

Public Meeting Summary

Meeting name: Melba Town Hall Meeting

Location: Melba, ID

Date: June 3, 2009

Time: 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Purpose and introduction: The Gateway West Transmission Line Project team hosted a town hall meeting, in coordination with the Canyon County Commissioners, to update attendees on project progress, answer questions, collect comments and document concerns. The meeting was facilitated by County Commissioner Steve Rule.

Notification and attendance: Approximately 440 landowners and residents along the two-mile study corridors within Canyon County were notified by mail and invited to attend. Posters announcing the meeting were also placed in key community locations. Approximately 100 people attended, including State Representatives Jim Patrick and Steve Kren, as well as staff representing U. S. Representative Mike Crapo, U. S. Representative Walt Minnick, and U. S. Senator Jim Risch.

Format: Project staff were available at a sign-in table and encouraged attendees to take informational materials and complete comment forms. Project staff also provided general information about the project, answered questions and helped identify specific parcels on landowner maps. Presentations included:

- Welcome and introductions: Steve Rule, Canyon County Commissioner
- Federal environmental process: John Sullivan, Bureau of Land Management
- Project overview: Kristi Pardue and Todd Adams, Idaho Power
- Routing overview: Jim Nickerson, Tetratech
- Questions and answers: facilitated by Commissioner Rule

Key questions and themes:

- Will the new transmission lines increase fire risks? *Lines will be built to exceed safety standards and should not contribute to fires; the draft environmental impact statement will include some consideration of fire risks.*
- Why doesn't the project use underground transmission lines? *Underground lines cause much more ground disturbance than overhead lines and underground lines generate a lot of heat, which requires more insulation. Overall, underground lines are much more expensive – roughly ten times the cost – and have greater effects on the environment.*
- Why can't the line be routed through Birds of Prey? *The record of decision for Birds of Prey aims to maintain existing conditions. The key issue with routing through Birds of Prey is that an additional corridor adds additional right of way that needs to be cleared, and this line would add more structures. It remains to be seen if the existing resource plan can be modified.*