

Land Before Lines Research

Transmission projects in Kansas Oklahoma and Missouri

Landowners face different approval processes along the same proposed transmission corridor. Kansas has already required Evergy to reconsider part of its route. Oklahoma has two pending certificate cases. Missouri needs a closer review of Liberty's route, service territory, and existing easements. Those differences determine where residents can challenge the project and what evidence they need.

Steve Bishop | September 17, 2026

This report covers the proposed 345-kV corridor, related large-load and water developments, permit questions, and options for affected landowners. No public record identified here establishes a named Neosho data center or connects Liberty's two prospective large-load customers to a specific Newton County site. "Not found" means a record was not located; it does not establish that the record does not exist. Filing deadlines, property rights, and compensation depend on the applicable order and the facts of each property. Review them with counsel in the relevant state.

1 Findings that matter for landowners

Southwest Power Pool has approved the regional project. Route selection, permits, easement rights, and cost remain the practical questions for landowners.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) approved a roughly 316-mile, 345-kV corridor from Buffalo Flats near Wichita through Delaware, Oklahoma, and Monett to North Branson, Missouri. Its stated purpose is reliability during extreme winter weather. SPP has issued construction notifications to Evergy, AEP, and Empire District Electric, which operates as Liberty. Regional approval does not resolve every state permit or property right.

Liberty reported two completed interconnection applications from prospective large-load customers in September 11, 2026 testimony. Neosho also received a data center inquiry before adopting its July 7 moratorium. These are specific reasons to request more information. They do not establish the customers' identities, locations, or connection to this transmission project.

Several decisions could occur outside a Neosho City Council vote. The city moratorium ends at the city limits, Newton County has no zoning, and Missouri American Water now owns Neosho's water and sewer systems. County records, utility proceedings, and economic development records each cover a different part of the inquiry.

No Missouri Public Service Commission (PSC) construction certificate case for this line was identified as of September 17, 2026. Whether Liberty needs a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (CCN) depends in part on the route and its existing authority. Compare the route with Empire's certificated territory before deciding how to raise that question with the PSC.

Oklahoma has two Certificate of Authority cases: PUD 2026-000047 for NEOTEP West and PUD 2026-000068 for NEOTEP East. The West schedule lists November 9 for public comments and November 13 for a hearing. The East hearing and protest deadline remain unconfirmed. Obtain the procedural orders before filing.

The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) approved the route west of US-77 on May 12, 2026 and denied the proposed route east of it. Evergy must study alternatives, including a route along US-166. The reported schedule lists a November 19, 2026 hearing, comments due December 2, and a decision by March 4, 2027.

Liberty's public map has shown one proposed Missouri route since August 13, 2026. The mapped alignment crosses Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and Stone counties and uses the existing Monett to Aurora to Reeds Spring corridor farther east. A proposed route is not proof that all approvals or easements are secured.

Water crossings, protected species, caves, and historic properties could require federal review even where the route avoids federal land. The specific crossing and construction method determine which requirements apply. A parcel-level review is still needed.

The Oklahoma route passes through reservation areas. That does not establish the ownership status of each parcel. Tribal trust land, restricted land, and individually owned allotments require separate title and legal review before conclusions can be drawn about consent, federal approval, or condemnation.

Missouri American Water's proposed Baynham Branch Reservoir would cover about 828 acres and supply roughly 20 million gallons per day. Its demand projections deserve review alongside regional growth plans. No evidence identified here establishes that the reservoir and transmission line serve a common data center project.

Protect Rural Missouri, Protect Rural Oklahoma, and Kansas landowners have organized opposition. Twelve landowner intervenors were identified in the Kansas case. No Missouri lawsuit, PSC filing, or county resolution addressing this line was located; participation in the Oklahoma cases remains unconfirmed.

Land Before Lines needs a complete three-state explanation, accurate filing dates, working links, and a way to notify residents of changes. The website review in section 10 identifies those needs.

2 Data center interest and unanswered questions

The chronology below separates reported events from what remains unknown. A closed meeting, an infrastructure purchase, or a confidential utility filing does not establish a connection among the parties.

Chronology

January 16, 2026. Liberty files notice of intent to file a large-load tariff case (ET-2026-0184). *Source: PSC EFIS.*

January 2026. Governor Kehoe signs Executive Order 26-02 supporting AI and data center development. *Source: Cassville Democrat.*

Before July 7, 2026. An unidentified caller asked Neosho about industrial park property for a data center. City Manager David Kennedy described the inquiry in July reporting. The date of the call was not disclosed. *Source: City Manager David Kennedy to Joplin Globe, July 9; KSN July 8.*

June 11, 2026. Newton County posts a closed Special Business Meeting for June 15, 10 a.m., topic "Real Estate," under RSMo 610.021(2) (records may be closed while public knowledge "might adversely affect the legal consideration"). *Source: newtoncountymo.com/notices.*

June 17, 2026. Newton County Commission calendar: "Data Center Meeting, Jefferson City." This matches the Missouri Association of Counties data center summit that day, where Governor Kehoe spoke. Who attended: not found. *Source: County notices; Missourinet; KCUR.*

June 24, 2026. PSC approves Missouri American Water's \$34.5 million purchase of Neosho's water and wastewater systems (WA-2026-0072). MAW president Rich Svindland talks about a Newton County reservoir that could "serve nearly a million people in the future." *Source: Joplin Globe June 25; PSC.*

July 7, 2026. Neosho City Council unanimously adopted a one-year data center moratorium within city limits. City officials said they needed time to prepare. The ordinance number was not identified. *Source: Joplin Globe July 9; KZRG July 8; KSN July 8.*

July 9, 2026. At a Protect Rural Missouri town hall, Commissioner Mark Knight said officials were consulting attorneys about data center regulation and described a possible zoning vote in the first half of 2027. Presiding Commissioner Daniel Swem also described legal review of the county's options. *Source: KSN July 10; Joplin Globe July 5 and 9.*

July 28 and August 13, 2026. Newton County closed sessions under 610.021(1) (legal). *Source: County notices.*

August 4, 2026. Mark Bridges wins the Republican primary for presiding commissioner (53.8 percent). Swem finishes third. *Source: KOAM.*

August 11, 2026. The county calendar listed a Liberty Stakeholder Update in Joplin. In an August 11 Cassville Democrat article, Liberty's Nate Morris said the upgrades were not being planned for data centers, while acknowledging that future users could use the system. *Source: County notices; Cassville Democrat.*

August 14, 2026. Algonquin Power CEO Rod West described Missouri as an area of data center interest during the company's second-quarter earnings call. He declined to disclose specific customer discussions. *Source: Earnings call transcript.*

September 3, 2026. Missouri American Water closes on Neosho's water and sewer systems. *Source: PR Newswire.*

September 11, 2026. Liberty files its large-load application, testimony, and a motion for protective order in ET-2026-0184. *Source: PSC EFIS ET-2026-0184.*

September 14, 2026. PSC suspends the tariff until February 8, 2027 and issues an order addressing intervention. The filing deadline needs confirmation from that order. *Source: PSC EFIS.*

September 15, 2026. County calendar: "Liberty Utilities regarding Transmission Project, Lampo Building," 2 p.m., same day as Liberty's public open house. *Source: County notices.*

Liberty testimony on prospective customers

Aaron Doll, Liberty's Vice President of Energy Supply Services, testified on September 11, 2026 that two prospective customers had completed applications in Liberty's interconnection queue. One application used SPP Attachment AQ and the other Attachment AX. Doll also reported inquiries from other potential large-load customers.

Charlotte Emery, Senior Director of Rates and Regulatory Affairs, described Liberty's prospective demand in hundreds of megawatts. Her testimony estimated that one 300 MW customer could increase Liberty's energy requirements by as much as 50 percent in the near term. She also described a scenario in which large-load demand could double or triple the utility's current load. These are potential changes, not committed demand.

Liberty requested a decision by January 31, 2027, explaining that prospective customers consider the timing of infrastructure, generation procurement, and regulatory approvals when choosing a location. The tariff was suspended until February 8, 2027.

Completed applications show that the two customers have advanced beyond an initial inquiry. They do not establish that either customer will build, that either is a data center, or that either has selected Newton County. Liberty proposed a 25 MW threshold for its large-load tariff. The separate statutory threshold cited for utilities with fewer than 250,000 customers is 50 MW under RSMo 393.130.7. The two thresholds should not be used interchangeably.

The public testimony identified here does not name the customers, counties, or substations. Requests for those details should go through the PSC process, subject to any confidentiality order.

Where public information is limited

Newton County has no zoning. That limits one form of local land-use review but does not establish that a project needs no other permits. Commissioner Mark Knight said county officials were consulting attorneys and that a zoning vote was possible in the first half of 2027.

Neosho's moratorium applies within city limits. It does not cover an unincorporated Newton County site.

Missouri American Water's ownership changes where residents seek information about water capacity and service agreements. Relevant PSC records and company filings should be reviewed alongside city records.

Request Chapter 100 and other incentive records from the responsible county and economic development bodies, including the Newton County Industrial Development Authority. Grow Neosho, also known as NABIFI, promotes

Chapter 100 incentives at a stated threshold of \$5 million and 100 jobs. Neosho has been an Enhanced Enterprise Zone since 2006.

Liberty filed a motion for a protective order with its September 11 application. Public statements indicate that customer identities will not be disclosed until Liberty and the customer agree to an announcement. The scope of any confidentiality protection must be read in the actual order.

The transmission proceedings provide a public process for questions about demand, project costs, and related infrastructure.

Public records requests

For Missouri public bodies, submit written requests for electronic copies under RSMo 610.023. Unless another period is specified below, request records from October 1, 2025 through the date of the request. Ask the custodian to identify the legal basis for withholding records and whether any previously closed real estate records are now open. Send federal requests to the Corps under the Freedom of Information Act.

Newton County Clerk (101 S. Wood St., Neosho; commission 417-451-8223)

Minutes, motions, and votes of the June 15, 2026 closed "Real Estate" session and the July 28 and August 13 closed "Legal" sessions. All correspondence, letters of intent, NDAs, and calendar entries involving any data center, large load, hyperscale, or "confidential project," or with Liberty, Grow Neosho, Joplin Regional Partnership, Missouri Partnership, DED, site selectors, or the County IDA. Attendee list and reimbursements for the June 17 Jefferson City meeting. Materials from the August 11 Liberty Stakeholder Update and the September 15 Liberty meeting. Outside counsel engagement letters on data center regulation. The July 9, 2026 Norway Road annexation file.

Newton County Industrial Development Authority (ask the clerk who holds records)

All minutes, inducement resolutions, applications, and Chapter 100 or bond inquiries since January 1, 2025.

City of Neosho (City Clerk; City Manager David Kennedy)

The July 7, 2026 moratorium ordinance and bill number, staff report, and Planning and Zoning draft regulations. All emails, call logs, and notes about the data center inquiry and the industrial park property (January 1 to July 7, 2026). Any NDA. Any 2026 closed-session minutes under 610.021(2). Any will-serve or capacity letter for a site over 50 acres.

Missouri Department of Economic Development

All Missouri One Start, Missouri Works, Chapter 100 review, or RSMo 144.810 data center exemption records referencing Newton County, Neosho, Seneca, Granby, or Diamond since 2025; any site visit records for Newton County; the current data center annual report.

Missouri DNR

Major Water User registrations filed for Newton County since January 1, 2025; any construction permit applications for industrial water, wastewater, or land disturbance over one acre in Newton County; all 401 certification correspondence on SWL-2019-00034.

Missouri PSC (Sunshine applies to the Commission and Staff)

Nonconfidential data request responses in ET-2026-0184 and WA-2026-0072. Separately, ask the Office of the Public Counsel, 1-866-922-2959, to seek the identity, megawatts, county, and substation of the two prospective customers, subject to PSC confidentiality requirements.

Corps of Engineers, Little Rock District (FOIA)

The full SWL-2019-00034 application, purpose and need, and demand projections for the Baynham Branch Reservoir.

Harry S Truman Coordinating Council (Region M council of governments, a public body)

Any data center prospect briefings in 2026.

Records to monitor

- Newton County Recorder index (ncrecorder.org/search): new deeds, options, memoranda of option, and easements to Empire District Electric or Liberty; LLC grantees; townships around Seneca, the Neosho industrial park, Granby and Baynham Branch, Diamond, and the I-49 and US-60 interchanges.
- Newton County Assessor and Collector parcel searches for ownership changes and parcel consolidations.
- Missouri Secretary of State business search for new LLCs with Joplin or Neosho registered agents or national registered-agent addresses.
- newtoncountymo.com/notices for weekly schedules and closed-session postings (the June 15 session appeared only there). neoshomo.gov/agendacenter for council and Planning and Zoning packets.
- PSC EFIS: ET-2026-0184, ER-2026-0260, WA-2026-0072, and any new Liberty EA case.
- DNR Major Water User system and issued permits page; Corps Little Rock public notices.
- Joplin Globe (John Hacker, Debby Woodin), KSN/KODE (Dustin Lattimer), KOAM, KZRG, Cassville Democrat (Sheila Harris), missouridatacenters.org.

Regional context

In Joplin, Jasper County, about 600 acres at Wildwood Ranch were annexed and rezoned on February 17, 2026 for developer Jimmer Pinjuv. Reporting identified a March lawsuit and quoted Pinjuv saying Liberty had no excess power. Reporting around September 2026 also described city data center rules requiring closed-loop cooling and a \$1,000 annual license.

Near Sarcoxie, Geronimo Power proposed a hyperscale development with about 2,000 acres of solar. The Jasper County Commission opposed Chapter 100 incentives in March 2026. KOAM reported on September 3 that the commission was reconsidering at Geronimo's request. Southwest Missouri Citizens Against Data Centers has organized opposition.

No Missouri data center legislation was identified as enacted during the 2026 session. A statewide moratorium rally took place at the Capitol on September 16, 2026. Cedar County adopted a one-year pause on solar, wind, and data centers on September 15.

Sedgwick County, Kansas, has paused data center applications since January 2026 and extended that pause to December 24, 2026. Evergy reports prospective large-load demand of 2 to 3 gigawatts. These regional developments do not establish a connection to a Neosho project.

3 Project scope and utility plans

SPP approval

SPP's 2024 Integrated Transmission Plan describes the Buffalo Flats to Delaware to Monett to North Branson corridor as a response to extreme winter weather and reliability concerns near Branson. The Board approved the portfolio on October 29, 2024; NTC-C 220886 records a February 4, 2025 approval for the two long new lines. The listed 345-kV facilities use regional cost allocation. Utility estimates of local customer costs therefore differ from total construction costs.

Buffalo Flats in Kansas to Delaware in Oklahoma

Responsible utilities: Evergy Kansas Central (Kansas miles) and AEP (Oklahoma miles, NEOTEP West).

Reported length in miles: 154.6 (SPP); 133 in Kansas (Evergy); about 34 in Oklahoma (AEP). Reported cost: \$484.1 million (ITP); \$493 million (Evergy); Evergy share \$363.1 million, AEP share \$113.3 million (NTCs).

NTC 220937 (AEP) and NTC 220938 (Evergy), September 22, 2025. KCC approved Kansas segment west of US-77 only, May 12, 2026; new hearing November 19, 2026. OCC PUD 2026-000047 for the Oklahoma miles.

Delaware in Oklahoma to Monett in Missouri

Responsible utilities: AEP (68 Oklahoma miles, NEOTEP East) and Empire (Missouri miles).

Reported length in miles: 114.5 (SPP). Reported cost: \$342.6 million (ITP).

NTC-C 220886 to AEP, March 21, 2025. OCC PUD 2026-000068. No unconditional NTC for this segment found.

Monett to North Branson

Responsible utilities: Empire (Liberty).

Reported length in miles: 47.2 (SPP) / 50.4 (NTC). Reported cost: \$213.7 million line plus \$28.3 million Monett substation; total \$252,564,853.

NTC 220948 to Empire, November 7, 2025.

161-kV rebuilds and 69-to-161 conversions

Responsible utilities: Empire (Liberty).

Reported length in miles: About 79 (Liberty). Reported cost: About \$135 million combined.

NTC 220903 to Empire, June 24, 2025.

SPP planning estimates, construction notices, and utility route descriptions use different scopes and dates. The mileages and costs above are retained separately because they have not been reconciled.

Missouri

Liberty proposes about 90 miles of new 345-kV line from the Oklahoma border near Seneca through Monett to a new North Branson substation. About 20 to 25 miles would require new right-of-way, largely in Newton County. Liberty says the portion east of Newton County would use existing 161-kV easements. The wording of those easements still needs review.

The proposed easement width is 150 feet. Liberty described structures of 80 to 120 feet in March 2026; other public accounts cite 125 or 130 feet. Request the dimensions planned for each affected property.

Liberty's 345-kV cost estimate was \$500 million to \$600 million in March 2026. The Cassville Democrat reported \$750 million on August 11. Liberty says its customers would bear about 3 percent of the regionally allocated cost. The separate 161-kV work has been described as \$250 million to \$300 million. The SPP figures above use different project scopes and dates; they should not be added or compared without reconciliation.

The 161-kV Ozark to Branson construction was described as starting in early 2027. For the 345-kV project, SPP lists November 12, 2029 as an in-service date, while landowner communications have cited 2030. A July 10, 2026 KSN report quoted Liberty saying the timeline had moved to October 2028. Request a written schedule that distinguishes construction start from in-service dates.

The public map's proposed route crosses Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and Stone counties. The mapped Newton County alignment follows the southern preliminary alternative, about 2.5 miles north of downtown Neosho, past

Granby and Seneca, reaching the state line about 2 miles southwest of Seneca. The map review did not identify a crossing of McDonald or Jasper County.

Liberty held open houses in Neosho on March 12 and September 15, Aurora on June 9, Pierce City on June 10, and Reeds Spring on June 11, 2026. Project contact: transmission.projects@libertyutilities.com. Burns and McDonnell prepared the map under project 178566.

Older easement searches should include Ozark Power and Water Company, dating to 1913, and Empire District Electric Company, dating to 1927. Algonquin acquired Empire in 2017. Confirm the chain of title for each property.

Oklahoma

AEP Oklahoma Transmission Company calls its portion the Northeast Oklahoma Transmission Enhancement Project (NEOTEP). The East segment covers about 68 miles from Delaware Substation across northern Nowata and Craig counties, then southern Ottawa County, to the Missouri border southwest of Seneca. The West segment covers about 34 miles from Delaware north past Copan to Kansas.

AEP describes structures of 100 to 135 feet, a 150-foot right-of-way, and spans of 850 to 1,300 feet. The affected counties are Washington, Nowata, Craig, and Ottawa. The corridor is north of Oologah Lake and Grand Lake.

AEP's schedule anticipates an Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) decision in early 2027, easement negotiations from early 2027 through the first half of 2028, and construction from summer 2028 through late 2029.

September 2026 open houses were scheduled for Bartlesville on September 9, Nowata on September 15, Vinita on September 16, and Miami on September 17. Contact Erika Rivera at 833-214-4653 or psa_outreach@aeptransmission.com.

4 Kansas route review

The project

Eversource Kansas Central proposes about 133 miles of 345-kV line from Buffalo Flats Substation near Garden Plain through Sedgwick, Sumner, Cowley, and Chautauqua counties to the Oklahoma border. The substation is near W. 13th St. N. and N. 279th St. W. AEP is responsible for the Oklahoma portion of the connection to Delaware Substation.

Eversource describes steel monopoles or H-frames of 100 to 140 feet, with spans of 700 to 1,200 feet. Testimony cited at least 205 towers. The right-of-way width was not identified.

Eversource lists a \$493 million project cost. Other figures cited in the research include a 16 percent Kansas allocation, a 9.36 percent Eversource Kansas Central allocation, about \$5.5 million in Kansas Central customer costs, and an estimated \$3.37 annual residential impact in 2029. These figures do not share a clearly stated calculation basis and should be reconciled with Eversource. SPP estimates roughly \$2 million in annual fuel and congestion savings.

Eversource's schedule lists construction in Sedgwick County in fall 2027, Sumner and Cowley counties in the first half of 2028, and Chautauqua County in summer 2028, with completion in December 2029. The updated eastern route remains subject to the KCC decision expected by March 4, 2027.

Project page: evergy.com/partner-with-us/transmission-projects/buffalo-flats. Map: experience.arcgis.com/experience/45c71df9dd6c43c6832937574ff6b802. Contact 316-261-6700, buffaloflats@evergy.com.

Siting and property rights

K.S.A. 66-1,178 requires a siting permit before construction or eminent domain for covered lines of at least 230 kV and five miles. The statute provides notice to landowners within 660 feet of the centerline. The approval status of the particular segment matters: Kansas approved the western route but required a new study for the eastern route.

K.S.A. 66-1,180 directs the KCC to consider necessity and the reasonableness of the location, including consumer and economic development benefits. The commission can attach conditions to protect affected parties. The cited 2025 legislation established a 180-day decision period.

Kansas condemnation procedures appear in K.S.A. 17-618 and 26-501 et seq. Court-appointed appraisers determine an award, and K.S.A. 26-508 provides an appeal process for compensation. Valuation can include damage to the remaining property under K.S.A. 26-513. Counsel should confirm the appeal deadline and any basis for recovering fees.

Docket 26 EKCE 148 STG

Date	Event
November 14, 2025	Application filed.
January 7 and 8, 2026	Public hearings, Sedan High School and Southwestern College, Winfield (123 attended). Comments through January 23.
February 5, 2026	Twelve landowner intervenors admitted, including Freeman Land and Cattle, Spring Hill Farm LLC, R5 Land and Cattle LLC, and Bull Oil Company LLC. No county, Farm Bureau, or conservation group found as intervenor. Attorney James Zakoura represented several landowners.
March 11 to 12, 2026	Evidentiary hearing, Topeka.
May 12, 2026	The KCC approved the route west of US-77 and denied the proposed route east of US-77. It directed Evergy to study alternatives, with strong consideration of US-166, and address landowner communication and oil and gas concerns. The commission news release identifies environmental damage and interference with existing leases as central issues.
Summer 2026	Evergy releases new eastern alternatives; landowners say several still "carve new utility corridors through intact prairie north of Highway 166" (Hunter Ferguson, Cedar Vale).
August 31, 2026	Landowner meeting, Cedar Vale (Samantha Ferensik; Ben Bullard of Protect Rural Oklahoma).
November 19, 2026	New KCC public hearing, location to be announced. Zoom testimony requires registration by noon the day before.
December 2, 2026, 5 p.m.	Written comment deadline.
By March 4, 2027	KCC decision on the eastern route.

Evidence behind the Kansas decision

Landowners presented testimony about tallgrass prairie, mature trees, oil and gas operations, and failures in Evergy's landowner communications. The KCC identified environmental damage and interference with existing leases as reasons to reconsider the eastern route.

The US-166 corridor gave the KCC a specific alternative to order Evergy to study. Any proposed alternative should identify the alignment and explain how it reduces impacts.

Prairie conservation mattered because the potential loss extends beyond a single property. Comments should identify intact prairie, restoration limits, and the effect of construction on grazing.

Existing access and use rights also mattered. Document oil and gas leases, farm access, and other rights that a proposed easement could impair.

Environmental and cultural resources

Etzanoa, the ancestral Wichita city near Arkansas City, is relevant to route review. Opponents report that several alternatives cross associated areas. Identify the affected sites and request appropriate historic preservation review where a federal action is involved, including consultation with the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, Osage Nation, and Kaw Nation.

Mapped mussel habitat includes the Neosho mucket in the Verdigris and Fall rivers and the rabbitsfoot in the Neosho River. Review the exact crossings if the revised US-166 route approaches Coffeyville.

Any species argument should use current listings and mapped habitat for the affected route. The lesser prairie-chicken issue cited in earlier discussions concerns western Kansas and should not substitute for evidence about this corridor.

Sedgwick County's data center application pause extends to December 24, 2026. Kansas SB 98, enacted in 2025, provides a 20-year sales tax exemption for qualifying data center investment of \$250 million.

Kansas participation

Comments: kcc-connect.kcc.ks.gov/s/public-comments citing docket 26-EKCE-148-STG; public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov; 1-800-662-0027; by mail to KCC Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection, 1500 SW Arrowhead Rd., Topeka, KS 66604. Deadline December 2, 2026.

A petition to intervene under K.A.R. 82-1-225 must explain how the proceeding could substantially affect the petitioner's legal interests. Use KCC-Connect and confirm the deadline in the procedural order. The docket room is 785-271-3266. The Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board, curb.kansas.gov, represents residential ratepayers.

Cowley County commissioners voiced opposition in 2025. No formal action by Chautauqua, Sumner, or Sedgwick counties was identified. Residents can ask their commissions to support examination of US-166 and existing rights-of-way.

5 Permits and unresolved approvals

Missouri

SPP Notification to Construct. Issued (NTC 220903, June 24, 2025; NTC 220948, November 7, 2025). SPP has approved regional transmission work. The notifications cover different facilities; match each one to the segment under review.

PSC line CCN (RSMo 393.170.1, 20 CSR 4240-20.045). No case filed as of September 17, 2026. Compare the route with Empire's certificated territory, including adjacent cooperative and municipal service areas. Ask counsel to evaluate the certificate requirement and any complaint under RSMo 386.390.

PSC large-load tariff (ET-2026-0184). Filed September 11, 2026; tariff suspended to February 8, 2027; intervention deadline in the September 14 order. Review intervention options and ask OPC to seek information about the two prospective customers. Confirm the filing deadline from the order.

County road assent (RSMo 229.100). Not found for Newton, Lawrence, Barry, Stone. Ask each county for road crossing approvals and standards. RSMo 229.100 and the Grain Belt cases require legal review before a county's authority can be stated conclusively.

Corps Section 404 (Nationwide Permit 57). Not found. Review Nationwide Permit 57 and current Missouri regional conditions for each actual crossing. Sensitive waters, listed species, and historic properties can require preconstruction notification. Corps Little Rock District, Branson office: 417-213-4796.

MoDNR 401 certification. Not found. Ask MoDNR which certification applies to each affected reach, including mining-metal impairments in Shoal Creek and Spring River, and whether individual review and public notice are required.

USFWS ESA consultation. Not found. Newton County's caves, sinkholes, and groundwater connections require site-specific review. The Missouri determination key excludes certain effects on caves and their hydrology. Identify whether work could affect Ozark cavefish habitat at Hearrell Spring.

Eminent domain filings. None found. No filing was identified. A forecast of later filings does not prevent an earlier action; property notices require prompt review.

Baynham Branch Reservoir (Missouri American Water). Corps public notice April 3, 2025 (SWL-2019-00034); no DNR 401 request received as of the DNR page. The reservoir has a separate federal permit process. Request demand projections and water quality certification status. Its location does not establish a shared customer with the line.

Oklahoma

OCC Certificate of Authority, NEOTEP West (PUD 2026-000047). Filed June 19, 2026. Listed comment deadline November 9 and hearing November 13. Confirm the procedural order. The cited statute uses a 200-day decision period. A simple count reaches about January 5, 2027, but the controlling filing date and any relevant orders must be checked. Public comment and party participation can have different deadlines. A reported July 31 protest date needs confirmation.

OCC Certificate of Authority, NEOTEP East (PUD 2026-000068). Filed August 21, 2026. Hearing and protest deadline unconfirmed. A 200-day count reaches about March 9, 2027, subject to the governing statute and orders. This case covers the eastern connection to Missouri. Confirm the county meeting and participation requirements.

Eminent domain. Certificate prerequisite under the cited 27 O.S. 7(C). The certificate requirement does not guarantee that condemnation cannot begin before a predicted date. Confirm whether a certificate has issued. Survey access is a separate issue addressed in *Transource v. Holloway*.

BIA right-of-way (25 CFR 169). Unknown. 25 CFR Part 169 governs federal right-of-way approval over covered Indian land and includes consent requirements. Ownership status, tribal interests, and applicable law determine the available process. Do not treat every allotment as legally identical. BIA Miami Agency: 918-715-4295.

Corps 404 and Section 10. Not found. Review the Neosho (Grand) River crossing under Section 10 and any fill under Section 404. Confirm current notification and EPA Region 6 conditions for work in Indian country.

GRDA / FERC Pensacola boundary. Unknown. Confirm the current Pensacola project boundary and license conditions with GRDA and FERC before concluding that structures require project approval.

Kansas

KCC siting permit (K.S.A. 66-1,178), western segment to US-77. Granted May 12, 2026. The state siting prerequisite is satisfied for the approved segment. Other condemnation requirements still apply. Easement negotiations were described as beginning in January 2027.

KCC siting permit, eastern segment US-77 to the state line. Denied May 12, 2026; re-study underway; hearing November 19; comments to December 2; decision by March 4, 2027. A siting permit remains necessary for the eastern segment before construction or condemnation under the cited statute.

Corps 404 (Tulsa District, Kansas regional conditions). Not found. Check the actual Arkansas, Walnut, Caney, and any Verdigris crossings against current district conditions and species records.

Section 106. Not found. Identify effects on Etzanoa and other historic properties where a federal action requires review. Consult the relevant tribes.

6 Federal state and tribal land

The map review did not identify a confirmed federal land crossing. Parcel boundaries and the Monett to Branson alignment remain unresolved in places. Distance from a park or refuge does not itself create a permit requirement; the relevant questions are whether the project crosses protected land or affects resources subject to federal review.

George Washington Carver National Monument (NPS, Diamond). About 3.7 miles. Evaluate potential effects on historic properties where a federal undertaking is involved. Proximity alone does not establish an adverse effect.

Neosho National Fish Hatchery and Ozark Cavefish NWR (USFWS, inside Neosho). Route about 2.5 miles north of downtown. Check groundwater connections and potential cavefish effects. A confirmed refuge crossing would require separate federal review.

Shoal Creek, Spring River, North Fork Spring River. Crossed or adjacent. Check the exact crossing, habitat designation, notification requirements, and any restrictions on in-stream work.

Baynham Branch and Shoal Creek southwest of Granby. In the corridor. Proposed 828-acre reservoir with its own Corps and DNR process.

Elk River and Indian Creek (McDonald County). About 13 to 19 miles. Not crossed by the current layer.

Table Rock Lake Corps land. About 5 miles from North Branson. Check whether the project would affect a Corps civil works project and require Section 408 permission.

Roaring River, Big Sugar Creek, Mark Twain NF, Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek. 14 to 35 miles. No direct crossing identified in the map review; confirm against the final alignment.

MDC areas: Fort Crowder (2,323 acres), Diamond Grove Prairie (861), Capps Creek, Talbot, Pilot Knob, Wire Road. Fort Crowder and Diamond Grove Prairie are nearest the Newton County alignment. Check ownership, easement authority, and any federal funding restrictions for affected conservation land.

Cherokee Nation Reservation (Nowata, Craig, most of Washington). Route inside it. Check parcel status, applicable tribal requirements, water quality certification, and historic preservation consultation.

Quapaw, Peoria, Miami, Ottawa, Wyandotte reservations; Eastern Shawnee, Seneca-Cayuga, Modoc lands (Ottawa County). Route through the cluster south of Miami. Match the centerline to title records. Trust, restricted, tribal, and individually owned parcels can require different consent and approval analysis.

Tar Creek Superfund site (north of Miami). Route passes south of Miami; overlap not verified. EPA, ODEQ, and Quapaw coordination under CERCLA.

Ozark Plateau NWR (closed cave tracts, Ottawa and Delaware counties). Locations not published. Ask the refuge manager whether any tract is affected. Exact locations should be handled through the responsible agency.

Flint Hills tallgrass prairie and Cross Timbers (Cowley, Chautauqua). The rejected Kansas segment crossed 35 miles of it. Document prairie and woodland impacts when comparing the revised eastern alternatives.

Etzanoa (Arkansas City). Several Kansas alternatives cross associated areas. Identify affected historic resources and consultation requirements for any federal undertaking.

7 Landowner groups and legislative activity

Missouri

Protect Rural Missouri is led publicly by Steve Roark of Circle R Ranch in Neosho. The group distributed about 6,000 flyers in April 2026 and held May 7 and July 9 town halls at the Lampo Center with speakers from Kansas and Oklahoma. It urges landowners to obtain legal advice before signing or granting access. Survey rights depend on the property and applicable law. Contact protectruralmissouri.org or info@protectruralmissouri.org.

Steve Roark and Cody Gostwick are among the named Missouri landowners. Liberty calls eminent domain a last resort and has said it will use more existing easements east of Newton County.

No Missouri lawsuit, PSC filing, county resolution, or legislator statement about this line was identified. Mark Bridges won the August 4, 2026 Republican primary for presiding commissioner with 53.8 percent of the vote. A

primary result does not establish the outcome of the November election. No position from Bridges on the line was located.

Oklahoma

Protect Rural Oklahoma is associated with Natalie and Ben Bullard. Meetings included Cedar Vale, Kansas, on August 31 and Welch on September 4, 2026. Its website lists Senators Michael Bergstrom and Julie Daniels and Representatives Rusty Cornwell, Steve Bashore, Judd Strom, and John Kane as contacts; that listing does not establish an endorsement. Participation in the OCC cases remains unconfirmed. Contact protectruralok.com or 918-244-5870.

Oklahoma reporting names Jason Bryan, Kelli and Russell Fent, Shelby Bergman of Wyandotte Farm School, and Greg Bryan among affected residents. A recurring request is to use existing rights-of-way. No tribal government or legislator statement on this project was identified.

Kansas

Twelve landowner intervenors were identified in the Kansas docket, with attorney James Zakoura representing several. Public opponents include Vance Freeman, Samantha Ferensik, and Hunter Ferguson. Stand 4 the Land Kansas, stand4thelandkansas.com, works on property rights statewide. Virginia Crossland-Macha spoke in Neosho in May; the group's website did not identify Buffalo Flats as a specific campaign.

Legislation to watch

Oklahoma SB 1929 (2026): \$2 per linear foot annual payment to landowners; passed committee February 26; final disposition not found. SB 1854 died.

Missouri SB 4, enacted in 2025, addressed large-load tariffs and integrated resource planning, including PSC rulemaking EW-2026-0091. Representative Brad Christ asked the PSC on September 14, 2026 to examine whether data centers were driving Ameren's rate case. No new 2026 enactment on the issues covered here was identified.

Kansas: HB 2728 (2026, uniform KCC siting standards limiting local control) died in committee; SB 262 and HB 2187 (good-faith offer, narrow public use) never got hearings. Kansas has twice rejected utility right-of-first-refusal bills; House leaders wrote FERC opposing the utilities' bid to end competitive bidding.

8 Priorities for landowner action

The first priority is preserving participation rights in open proceedings. The remaining work is to document property impacts, request missing records, and identify which approvals apply to the proposed route.

Participate in the state proceedings

In Kansas, use docket 26-EKCE-148-STG to document route impacts and specific alternatives. The listed hearing date is November 19, 2026, with comments due December 2. Ask Cowley and Chautauqua counties to support review of US-166 and existing corridors. Landowners seeking party status should confirm eligibility and the intervention deadline.

In Oklahoma, obtain the procedural orders for both cases. The West schedule lists November 9, 2026 for comments and November 13 for a hearing; the East schedule remains unconfirmed. Ask the Attorney General's Utility Regulation Unit, 405-521-3921, to examine need studies, costs, alternatives, and tribal consent requirements. Review completed Certificate of Authority orders for relevant conditions.

In Missouri, compare the proposed route with Empire's certificated territory and ask counsel whether any segment requires a CCN. Counsel can evaluate a complaint under RSMo 386.390 if needed. Separately, review participation options in Liberty's large-load tariff case, ET-2026-0184, and request a local public hearing where appropriate.

Request customer and demand records

Submit the requests in section 2 and maintain a public log of requests, responses, and denials. Include the statutory basis the custodian gives for withholding records.

Ask the Office of the Public Counsel to seek the county, substation, megawatts, and expected service date for Liberty's two prospective customers in ET-2026-0184. Public disclosure will depend on the PSC's confidentiality rulings.

Request the Baynham Branch Reservoir demand projections under FOIA, using Corps file SWL-2019-00034. Ask which categories of future demand support the proposed capacity and whether any specific industrial commitments are included.

Ask Newton County commissioners whether the June 15, 2026 real estate session concerned a data center or substation and whether the county has signed a related nondisclosure agreement. Record the response without treating a refusal to disclose as proof of a connection.

Ask counties to address local impacts

Missouri residents can ask county commissions to review road crossing requirements under RSMo 229.100 and request that Liberty explain its CCN position publicly. Cheryle Perkins proposed a six-month county moratorium on data centers. Any proposed moratorium requires legal review of county authority.

Oklahoma counties can use meetings under 17 O.S. 851 to document local concerns in the certificate cases. Kansas counties can request evaluation of US-166 and existing corridors.

Review Missouri easements

Obtain the recorded Ozark Power and Water and Empire easements along the Monett to Branson corridor. Review the number of lines authorized, easement width, voltage and structure language, tree removal, assignment rights, and chain of title.

The scope of an older easement depends on its wording and applicable case law. *Barfield v. Sho-Me Power and Carroll Electric v. Lambert* are relevant starting points for counsel. RSMo 523.282 and 523.283 address specified easements executed after August 28, 2006. A requested amendment can change property rights and deserves the same review as a new easement.

Document water species and tribal concerns

Send the Corps' Little Rock and Tulsa districts maps and evidence of affected waters, listed species habitat, caves, and sinkholes. Ask which permit and consultation processes apply. Request an explanation of whether individual water quality certification or an individual Corps permit is required at a particular crossing.

Contact relevant tribal historic preservation offices, including the Osage, Quapaw, Cherokee, Peoria, Shawnee, Delaware, Wichita, and Kaw, about federal actions affecting resources in their areas of interest. Each tribe determines its participation.

Work with the BIA Miami Agency and tribal realty offices to identify trust or restricted parcels along the Oklahoma alignment. Ask whether AEP Oklahoma Transmission Company has submitted right-of-way applications or requested consent.

Protect compensation and objection rights

Missouri law provides different valuation protections for qualifying homestead, heritage, and agricultural property. The applicability of the cited 125 percent homestead and 150 percent farmland provisions requires property-specific review. RSMo 523.265 addresses proposed alternative locations, and RSMo 523.256 addresses certain procedural remedies. Have counsel check each notice and deadline promptly.

Oklahoma procedures distinguish objections to a taking from a demand for a jury determination of compensation. The cited periods are 30 days for exceptions and 60 days for a jury demand, with fee recovery possible under specified conditions. Counsel must confirm the triggering event and preserve any challenge to the right to take.

Kansas uses court-appointed appraisers and provides an appeal process for compensation. The cited appeal period is 30 days. Fee recovery is limited and depends on the circumstances, including abandonment or an unsuccessful appeal by the condemnor. Confirm the controlling notice and statute with counsel.

Request updated costs and allocation

The July 2025 cancellation of the \$4.9 billion conditional DOE loan commitment for Grain Belt Express illustrates that financing decisions can change. It does not establish that this corridor depends on the same financing or serves a private campus. Ask who pays for the proposed facilities and how any new large-load customer would contribute.

Request the refined SPP estimates and the basis for Liberty's changing public cost figures. Ask state commissioners whether the applicable SPP process requires re-evaluation. A comparison must use the same project scope and approved estimate before applying a cost-variance threshold.

Claims that need a stronger basis

SPP's need finding and federal preemption issues complicate a challenge based only on whether the regional line is necessary. *Transource v. DeFrank* is relevant but does not eliminate every state siting question. A county veto, a health claim, or a named data center allegation also needs its own legal or factual support. Specific route impacts and documented alternatives provide a more useful filing.

9 Action schedule

Dates below reflect the September 17, 2026 research. Confirm the current order or notice before filing. Public comments, protests, and intervention can have different deadlines.

When	What	Who
September 17 to 24, 2026	Fix the bare domain. Publish the three-state schedule. Add the Kansas page.	Site
September 17 to 24, 2026	File Sunshine requests to Newton County, the IDA, and the City of Neosho (section 2). Publish them.	A named Missouri resident; the site hosts the templates
September 17 to 24, 2026	Pull the OCC procedural orders for PUD 2026-000047 and 2026-000068; publish the East protest deadline when it posts.	Protect Rural Oklahoma; site
After obtaining the September 14 PSC order	Confirm the intervention deadline in ET-2026-0184; review participation with counsel and request OPC assistance.	Missouri landowner group with counsel
October 2026	Compare the Missouri route with Empire's certificated territory and assess whether a CCN or complaint is warranted.	Counsel
October 2026	Ask Newton, Lawrence, Barry, and Stone counties about road crossing standards and Liberty's CCN position. Request information about the June 15 closed session.	Landowners by county
October 2026	Obtain recorded Ozark Power and Water and Empire easements along the Monett to Branson corridor.	Volunteers plus a title company

When	What	Who
October 2026	Submit maps and questions to the Corps, MoDNR, USFWS, and relevant tribal historic preservation offices. Request reservoir records under FOIA using SWL-2019-00034.	Site provides templates
October 2026	Ask the BIA Miami Agency and tribal realty offices whether AEP Oklahoma Transmission Company has applied for rights-of-way over trust land.	Protect Rural Oklahoma
By November 9	OCC comments on NEOTEP West. Attend the November 13 hearing.	Everyone
November 19	KCC public hearing on the Kansas re-route. Send Missouri and Oklahoma people to testify that the corridor is one project.	Coalition
By December 2	KCC written comments citing 26-EKCE-148-STG.	Everyone

10 Land Before Lines website review

Material to retain

The site explains easement concerns in language landowners can use. Keep the five-question letter, share materials, and rules against unsupported numbers and health claims.

Extend the existing Missouri and Oklahoma coverage to Kansas. Readers need to understand the common corridor and the separate approval processes.

Recommended updates

The September 17 review reported a certificate error at the bare domain, landbeforelines.com, while the www address loaded. Correct the domain configuration and test both addresses before distributing more printed material.

The review reported a 404 error at rights.html. Restore the page and explain the difference between a new easement and an amendment to an existing one.

Add Kansas coverage, including the partial route denial, docket 26-EKCE-148-STG, and the reported November 19 hearing and December 2 comment deadline.

Add a sourced account of data center interest. Include the city inquiry, county meeting notices, Liberty's testimony, and water developments. State what each record establishes and what it leaves unanswered. Link to records requests and responses.

Update the Missouri page to reflect the single proposed route shown since August 13, 2026. Distinguish that proposal from a final approved route or acquired right-of-way.

List both Oklahoma cases and their separate deadlines. Explain the OCC's stated limits on routing authority and the certificate review period. Do not substitute a calculated approval date for an actual order.

Explain why a Missouri line CCN case may not appear and why the service territory comparison matters. Include the separate large-load tariff case, ET-2026-0184.

Separate the 161-kV and 345-kV schedules. The early 2027 date concerns 161-kV construction. Public descriptions place the 345-kV work later, with conflicting start and completion dates that need clarification.

Link directly to the SPP assessment and construction notices, state dockets, statutes, testimony, and habitat documents. Place the relevant source beside each material claim.

Add a voluntary email signup and a clear contact address so residents can receive deadline and route updates. State how submitted information will be used.

Add the Baynham Branch Reservoir proposal and its separate permit process. Explain the demand questions without asserting an undocumented connection to the transmission line.

11 Sources and remaining questions

Planning filings and project documents

[SPP 2024 ITP Assessment Report](#)

[SPP NTC-C 220886 to AEP \(March 21, 2025\)](#)

[SPP NTC 220903 to Empire \(June 24, 2025\)](#)

[SPP NTC 220937 to AEP \(September 22, 2025\)](#)

[SPP NTC 220938 to Evergy \(September 22, 2025\)](#)

[SPP NTC 220948 to Empire \(November 7, 2025\)](#)

[Missouri PSC ET-2026-0184 docket](#)

[Doll direct testimony \(September 11, 2026\)](#)

[Emery direct testimony \(September 11, 2026\)](#)

[Liberty application \(September 11, 2026\)](#)

[PSC order of September 14, 2026](#)

[Liberty electric transmission projects page](#)

[Liberty / Burns and McDonnell ArcGIS map](#)

[AEP NEOTEP project page](#)

[AEP NEOTEP FAQ \(March 2026\)](#)

[AEP NEOTEP final route map](#)

[OCC High Voltage Act page and case list](#)

[Evergy Buffalo Flats project page](#)

[KCC release, December 29, 2025](#)

[KCC release, May 12, 2026](#)

[KCC hearing notice](#)

[KCC minutes, February 5, 2026 \(intervenors\)](#)

[Newton County Commission notices](#)

[Missouri DNR Baynham Branch Reservoir page](#)

[Neosho mucket and rabbitsfoot critical habitat rule](#)

[Corps Missouri regional conditions, 2026](#)

[USFWS Missouri determination key v2.0](#)

[Algonquin Power Q2 2026 earnings call transcript](#)

[Missouri American Water closing release \(September 3, 2026\)](#)

Statutes rules and cases

[Oklahoma HB 2756 \(2025\), enrolled](#)

[Oklahoma HB 2752 \(2025\), enrolled](#)

[OAC 165:5 \(OCC rules of practice\)](#)

[66 O.S. 55](#)

[K.S.A. 66-1,178](#)

[K.S.A. 66-1,180](#)

[K.S.A. 26-508](#)

[K.S.A. 26-513](#)

[K.A.R. 82-1-225 \(intervention\)](#)

[RSMo 393.170](#)

[RSMo 229.100](#)

[RSMo 523.039](#)

[RSMo 523.256](#)

[RSMo 523.265](#)

[RSMo 523.282](#)

[RSMo 523.283](#)

[RSMo 610.021 \(Sunshine Law closed records\)](#)

[20 CSR 4240-20.045](#)

[20 CSR 4240-2.075 \(intervention\)](#)

[Empire District Electric v. Cox](#)

[Grain Belt Express v. PSC \(Mo. banc 2018\)](#)

[Grain Belt Express v. Chariton County \(Mo. App. 2024\)](#)

[Barfield v. Sho-Me Power \(8th Cir. 2017\)](#)

[25 CFR Part 169](#)

[Enable Oklahoma v. 25 Foot Wide Easement \(W.D. Okla. 2016\)](#)

[Transource v. DeFrank, Third Circuit \(2025\)](#)

[Transource Oklahoma v. Holloway \(Okla. Civ. App. 2024\)](#)

[Osage Nation HPO Section 106 agency assignments](#)

Reporting and landowner groups

[Joplin Globe, Neosho data center moratorium \(July 9, 2026\)](#)

[KSN/KODE, Neosho moratorium \(July 8, 2026\)](#)

[KSN/KODE, Newton County zoning town hall \(July 10, 2026\)](#)

[Joplin Globe, data centers in local races \(July 5, 2026\)](#)

[Joplin Globe, PSC approves Missouri American purchase \(June 25, 2026\)](#)

[Cassville Democrat, data centers on horizon \(August 11, 2026\)](#)

[KOAM, county commissioner primary results \(August 2026\)](#)

[Joplin Globe, Liberty to use more existing easements \(June 2026\)](#)

[KOAM, Liberty seeks landowner input \(March 2026\)](#)

[KOAM, Newton County landowners unite \(April 24, 2026\)](#)

[Missourinet, data center summit \(June 17, 2026\)](#)

[News On 6, landowners push back against NEOTEP \(September 3, 2026\)](#)

[KRMG, AEP line opposition \(September 5, 2026\)](#)

[Kansas Reflector, landowners push back \(April 22, 2026\)](#)

[Kansas Reflector, KCC stops Flint Hills routing \(May 12, 2026\)](#)

[KMUW/KRPS, KCC order on Flint Hills \(May 13, 2026\)](#)

[Cowley Post, KCC rejects eastern portion \(May 12, 2026\)](#)

[KAKE, Chautauqua County meeting \(August 31, 2026\)](#)

[Derby Informer, Ferguson op-ed \(August 12, 2026\)](#)

[Oklahoma Watch, line becomes data center address \(June 26, 2026\)](#)

[Utility Dive, DOE cancels Grain Belt loan \(July 2025\)](#)

[Protect Rural Missouri](#)

[Protect Rural Oklahoma](#)

[Stand 4 the Land Kansas](#)

[Land Before Lines \(current site\)](#)

Questions still unresolved

- No named Neosho or Newton County data center developer, confirmed site, acreage, or megawatt figure was identified. No associated land sale or LLC was established. The subject of the June 15, 2026 closed county session remains unknown.
- Liberty's two prospective customers remain unnamed, with no confirmed county, substation, or capacity. The exact intervention deadline in the September 14 PSC order was not confirmed. Do not calculate it from a general default.
- No Missouri construction CCN docket, county road assent, or project-specific application to MoDOT, the Corps, USFWS, or MoDNR was identified. Check each agency before treating an approval as absent.
- The Oklahoma alignment has not been matched to trust or restricted parcel titles. BIA application status, the East protest deadline and hearing date, and the contents of the OCC application PDFs remain unresolved.
- The complete KCC May 12 order and Evergy's June 12 schedule filing were not available in the underlying review. The KCC news release documents the partial denial. The November 19 hearing venue and Evergy's right-of-way width still need confirmation.
- Other open items include reporting on the September 15 Neosho open house, the Neosho moratorium ordinance number, and the final disposition of Oklahoma SB 1929.
- A parcel-level check is still needed to determine whether the Monett to Branson corridor affects Table Rock Corps land or Mark Twain National Forest.