

Between the lines



Your MYR Group Customer Newsletter



NICE JOB, L.E. MYERS!

The L.E. Myers Co. Successfully Completes Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) Project

The successful completion of the Kansas Electric Transmission Authority (KETA) Project for ITC Great Plains was the culmination of an outstanding and meticulous performance by MYR subsidiary The L.E. Myers Co., which finished the job ahead of schedule, under budget, and without a single recordable injury or lost-time incident.

The new 345kV line, which begins in Spearville, Kansas, and runs 225 miles to Axtell, Nebraska, will make the regional grid more reliable and efficient and provide homes and businesses with more affordable energy. The L.E. Myers Co. built 174 miles of the new line, ending at the Kansas border.



Nearly 3,000 MW of wind generation is proposed for interconnection near the new line, which was constructed primarily with singular tubular-steel poles to minimize land-use impact. Structures are 100 to 150 feet high, with an average of 900 feet between them.

“A total of 507 structures were erected, 1,521 insulators, and more than 250 reels of wire were installed on 174 miles of line,” said Russell Langton, director of project engineering for ITC Great Plains. “More than 210,190 man-hours were expended by MYR and their subcontractors during construction.”



Gary Klocke, Construction Manager for the KETA project is shown here reviewing time and productivity reports with Administrative Assistant Toni Morss.

L.E. Myers' Construction Manager Gary Klocke said the impressive outcome of the KETA project represents a major achievement for MYR, which owns some of the most sophisticated computerized wire-pulling equipment in the industry.

“This was an excellent job, from both a safety and financial perspective,” Klocke said. “We found new, more efficient ways of doing things, mostly in our wire-pulling operations. We kept tweaking processes and procedures to do them more safely and efficiently.”

Construction kicked off in October, 2010, when MYR established the first staging area for delivery of the poles to Burdett, Kansas.



The first delivery of project materials arrives in Burdett, Kansas, October 2010.

Neighbors could not have been more delighted. “Immediately, the project team created such a positive whoop to the area that the local diner, which had closed permanently, reopened for breakfast and lunch service,” Langton recalled. “Even after we left the diner stayed open!”

Construction proceeded in two phases. First, crews built the line south to an existing Spearville station, owned by Sunflower, and expanded that station. Next, they headed 89 miles north toward Hays, Kansas, where they built a new ITC-owned electrical substation called Post Rock. The first 89 miles of 345kV line was energized from Spearville to Post Rock on June 30, 2012. Finally, the construction team continued the line 85 miles north until they reached the Kansas- Nebraska border.

The entire project went smoothly and safely, said Safety Manager Alan Richardson, who had spent his career as a lineman until 2010, when he was hired by MYR to oversee safety for the KETA project.

“I’m very proud of our performance, and I’m proud of the guys who were on the job,” he said. “If all your men are healthy and working, things get done quickly. I reinforced this for two years and no shortcuts were taken.”



The area along the KETA line has a delicious and melodious history. In 1888 the famous chocolate maker, Russell Stover, was born in a sod house in Alton, Kansas, a small town north of Hays. In 1872, “Home on the Range” was written by Dr. Brewster Higley in a one-room cabin near Athol, Kansas, near the Nebraska state line.

That diligence paid off. The final phase of the Axtell line, originally slated for completion in early 2013, is slated for energization on December 15, 2012. Even better, ITC Great Plains has awarded The L.E. Myers Co. a new contract to build the largest portion of a 122-mile, 345kV transmission line known as the V-Plan, which will connect eastern and western Kansas.



A foundation crew sets a new structure in place, November 2010.

“We’re moving our equipment down there and receiving poles on that project,” Klocke said. “Eventually the V-Plan line will go to Spearville and connect the whole thing together.”

Richardson largely credits winning the contract to build 86 miles of the V-Plan project to his crews’ stellar safety performance on the KETA line.



An L.E. Myers crew installs conductor jumpers on the project’s last structure built.



Project players commemorate the job’s completion by signing the last structure built.

“Our performance helped us a great deal,” Richardson said. “ITC had talked about the safety on this job ever since we broke 50,000 hours. This is a brand-new project, and so far we’ve put in 400 hours with no incidents. Customers look at safety first.”

ITC’s Langton agrees. “We’re keeping that team together,” he said. “For the two years we’ve been out there, they did a very good, and a very safe job. I was extremely satisfied with their work and their performance. L.E. Myers rocks.”

Story by Christine Pertel



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