

Grid North Partners conference panels discuss regional transmission needs for energy future

Changes in energy production and delivery create challenges and opportunities for Upper Midwest transmission system

Minneapolis (June 16, 2021)—More than 300 energy industry leaders from throughout the Upper Midwest gathered this week to discuss the changing needs of the region’s electric grid in the face of upcoming generation plant retirements and the continued development of new renewable energy. Grid North Partners, an evolution of CapX2020, convened several panels to address issues ranging from how to plan for a 100% clean energy future, policy needs for the region’s build-out, how the future system will be operated, and the need for grid resiliency.

The conference’s theme of “Finding True North” featured wide-ranging discussions with several common threads, including noting the importance of partnership in new transmission development, a hallmark of the 800-mile CapX2020 projects developed and built in the 2010s. The need for reliability and affordability as many Upper Midwest energy providers retire older, legacy power plants and invest in more geographically widespread renewable generation was also discussed.

“The CapX2020 organization was formed in 2004 to ensure we built new transmission infrastructure in the Upper Midwest in partnership with the companies that collectively serve the region,” said Matthew Ellis, Grid North Partners co-executive director. “As we move toward new opportunities, we’ll meet as Grid North Partners. This conference was a great way to reconnect with energy leaders throughout the Midwest to identify the needs, challenges and issues we’ll face in the coming decade to ensure the continued delivery of reliable and affordable energy that powers our homes, businesses and industry of the Midwest.”

Grid North Partners will continue to work with regional and local officials as the energy and transmission system evolves. They’ll collaborate on identifying and developing projects that deliver new renewable and carbon-free electricity customers while maintaining reliable and affordable electric service. The conference will be available for viewing at www.GridNorthPartners.com.