the congestion and increase the capacity of the current power delivery system.

Public Involvement Process

Siting new transmission lines calls for an open and comprehensive process that involves various factors: electric system planning, economics, the environment, public involvement, regulatory issues, land rights, and engineering input. Tri-State is committed to following a thorough siting and environmental process in order to meet or exceed local, state and federal compliance requirements and to minimize impacts to land use and natural or cultural resources.

Tri-State has defined proposed corridors and preliminary routing options for transmission line development between northwest New Mexico and southwest Colorado by analyzing data as well as public and agency input that identifies potential opportunities and constraints for the 230-kilovolt transmission line and electrical substation facilities.

An important component of Tri-State's siting process is the consideration of public input in the identification of feasible routes. The siting process will feed into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) federal review process for the project and will include a

comparative analysis of system alternatives and routing alternatives, public and stakeholder meetings, selection of a proposed route and alternatives for analysis in a federally-required environmental study.

Through community engagement, Tri-State provides an open, transparent and responsive process. Following selection of a proposed route, Tri-State will acquire the appropriate land-use permits from counties and other jurisdictions and right-of-way grants from land management agencies crossed by the selected route. Tri-State also needs to acquire long-term easements from landowners for the new transmission line right-of-way.

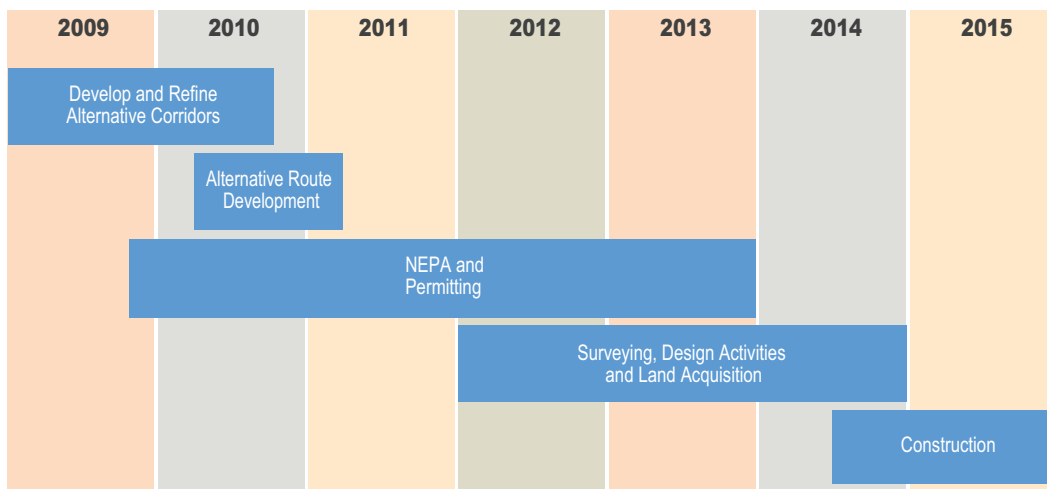
Purpose, Need and Benefits

The purpose and need for the project is to relieve transmission constraints, improve the power delivery infrastructure, and serve growing and new electric loads.

The proposed project would also:

- improve electric reliability
- increase the load-serving capabilities for residential, small business and industrial electric consumers (including oil and gas developers)
- provide a pathway for potential renewable energy development

San Juan Basin Energy Connect Timeline

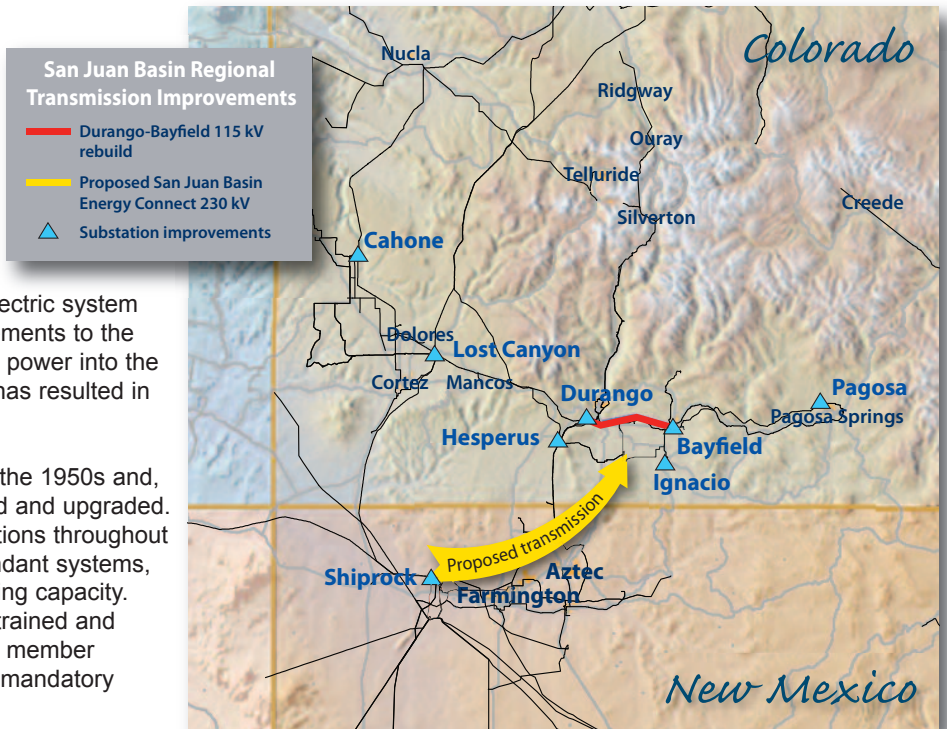


Regional Transmission Improvements

While the existing generation resources throughout the region are adequate to meet load growth, additional transmission is required to ensure that power can be delivered reliably. An added benefit of this new transmission line will be that new renewable energy developments could more easily interconnect to the power grid.

Tri-State, its member co-op La Plata Electric Association, and other regional utilities have been making improvements and additions to the electric system over the years to maintain reliability. While improvements to the local system have helped, the need to import more power into the region to meet the needs of growing communities has resulted in the proposal of this 230-kv transmission line.

Most of the infrastructure in the region was built in the 1950s and, over the years, aging equipment has been replaced and upgraded. Numerous investments have been made at substations throughout the region to improve reliability by building in redundant systems, installing voltage support mechanisms and increasing capacity. But still the transmission path in the region is constrained and Tri-State must ensure that it meets the needs of its member systems, as well as comply with numerous federal mandatory reliability standards.



Who is Tri-State?

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. is a wholesale electric power supplier owned by the 44 electric cooperatives that it serves. Tri-State generates and transports electricity to its member systems throughout a 250,000-square-mile service territory across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.

Tri-State was founded in 1952 by its original member systems, and today serves more than 1 million consumers in four states. Tri-State serves its customers through a combination of Tri-State owned baseload and peaking power plants that use coal and natural gas as their primary fuels, supplemented by purchased power, federal hydroelectricity allocations and renewable energy.

The Cooperative Difference

Electric cooperatives are private, not-for-profit electric utilities, owned and governed by the members they serve. Electric cooperatives bridge the vast expanse of rural America to energize residences, farms, ranches, businesses and communities that have organized cooperatively and accept responsibility for delivering safe, affordable and reliable power.



For more information:

San Juan Basin Energy Connect

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