

# Town opposes running power line over bluffs

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The Baraboo Town Board opposes plans for 150-foot-tall, high-voltage electrical towers marching past the town and over the Baraboo Bluffs.

On Monday, the board discussed American Transmission Company's Badger Coulee transmission line project. ATC is in the process of selecting a route for a 345,000-volt power line between La Crosse and the Madison area. A map on ATC's Badger Coulee website shows a wide range of possible corridors for the line, from a path through Columbia County in the east, to one following Interstate 90/94 to a Sauk County path that would take the line along the west edge of Baraboo and over the Baraboo Bluffs in the township.

The township is joining other local governments, including a Sauk County Board committee, in opposing the line, Supervisor Steve Cohoon said. "The opposition is they don't want the line going through if the (electrical) transmission is not being used here," he said. "As far as the township, we're following what the county Planning and Zoning and other townships have done."

A huge power line wouldn't fit with the town's comprehensive plan, Supervisor Randy Puttkamer said.

"The southern part of the township is in the Baraboo Range and money has been spent to preserve the Baraboo Range," he said. "The constituents didn't feel we need to stick a big power line up going through it."

"Also the fact it doesn't really supply power to our area at all," Puttkamer said. "It seems to us it makes more logic to follow the interstate."

ATC is in the early stages of figuring out what route its proposed transmission line should take and how it will be designed, said Kaya Freiman, company spokeswoman. Laws governing construction of power lines require ATC to investigate a variety of existing and alternative corridors, which is why one possible path goes near Baraboo and through the bluffs, she said.

"Of course at this point we are examining all the options within the potential corridors, and many people do mention the interstate as an option," Freiman said. "That is being evaluated, as well as all of our corridors for constructability and other reasons."

Typically, poles supporting a high-voltage line would be up to 150 feet tall, she said. They would be built in a 150-foot-wide right of way that would be cleared of trees and most other vegetation.

ATC will have more specific ideas for what route the Badger Coulee Line might take next spring, Freiman said.

She invited area residents to an open house at which they can see maps of the potential corridors, ask questions about the project and submit comments which will be turned over to the Wisconsin Public Service Commission, the regulator for the project.

The Sauk County open house will be held from 1-7 p.m. June 23 in the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

Information about the high-voltage line, including maps, standards for removing trees and vegetation and a link to make comments, may be found at ATC's website for the project at <http://www.BadgerCoulee.com>. Also, ATC is inviting questions and comments by phone at (866) 899-3204. Posted in [News](#), [Local](#) on *Wednesday, June 15, 2011 3:30 am Updated: 9:17 am*.