

For Immediate Release

**Village of Montfort Hosting Informational Meeting on Cardinal Hickory Creek Proposal
Tuesday September, 19**

Jim Schmitz learned about the importance of public outreach the old-fashioned way. Before assuming duty as the village president of Montfort, Wisconsin, he made farm by farm rounds for 52 years as a dairy creamery fieldman.

The evening I spoke with Jim, he had spent the day distributing signs in six surrounding communities about a public meeting his village board is hosting concerning an enormous transmission line utilities want to stretch across much of southwest Wisconsin. "We have learned a lot about the Cardinal Hickory Creek transmission line proposal in recent weeks. My personal concern is this proposal does not seem to be keeping pace with the times and with keeping electricity costs affordable."

The village welcomed one of the state's earliest wind farms in 2000. "We take pride in local renewable energy development and in conserving power. Unfortunately, the state has continued to allow utility spending on transmission expansion and power plants to get increasingly out of control even as electricity use has dropped. The only change is Wisconsin's electric rates are now the highest in the Midwest."

Noting the price of solar has dropped 70% over the last 10 years and a large solar farm has been proposed to power his community, Schmitz says larger users like dairy operations that have not already installed solar will soon go that direction. "Self-sufficiency, that is, meeting our needs on our own is how farms and communities stay healthy."

Pat Raimer, born and raised in the Montfort-Cobb area, is one of the village trustees who unanimously approved a formal resolution asking the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to prove that the millions of dollars transmission builders want electric customers to spend on this transmission line would not be better invested in improving homes farms and businesses with energy efficiency and further developing local power. "We all pretty much agreed that the state rule change in 1998 that stopped requiring cost-benefit analysis oversight for transmission proposals was not in anyone's best interest. We'd like to see that oversight come back."

At a recent meeting with twenty Grant County dairy farmers, Raimer was surprised to learn that most farms still have no access to energy-saving three phase power service yet transmission builders argue that adding a huge line when electricity use has been flat would somehow improve local efficiency.

Raimer is proud that the village board is hosting the public information meeting in Montfort on Tuesday, September 19 in order to help others in Southwest Wisconsin become more informed and address what could be an "unnecessary reach of utilities into our pockets." He hopes the factual information will motivate other municipal governments to join more than 130 local governments across the state in adopting the resolution and "ask the PSC (Public Service Commission of WI) to analyze energy efficiency and all other spending options and to do its job."

Village trustee Don Pluemer feels the PSC also needs to make costly transmission expansion

spending fully accountable for impacts on CO2 emissions. He notes that all transmission lines carry generation predominantly from fossil fuel power plants: 73% in 2016 on average compared to 16% from nuclear plants and only 8% wind power. Pluemer observes that guaranteed, maximized CO2 reductions occur when, “households, businesses and communities consume less power from transmission because they are increasingly efficient and using local renewable energy, not when a transmission is added.”

Despite billions electric customers will already assume in coming decades for dozens of expansion transmission lines since 2005, remote wind power contributions have only increased a few percent. Says Pluemer, “It is logical to me to focus efforts on what we can do locally and stop waiting on utilities. All of the potential benefits transmission builders propose are highly contingent on powers electric customers do not possess.”

Pluemer encourages fellow citizens to do some homework and grasp that transmission expansion lines have no chance of reducing CO2 emissions significantly unless market rules fully determined by utilities are completely overhauled. Raimer and Pluemer will assist individuals and local governments who cannot attend the meeting access information by either calling (608) 943-6704 or emailing raimerpjr@charter.net

The public information meeting will be held at the Montfort Community Center, 102 East Park Street, starting at 7 pm. Experts from several citizen groups and local governments including Driftless Area Land Conservancy, S.O.U.L. of Wisconsin and the Inter-Municipal Energy Planning Committee will be making presentations and receiving questions.

For more information about the press release, contact its author:

Rob Danielson, Secretary
Energy Planning and Information Committee [EPIC]
Town of Stark, Vernon County
608.625.4949