Construction overview

Minnesota Energy Resources is committed to working with impacted property owners through the route permitting and construction process.

After the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission issues a Route Permit for the Rochester Natural Gas Pipeline Project, we will work with property owners to finalize the pipeline location and obtain a easements to construct and maintain the natural gas pipeline and/or related facilities.

An easement gives us land rights to use a defined part of a property for a specific purpose such as the installation, maintenance and inspection of natural gas laterals and/or related facilities.

In our Route Permit Application submitted to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, we requested a 500-foot width to allow us to work with individual landowners to site the final location of the pipeline. Once the actual location is determined, a 50-foot permanent easement and a 50-foot temporary easement will be negotiated. The temporary easement will be necessary for construction activities. The area contained within these easements is referred to as the “right-of-way.”

After we have obtained easements, we will initiate the construction process for the Project. The construction process begins by surveying the route and marking the right of way. The right of way is cleared of brush, trees, large rocks and other obstructions. The right of way is then graded to create a surface suitable for construction work.

Next, a trench is dug. Typically, the pipe is buried 4.5 feet below the surface in accordance with Olmsted County Zoning Ordinance and Minnesota statutes. A depth of 5 feet will be used for all state highway crossings, as required by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The pipe always meets the depth of cover dictated by federal and state regulatory standards.

After trenching, sections of pipe are laid along the right-of-way and welded together. The pipe is welded by professional welders. The welds will be visually inspected, X-rayed and then wrapped to protect against corrosion prior to the pipe being lowered into the trench.

After the pipe is laid, the trench is backfilled. The natural gas pipeline is then pressure-tested to validate its strength and integrity.

Finally, the construction area is restored. Crews reseed affected land as appropriate, in coordination with affected landowners, so that any signs of construction are quickly replaced by new growth.

In addition to the pipeline construction, the project will require expansion of an existing town border station (TBS 1D) and the construction of a new town border station and district regulator station. A town border station serves as the connection between an interstate natural gas pipeline and our distribution pipeline. A district regulator station serves to reduce the pressure from the high-pressure distribution natural gas pipeline to standard distribution pressure (60-100 psig) for delivery to our customers.