

Texas company expanding 128 miles of gas pipeline through NEPA

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With an eye set toward growing Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction in the region and throughout Appalachia, a Texas company will expand capacity of an existing natural gas transmission pipeline that crosses beneath Susquehanna and Wayne counties beginning this month.

Dubbed the "300 Line Project," El Paso Corp. will lay 128 miles of new natural gas transmission pipeline - parallel to an existing line across the state's northern tier - that will include approximately 18 miles of new pipeline in Wayne County. There also will be sections built in Susquehanna and Bradford counties, also within existing rights of way.

Following permit approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last month, the company anticipates constructing a natural gas compression station in Susquehanna County this month as part of the project and will begin pipeline construction in Wayne County early next year, said company spokesman Robert Newberry.

Mr. Newberry said the project will create an estimated 400 temporary construction-related jobs in the region. "We generally use local workers," he said.

The company filed its initial permit request with the federal agency, which is charged with the oversight of interstate pipelines transporting energy commodities, in October 2008.

An estimated total project cost was not available Wednesday.

The project will enhance the company's Tennessee Gas Pipeline, part of a network of transmission pipelines extending to the Gulf of Mexico. It will expand natural gas transmission capacity for the overall network and better service growing demand in major metropolitan markets including New York City, according to the company.

In Wayne County, a new 30-inch natural gas transmission pipeline will be placed generally within the rights of way of the company's existing 24-inch pipeline that was constructed in 1955, said county planning director Ed Coar.

The existing pipeline runs beneath Berlin, Clinton, Dyberry and Mount Pleasant townships, and Bethany and Honesdale boroughs in Wayne County, Mr. Coar said.

The entire pipeline expansion is projected to be in-service by November 2011 with the majority of the construction work in Wayne County occurring throughout 2011, Mr. Newberry said.

"We've come pretty close to those in-service dates," he said.

In addition to this project, Wayne County is entering the early stages of Marcellus Shale natural gas development with up to 14 exploratory wells expected to be drilled this year by New York-City based Hess Corp. and Houston-based Newfield Exploration Co. in a joint partnership.

El Paso Corp. owns the largest interstate natural gas pipeline system in the U.S., according to the company.

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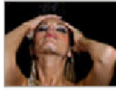
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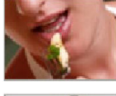
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