

NOTE.. read the full article. The decision on which crossing will be chosen will be done by the Utilities Commission. Winona and La Crescent continue to be strong considerations for river crossings.

http://www.lacrossetribune.com/news/local/article_c4fb2c08-938d-11de-8c84-001cc4c002e0.html

Utilities pick Alma crossing for power line

By RYAN STOTTS rstotts@lacrossetribune.com | Posted: Friday, August 28, 2009 12:15 am

HOUSTON, Minn. - CapX2020 representatives said Thursday they have chosen a preferred site for its proposed \$2 billion Minnesota-Wisconsin high-voltage power line to cross the Mississippi River: Alma, Wis.

The consortium of 11 utility companies made the announcement at a town hall meeting at the Houston American Legion moderated by state Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes, DFL-Winona.

If the Alma option is chosen, it would eliminate crossings that had been considered at Winona, Minn., and La Crescent.

"That's our opinion as of now," said Tom Hillstrom, of CapX2020. "That may change between now and our filing. After we file, our opinion doesn't matter anymore."

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has 15 months to make the final decision once CapX2020 files, likely in November, Hillstrom said.

George Crocker, of the North American Water Office, told the more than 20 people at the meeting - some of them concerned the lines might cross their land - the project was feeding into an outdated national grid system.

The need for the 345-kilovolt power lines was based on projected energy use that has been misrepresented by the utility companies, he said.

Crocker pushed for local, efficient and cleaner forms of energy, as opposed to the bulk transfer system being propagated by big energy interests.

"Your eyes have been opened a little bit here, because you've been threatened," Crocker said. "But these issues will not go away if they choose Alma."