

MINNESOTA ENERGY CONNECTION

TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE CUSTOMERS IN THE UPPER MIDWEST



Example of double-circuit
345-kV structure.

The Minnesota Energy Connection transmission line will deliver new renewable energy to customers in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest as Xcel Energy retires the Sherco coal plants and expands the use of renewable energy in southwest Minnesota. The double-circuit 345 kilovolt transmission line will enable up to 4,000 megawatts of new renewable energy, as well as connecting to a new 420-megawatt natural gas plant to deliver reliable electricity to customers when renewable energy is not available, and at times of peak electric use.

The project, which began construction in spring 2026, will use the existing Sherco grid connection near Becker to serve customers, a key point in the transmission grid in central Minnesota.

These new energy investments will benefit local governments and landowners through millions of dollars in lease and property tax payments, while also providing access to low-cost energy sources.

Construction activities begin in spring 2026

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission approved the project in mid-2025 and approved some minor route amendments in early 2026. With final approvals in place, the project is completing final design, land rights acquisition, and early construction activities. Ongoing engagement with landowners, communities, and state agencies remains a priority to address questions, incorporate feedback where feasible, and ensure transparency throughout the process.

Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2026, beginning in the central portion of the project and progressing towards Garvin in 2026-2027. Timelines are being refined, with work expected to proceed in phases.

The line is scheduled to start carrying electricity in 2028. Additional substation construction will occur through 2031.

- Install matting for Access
- Drill foundations (generally 40-60 feet deep and about 8-10 feet in diameter)
- Installing a rebar cage into the foundation
- Pouring concrete
- Delivering structures to the project area and installing with a crane
- Installing 'lead line' rope to the insulators on each arm of the structure, which will pull the conductor wire back through each foundation.
- Install the conductor wire to the structures.
 - Lead line and wire pulls may use a combination of ground based and helicopter equipment

Please follow traffic directions when near construction areas and remain outside of work areas at all times.

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PROJECT TIMELINE

