

Billions in Transmission Work From State, Federal Initiatives

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Transmission projects to deliver renewable power in the Northwest and Southwest are surging forward thanks to recent federal and state action.

The Bonneville Power Administration, Portland, Ore., plans to build a \$246-million, 500-kV transmission line to deliver 870 MW of electricity, including more than 700 MW of wind power, in the Northwest. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act granted BPA and the Western Area Power Administration each an additional \$3.25 billion in borrowing authority to develop new transmission lines. Lakewood, Colo.-based WAPA says it is still deciding on projects.



Photo: Burns & McDonnell
Power line projects to start soon.

In Texas, contractors are preparing for \$4.5 billion in work. The Public Utility Commission of Texas in late January selected 12 companies to build 2,900 miles of transmission lines.

Oncor Electric Delivery Co. LLC, Dallas, was awarded \$1.34 billion of work and will begin detailed engineering this month. Oncor has contracts with several companies, including Seattle-based InfrastruX Group for all construction services and Hailey, Idaho-based Power Engineers for engineering services.

“Our suppliers and vendors have agreed they would move our project to the top priority and expedite construction of them as soon as possible,” says a spokeswoman for Oncor.

To end a standoff between transmission utilities and wind developers that has stranded 8,000 MW of wind capacity, the state legislature directed PUCT to develop “Competitive Renewable Energy Zones.” Developers were waiting on transmission companies to build lines, and transmission companies were waiting on wind farms to be built.

PUCT has awarded \$790 million in projects to a joint venture of American Electric Power Co. Inc., Columbus, Ohio, and Mid-American Energy Holdings, Des Moines; \$750 million in projects to the Lower Colorado River Authority, Austin, Texas; \$584 million in work to Lone Star Transmission, a subsidiary of Jacksonville, Fla.-based FPL Energy

LLC; \$394 million to Sharyland Utilities L.P., McAllen, Texas; and \$390 million to Cross Texas Transmission LLC, a division of New York-based LS Power Group. Five other companies won \$300 million in smaller projects.

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