

\$65 Million Electric Utility Project Completed Ahead of Schedule and Under Budget, with ‘Almost Flawless’ Results

Industry: Utilities

Services Provided: Project Management as a Managed Service (PMaaS)

Company: Xcel Energy provides the energy that powers millions of homes and businesses across eight Western and Midwestern states. Headquartered in Minneapolis, the company is an industry leader in producing and delivering clean energy solutions from a variety of renewable sources.

Challenge: In 2018, Xcel Energy made a commitment to meet a Reliability Need required by the Southwest Power Pool in New Mexico. A new 34-mile, 345-kilovolt Eddy County to Kiowa line was designed to improve the reliability of the grid by extending a 345kV source and substation upgrades providing additional alternatives to help prevent outages. The line, part of Xcel Energy’s “Power for the Plains” transmission expansion project, also supports the growth of New Mexico’s economy.

The company had committed to perform the work on schedule for a \$65 million budget, while meeting Bureau of Land Management (BLM) environmental requirements. These commitments meant obtaining a New Mexico Public Convenience and Necessity Permit, as well as Environmental Assessments required by BLM. The time and budgetary constraints meant that the work would need to be performed using existing cost and schedule software, as well as existing project management processes (within the organization’s weak matrix structure).



VALUE DELIVERED

- Completed **11 days** ahead of schedule
- Completed about **\$4 million** under budget
- Completed safely with **no injuries**



Solution: The PM Solutions consultant deployed to Xcel utilized his years of project management and utility industry experience to adapt to the organization's structure and processes, becoming an integral part of its Project Management functional organization. The consultant leveraged the very competent resources to meet milestones and deadlines by using social skills rather than command and control tactics, focusing on roadblocks and risks to develop mitigation strategies.

The consultant helped functional areas meet commitments by organizing vendor, design, and construction meetings. He monitored and expedited long-lead equipment deliveries, monitored Design and Construction milestones and commitments through field visits, and monitored estimates, actual costs, and change orders.

[Click here to watch a video](#) featuring workers building the new line plus comments from Xcel Energy and state, local, and business leaders.

results

Crews built 185 steel structures, poured 3,500 cubic yards of concrete and strung more than 1.1 million feet of conductor along the length of the line. The project was completed eleven days ahead of schedule and approximately \$4 Million under budget.

Commissioning went as planned, meeting all technical and quality requirements. In addition, it was completed safely with no injuries. The project team was recognized by the management team and clients for completing a very successful project meeting all commitments.