

Notice

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION BakkenLink Pipeline, LLC Crude Oil Pipeline - Williams to Billings County Siting Application

Case No. PU-10-218 NOTICE OF CONTINUED HEARING September 7, 2011

On June 21, 2011, BakkenLink Pipeline, LLC (BakkenLink) filed applications for a certificate of corridor compatibility and a route permit to authorize construction for approximately 144 miles of 8-inch and 12-inch crude oil pipeline in Billings, Dunn, McKenzie, Stark and Williams Counties, North Dakota, as shown on the attached map.

On August 3, 2011, the Commission issued a Notice of Filing and Notice of Hearing scheduling a public hearing to begin September 1, 2011 at 10 a.m. CDT, McKenzie County Court House, 201 5th Street NW, Watford City, North Dakota, 58854. The Commission found the applications were complete.

At a worksession on August 30, 2011, the Commission indefinitely continued the formal hearing scheduled to begin September 1, 2011, to be rescheduled for a later date.

A Public Hearing on the applica-

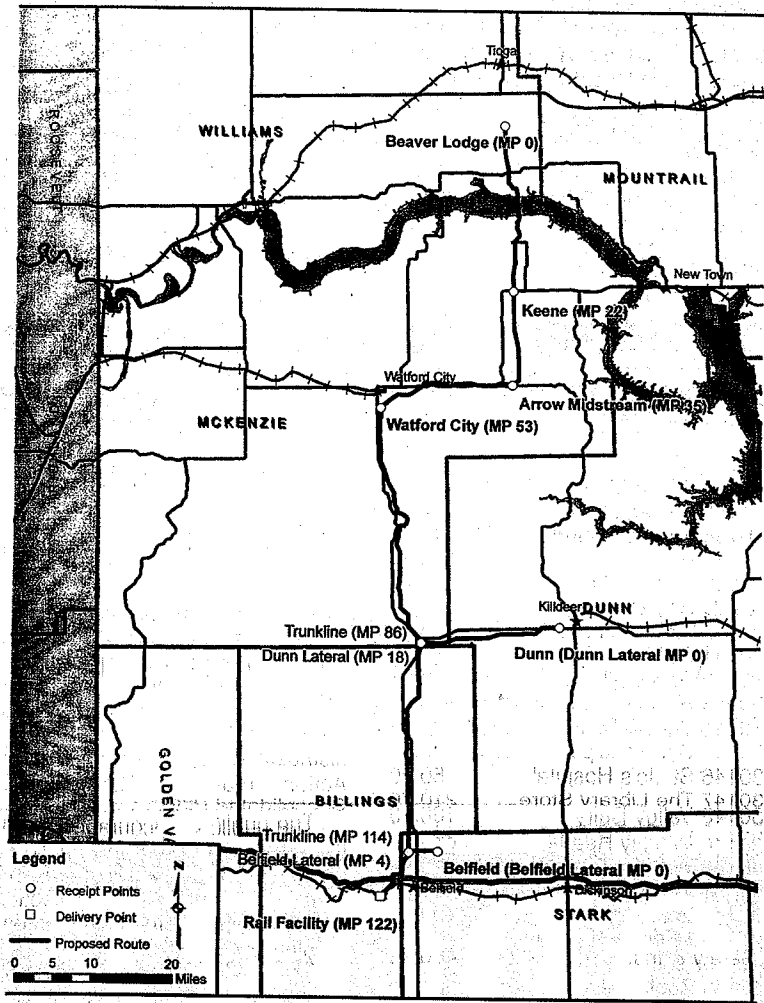
tions is now scheduled to begin October 25, 2011 at 9 a.m. CDT, McKenzie County Court House, 201 5th Street NW, Watford City, North Dakota, 58854. The issues to be considered are:

- 1. Is the proposed facility of such length, design, location, or purpose that it will produce minimal adverse effects, or, does a demonstrable emergency exist which requires immediate construction and that adherence to the procedures and time schedules would jeopardize the utility's system?
2. Will the location, construction, and operation of the proposed facilities produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota?
3. Are the proposed facilities compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources?
4. Will the proposed facility locations minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

For more information contact the Public Service Commission, State Capitol, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505, 701-328-2400; or Relay North Dakota, 1-800-366-6888 TTY. If you require any auxiliary aids or services, such as readers, signers, or Braille materials, please notify the Commission at least 24 hours in advance.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION Kevin Cramer, Commissioner Tony Clark, Chairman Brian P. Kalk, Commissioner

(September 15)



Medicare open enrollment begins, seniors

Medicare Open Enrollment began Saturday - seniors have more benefits, better choices, lower costs

Affordable Care Act gives seniors with Medicare cheaper prescription drugs, free preventive services, and lower costs

With more benefits, better choices and lower costs, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is encouraging people with Medicare and their families to begin reviewing drug and health plan coverage options for 2012. The Medicare Open Enrollment Period - which began earlier this year, on Saturday, October 15 - has been expanded to last seven weeks and will end on December 7.

This will give seniors and people with disabilities more time to compare and find the best plan that meets their unique needs.

Across the country, HHS officials will hold 150 events in the days leading up to Medicare's Open Enrollment Period to inform and educate people with Medicare.

"Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, people with Medicare can get certain preventive services for free and can get more affordable prescription drugs," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "Open enrollment is seniors' chance to review their Medicare choices and pick the plan that works for them, or keep the plan they have today."

Beginning today, people with Medicare can begin reviewing the 2012 quality ratings for Medicare

Advantage health plans (Part C) and prescription drug plans (Part D) for the upcoming year.

This year CMS is highlighting plans that have achieved an overall quality rating of 5 stars with a high performer or "gold star" icon so people with Medicare can easily find high quality plans. People with Medicare can switch to an available 5-star plan at any time during the year.

Using Medicare's Plan Finder - available at www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan - people will see the enhanced star ratings for 2012. In addition to the enhanced star ratings for 2012 and new "gold star" icon, Plan Finder users will see an icon showing which plans received a low overall quality rating for the past three years.

"Over the past year, we have worked to improve health coverage choices for people with Medicare, and make it easier for people to find a plan that is both a good value and meets their health care needs," said CMS Administrator Donald M. Berwick, M.D. "Due to these efforts, people with Medicare have good, meaningful choices for their 2012 plan options."

In 2012, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, additional benefits to people with Medicare include lower prescription drug costs through a 50 percent discount on covered brand name drugs in the coverage gap (also referred to as the "donut hole"), wellness checkups, and access to certain preventive care

with no copayments - a benefit all Medicare Advantage plans offer starting in 2012.

Resources for Medicare Beneficiaries

People with Medicare, their families and other trusted representatives can review and compare current plan coverage with new offerings, using many professional resources, including:

• Visiting www.medicare.gov where they can get a personal comparison of costs and coverage of the plans available in their area. The popular Medicare Plan Finder tool has been enhanced for an efficient review of plan choices. Spanish Open Enrollment information is available.

• Calling 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) for around-the-clock assistance to find out more about coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. Multilingual counseling is available.

• Reviewing the 2012 Medicare & You handbook. It is also available online at http://www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf - an e-book has been mailed to the home of people with Medicare.

• Getting one-on-one counseling assistance from the local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). Local SHIP contact information can be found:

http://www.medicare.gov/contact-organization-search-criteria.aspx

State's natural resources service highlights a

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) issued over 2,000 contracts to North Dakota producers and close to \$93 million in financial assistance in fiscal year 2011. NRCS funding will help improve, protect, and conserve natural resources on over 1.7 million acres of private lands and restore over 11,000 acres of wetlands.

"North Dakota NRCS had a very successful year delivering conservation assistance to thousands of private landowners," stated Mary Podoll, NRCS State Conservationist. "In addition to these contracts, we had over 6,000 applications requesting NRCS conservation assistance. This demonstrates the level of interest landowners have in partnering with NRCS to conserve and sustain the state's private lands."

NRCS offers financial and technical assistance on a competitive basis to eligible producers

through its 15 programs and special initiatives. Assistance provided through these programs and initiatives is intended to ensure that private lands are conserved, restored, and made more resilient to environmental challenges.

New additions to the NRCS programs portfolio were the Oil Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Initiative and the Northern Plains Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (NPMBHI). NRCS issued over 500 contracts and \$1.2 million in funding through SPCC to help prevent and mitigate fuel and oil spills on agricultural operations. Through the NPMBHI, over 100 contracts and \$2.1 million in financial assistance were issued to help producers manage their wetlands and farmlands while protecting and enhancing habitats for migratory birds.

The Environmental Quality Incentives

Department of Human Services seeking

The N.D. Department of Human Services is seeking public input about local and statewide human services-related needs and issues through a new online stakeholder survey.

The Department invites clients, their family members, service providers, advocates, county staff, legislators, and other interested individuals to complete the survey by close of business on October 21, 2011. It is online at www.nd.gov/dhs.

"We value all the feedback we receive from the people we serve," said Department Executive

Director Carol K. Olson. "We encourage participation because the information we gather will help us serve people more effectively and is used in program administration and budgeting efforts."

The survey, which asks open-ended questions about gaps in services, service access issues, and other concerns, and also solicits suggestions, may take about 10-15 minutes to complete. All responses remain anonymous.

Paper surveys are also available at the department's eight regional human service centers in North Dakota. Location information is

online at http://www.nd.gov/dhs/location-regionalhsc/.

In addition, individuals can submit written comments and suggestions about services by October 2011, to the N.D. Department of Human Services - Executive Office, 600 E. Boulevard A, Dept. 325, Bismarck, ND 5850250 or by email dhseo@nd.gov.

The N.D. Department of Human Services administers child protection services, child support

Debit card users should watch out for new fees

The Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) is alerting consumers that they may be seeing new fees on their bank statements for using their debit cards.

Recent changes in banking laws capped the "swipe fee" that banks can charge retailers for debit transactions.

The average fee was 44 cents per transaction, but the new law caps that fee at 21 cents.

Banks estimate they will lose hundreds of millions of dollars a year in debit card transaction fees and are looking to recoup that money by modifying various checking account fees.

Some of the nation's largest financial institutions already have announced a flat \$3-\$5 monthly fee

ticularly for infrequent users.

The BBB is advising consumers and business owners to be on the alert for notices from their financial institutions about changes in the terms of their accounts.

"If you don't understand a notice you receive or see a new fee on your account statement that you weren't expecting, contact your financial institution and ask for an explanation," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB.

Account holders may want to ask their bank if there are programs to waive the fee for accounts with a minimum balance.

It also pays to shop around; some financial institutions may continue offering no-fee debit cards.

DEADLINES

The deadline for submitted copy and stories and all ad orders is noon on Fridays. Call 872-3755 or e-mail gvnews@midstate.net.

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