

Dated: February 14, 2000.

**Robert T. Jacobs**

*Regional Forester.*

[FR Doc. 5864 Filed 3-8-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-11-M

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Information Collection Activity; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35, as amended), the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) invites comments on this information collection for which RUS intends to request approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

**DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by May 8, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Program Development & Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., STOP 1522, Room 4034 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-1522. Telephone: (202) 720-9552. FAX: (202) 720-4120.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Title:* Preloan Procedures and Requirements for Telecommunications Program.

*OMB Control Number:* 0572-0079.

*Type of Request:* Reinstatement with change of a previously approved information collection.

*Abstract:* This program is necessary in order for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to determine an applicant's eligibility to borrow from RUS under the terms of the RE Act. This information is also used by RUS to determine that the Government's security for loans made by RUS is reasonably adequate and that the loans will be repaid within the time agreed.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 9 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Small business or organizations.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 50.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* 8.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 3,621.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Bob Turner,

Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, at (202) 720-0696.

Comments are invited on (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of burden including the validity of the methodology and assumption used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques on other forms of information technology. Comments may be sent to F. Lamont Heppe, Jr., Director, Program Development and Regulatory Analysis, Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Stop 1522, Room 4034 South Building, Washington, D.C. 20250-1522.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Dated: March 2, 2000.

**Christopher A. McLean,**

*Acting Administrator, Rural Utilities Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-5640 Filed 3-9-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-15-P

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Utilities Service

#### Great River Energy Pleasant Valley Station, Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment.

**SUMMARY:** Notice is hereby given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is publishing an environmental assessment (EA) for a project proposed by Great River Energy (GRE) of Elk River, Minnesota. The project consists of constructing a natural gas-fired simple cycle, combustion turbine power generation facility in Pleasant Valley Township in Mower County, Minnesota. The project will have a total of three combustion turbine units, two 155 megawatts (MW) units and one 124 MW unit, including a new 345/161 kV substation and other associated transmission facilities. The total electrical output from the facility is expected to range from 434 MW to 526 MW depending upon operating

conditions. RUS proposes to provide financial assistance to GRE for this project.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Nurul Islam, Environmental Protection Specialist, Rural Utilities Service, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Stop 1571, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-1571, telephone: (202) 720-1414; e-mail: nislam@rus.usda.gov. RUS seeks written comments on the GRE proposal. Written comments should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice to the above address.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** GRE proposes to construct the power station in Pleasant Valley Township in Mower County, Minnesota. The primary purpose of the facility is to meet GRE peak electrical load during hot summer weather. Under those conditions the facility's expected output is about 434 MW of power. The generation unit consists of turbines similar to those found in commercial airline engines. The primary fuel will be natural gas and the distillate oil will serve as the back up fuel for the plant. The three units will have a total peak capacity of 526 MW. The generating power station will require approximately 24 acres of land. The preferred site for the generating station is located in the northwest quarter of Section 19, Pleasant Valley Township, Mower County, Minnesota. An alternative site was considered and is located approximately two miles south of the preferred site, in the south of the northwest quarter of Section 31, Pleasant Valley Township, Mower County, Minnesota. The following additional facilities will also be constructed. A 345/161 kV substation will be constructed at the plant site. A short, 345 kV transmission tap line, approximately 500 feet long, will be needed to connect to an existing Byron-Adams 345-kV transmission line. A new 161 kV transmission line, between 5 and 7 miles long, will be built from the plant site to the Sargeant Substation. The existing 69 kV line between the Sargeant Substation and south of the City of Brownsdale will be upgraded to a 161/69 kV line. This section of the line will be approximately 10 miles long. A 161 kV line will be built from Brownsdale to the Austin North Substation in Austin, Minnesota. A number of alternative routes have been considered for this section of the transmission line. Approximately three miles of new high pressure gas pipeline will be built to provide gas supply from the proposed generating station north to an existing gas pipeline. The expected water use is