

September 1, 2004

## **ATCO Electric completes Alberta's newest high-voltage power project in record time**

*“This is the largest, most challenging transmission project Alberta has seen for decades.”*

EDMONTON – ATCO Electric energized its Dover-Whitefish transmission line this week, boosting Alberta's electric system capacity between Edmonton and Fort McMurray from about 350 MW to 600 MW and maintaining electric service reliability.

ATCO Electric built the \$99 million, 350-kilometre Dover-Whitefish line in just 10 months. Typically, a project of this scale and complexity is constructed over two years.

“This is the largest, most challenging transmission project Alberta has seen for decades,” says Dick Walthall, President, ATCO Electric. The project included 350 km of 240 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, construction of three new substations, and expansion of an existing substation. Stretching from Dover, northwest of Fort McMurray, to Whitefish, east of Fort Saskatchewan, more than half of the line crosses muskeg.

“Muskeg and Mother Nature gave us a tight timeline but we worked hard over the winter when the ground was frozen to ensure we could deliver additional new power being generated in the oilsands to Albertans,” Walthall says. Construction started in December 2003 and was completed in August 2004.

The project also included building 70 furbearer houses to protect local wildlife. Piles of woody debris recycled from construction were placed at 18 sites along the power line right-of-way, providing homes for weasels and other animals that may have been disturbed by the project.

ATCO Electric, part of the ATCO Group of companies, delivers electric energy to customers throughout northern and east-central Alberta. ATCO Group is a worldwide organization of companies with more than 7000 employees actively engaged in utilities, power generation, logistics, energy services, technologies and industrials. Additional information about ATCO can be found at [www.atco.com](http://www.atco.com).

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## **Dover – Whitefish transmission project**

ATCO Electric has delivered safe, reliable electricity to Albertans for nearly 80 years. We have built about 9,000 km of transmission line and 58,000 km of distribution line throughout northern and east-central Alberta – some of Alberta's most remote and difficult locations. While the area's geography, distance and climate present unique challenges, it has given us the experience needed to complete Alberta's newest high-voltage power project in record time.

### **Project need**

The provincial Transmission Administrator identified in 2001 a need for a third major transmission line between Fort McMurray and the Edmonton area to:

- increase transmission capacity to serve Fort McMurray, one of Alberta's fastest growing areas,
- increase electric service reliability in the areas south of Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche area, and
- transmit new energy from oil sands co-generation plants in the Fort McMurray area to the rest of the province.

### **Project overview**

- 350km of 240 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from Dover, northwest of Fort McMurray, to Whitefish, east of Fort Saskatchewan
- Built in three sections: Dover to McMillan (169 km), McMillan to Heart Lake (106 km), and Heart Lake to Whitefish (72 km)
- transport capacity increased by about 230 MW, from about 370 MW to approximately 600 MW
- Three new 240 kV substations – Dover, McMillan and Heart Lake – and expansion of the existing 240 kV Whitefish substation

### **Highlights**

- 350 kilometres of transmission line built in just four months. The entire project, including construction of three new substations, was completed in 10 months
- More than half of the line, 208 kms, crosses muskeg and had to be constructed during the winter when the ground is frozen to allow the heavy construction equipment access, and to protect the environment.
- Largest high-voltage power project in ATCO Electric's history, and largest project Alberta has seen for decades
- With 1,273 steel poles, towers and frames, it is the largest all-steel transmission project ATCO Electric has constructed
- ATCO Electric crews and contractors worked extended shifts and around the clock to meet the ambitious deadline
- ATCO Electric worked closely with four First Nations communities and two Metis Nation groups throughout the project. First Nation affiliated contractors completed much of the brushing work.
- Over 900 employees and contractors received electrical safety training and testing as part of their orientation

## **Environmental innovation**

Working with the Fort McKay Industry Relations Corporation, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD), local government wildlife staff and trappers, 70 piles of woody debris were placed in 18 locations along the right-of-way, west and north of Fort McKay to provide cover/habitat for members of the weasel family (marten, fisher, ermine, otter) and lynx. Early results are encouraging. Fresh weasel or fisher tracks have already been found at 72 per cent of the 18 sites, and at about half of the 70 piles. Tracks of other species were also evident.

## **Construction milestones**

Dec. 2003 – Jan. 2004	Construction contracts finalized and rights-of-way cleared
April 4, 2004	Construction of transmission line completed
July 21, 2004	Dover substation energized
Aug. 9, 2004	Customers connected to Dover
Aug. 30, 2004	New transmission lines and substations at Heart Lake, McMillan and Whitefish are energized.

## **The process**

Sept. 2001	Transmission Administrator (TA) issues a RFP (Request For Proposal) to build a third major transmission line between Fort McMurray and the Edmonton area.
Dec. 2001	ATCO Utility Services (AUS), established to pursue competitive non-regulated transmission opportunities, is awarded the contract.
May-Sept. 2002	AUS holds public open houses and consults landowners along the proposed route.
October 2002	TA re-assigns the project to ATCO Electric.
November 2002	ATCO Electric submits the project application to the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB).
April 2003	EUB conducts hearing and issues decision. ATCO Electric voluntarily agrees to modify the route originally proposed in response to landowner concerns.
June 2003	EUB issues permits and licenses for the Dover and McMillan substations, and the transmission line between the stations.
July 2, 2003	ATCO Electric submits the revised McMillan to Whitefish EUB application.
Aug 1, 2003	EUB issues final approval for McMillan to Whitefish application.