SPP board approves $751 million of transmission expansion projects

January 31, 2013, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS – In keeping with its 2010 Strategic Plan to build a robust transmission system and develop efficient energy markets, the Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (SPP) Board of Directors approved a Near-Term transmission expansion plan that will result in the construction of $751 million in new transmission projects needed to maintain reliable supplies of electricity across its eight-state Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) region. These projects are expected to be constructed over the next six years, with construction taking place in all eight states.

The approved suite of projects are a result of SPP’s Integrated Transmission Planning (ITP) process which is an iterative three-year cycle that includes 20-Year, 10-Year, and Near-Term Assessments and targets transmission expansion solutions that meet reliability, policy, and economic needs within the region. The Near-Term Assessment approved by the Board today is one that is performed every year and focuses on development of cost-effective solutions for identified reliability needs.

“This is the third year for us to use the ITP process and it reflects well on the collaborative, member-driven focus of SPP,” said SPP President and CEO Nick Brown said. “Our transparent approach includes state regulators who serve on the SPP Regional State Committee (RSC). The RSC has substantive authority to direct policy changes on behalf of ratepayers and influence important regulatory issues such as how costs of new transmission are allocated in the SPP region.”

The project portfolio from the Near-Term plan is expected to mitigate more than 220 reliability issues identified in the assessment.

“Maintaining a reliable transmission grid is our first priority,” said Lanny Nickell, SPP Vice President of Engineering. “This portfolio of projects responsibly addresses expected areas of reliability concerns to ensure we help our members keep power moving to the cities and towns across our footprint.”

Founded in 1941, SPP is a group of 68 members in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas that serve more than 15 million customers. Membership is comprised of investor-owned utilities, municipal systems, generation and transmission cooperatives, state authorities, wholesale generators, power marketers, and independent transmission companies. SPP’s footprint includes 48,930 miles of transmission lines and 370,000 square miles of service territory. As an RTO, SPP ensures reliable supplies of power, adequate transmission infrastructure, and competitive wholesale prices of electricity. The SPP RE oversees compliance enforcement and reliability standards development. Learn more about SPP by visiting our Newsroom.