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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**APPALACHIAN POWER ANNOUNCES ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION UPGRADES IN MCDOWELL COUNTY, WV AND BUCHANAN COUNTY, VA**

ROANOKE, Va., Mar. 10, 2023 – Appalachian Power representatives are upgrading the transmission system in McDowell County, W.Va., and Buchanan County, Va., as part of the Sourwood-Hales Branch Transmission Line Rebuild Project. The project team plans to host two open houses in April for the community to learn more about electric upgrades in their community and provide input.

The project involves rebuilding about 11 miles of 138-kilovolt electric transmission line. The upgrades begin at the Sourwood Substation in Iaeger, W.Va., and end at the Hales Branch Substation in Grundy, Va. This power line has experienced multiple outages since 2015. These improvements are necessary to ensure reliable electric service to customers and maintain safety of the power line and the area's power grid.

“The existing transmission line was built with wooden poles and is showing age-related wear,” said George Porter, Appalachian Power spokesperson. “It’s important to upgrade this equipment with modern steel poles and structures to meet current electric safety standards and improve reliable electric service in the area.”

The project team is seeking community input on route options at select areas along the power line route to rebuild the line. Though most of the line will be rebuilt in place, there are deviations where a new right-of-way will be needed.

**The project team invites landowners and community members to attend an open house to learn more about the upgrades and provide input. There is no formal presentation, so attendees may come and go at any time during the two-hour events at the location that is most convenient to them.**

**Open house details:**

- **Tuesday, April 4**, at Mount View High School cafeteria, 950 Mount View Road, Welch, W.Va., 5 – 7:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, April 5**, Twin Valley High School gymnasium, 14449 Dismal River Road, Pilgrim Knob, Va., 5 – 7:00 p.m.

Residents who are unable to attend the open house, please consider visiting the project website and virtual open house at **[AppalachianPower.com/Sourwood-HalesBranch](https://www.appalachianpower.com/Sourwood-HalesBranch)**.

Affected landowners can expect to receive a packet in the mail that includes additional project details and a comment card they can return with their feedback. The project team plans to use input from the community and additional field work to determine a power line route that reduces impact on the community and environment.

The project team is seeking local approval from Buchanan County and state approval from the West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) for the transmission line upgrades. Company representatives plan to file an application with the PSC requesting approval this fall. If the project receives approval, the company expects construction to begin summer 2025 and conclude by the end of 2027.

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power, which is focused on building a smarter energy infrastructure and delivering new technologies and custom energy solutions. AEP's approximately 16,700 employees operate and maintain the nation's largest electricity transmission system and more than 224,000 miles of distribution lines to efficiently deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation's largest electricity producers with approximately 31,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 5,900 megawatts of renewable energy.

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