

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

John Shepelwich  
(540) 985-2968  
Mobile: (540) 613-7460  
jeshepelwich@aep.com

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**APPALACHIAN POWER ANNOUNCES PREFERRED ROUTE FOR FIRST PHASE OF  
ABINGDON-WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSMISSION PROJECT**

ROANOKE, Va., January 27, 2016 – Appalachian Power today announced its preferred route for the first phase of planned transmission improvements that will benefit electric reliability for its customers in the Town of Abingdon, Va. and surrounding Washington County.

Announced in September 2015, the Abingdon and Washington County Improvements Project is an approximately \$50 million project that is divided into two phases: the South Abingdon Extension and the Washington County Improvements.

The South Abingdon Extension directly addresses local reliability and the increasing power demand from a growing residential and business community.

“We are excited to be in a position to move forward with the most critical portion of this project,” said Mary Begley, external affairs manager for Appalachian Power. “We’ve received positive input from the community since the open house in September. That information, along with our continuing studies, put us in a position to file what we think is the route that has a minimal effect on our neighbors.”

“Moving ahead in two phases allows us to more quickly begin to generate local income from construction and realize long-term taxes at an earlier date,” Begley added.

The proposed South Abingdon Extension consists of building a substation, constructing about 4 miles of transmission line, and making upgrades at three existing substations to support local power distribution. The route originates from an existing Appalachian Power transmission line on the west side of Abingdon. From there, it runs south out of Abingdon across Interstate 81 into Washington County before turning east to an end point at the new substation location on Vances Mill Road.

The company plans to file with the Virginia State Corporation Commission an application for the South Abingdon Extension portion of the project by March. A preferred route for the Washington County Improvements part of the project will not be finalized until PJM, the regional

transmission organization responsible for monitoring the transmission grid in Virginia and 12 other states, releases its findings from studies it regularly performs related to wintertime electric reliability.

The company's Abingdon and Washington County improvements are part of an on-going \$600 million investment in announced system upgrades of transmission infrastructure in southwestern Virginia.

Additional information about this phased project, including a virtual open house regarding the proposed segments for the Washington County Improvements portion, can be found at [www.AppalachianPower.com/Abingdon](http://www.AppalachianPower.com/Abingdon).

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is a unit of American Electric Power, one of the largest electric utilities in the United States, delivering electricity to nearly 5.4 million customers through 223,000 miles of distribution lines in 11 states. AEP owns the nation's largest electricity transmission system, a more than 40,000-mile network that includes more 765-kilovolt extra-high voltage transmission lines than all other U.S. transmission systems combined. AEP also ranks among the nation's largest generators of electricity, owning approximately 32,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S.

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