

Van Buren County Electric Upgrades Project



Consumers Energy works hard to provide you with safe, reliable service. That's why we are working to construct a new electric line in Van Buren County that will strengthen our power grid and provide you better service throughout the year. We know you may have questions, so we did our best to answer them below. If you have additional questions, please call us at **800-647-8101** or email us at POBoxCrandallProjects@cmsenergy.com. Delivering safe, reliable, and affordable energy 24/7 is our promise to our customers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why does Consumers Energy have to build a new electric line?

Consumers Energy is building a new 20-mile High Voltage Distribution line to serve the future growth of Van Buren County. The line will help deliver more reliable service to the entire county. Whenever possible, the installation of this line will follow existing low voltage lines, allowing us to upgrade that equipment as well and further strengthen the power grid.

I heard these power lines can cause health problems. Will our health be at risk if you build these lines near where we live?

We understand some of the concerns folks have. Consumers Energy is committed to safely providing electric service for our customers. All power lines, electric wiring, and electric appliances exhibit electric and magnetic fields (EMFs). EMFs from power lines are non-ionizing, which is generally perceived as harmless to humans, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Potential health effects of power line EMFs have been studied for more than half a century but there have been no scientific conclusions on health advantages or disadvantages identified.

What are you doing to protect the environment and prevent harm to the species that live in the area where you are planning the construction?

From start to finish, you can count on Consumers Energy to do the right thing when it comes to safeguarding the land, water, wildlife and other natural resources we all cherish in the area. For 135 years, we have worked on projects like these around the state of Michigan. We always work closely with local, state, and federal agencies, when applicable, to identify potential concerns and minimize our impact on the environment.

How will constructing this new power line affect the trees in the area?

The new corridor for the new line will be cleared where needed to allow room for construction of the lines. Trees, brush and all vegetation will be cleared ground to sky to 40ft on either side of the poles. Additionally, trees within 80 feet on either side of the pole will be assessed for trimming or removal to prevent future outages from occurring. Michigan energy providers are required by the Michigan Public Service Commission to develop a standard for clearing vegetation away from lines. Consumers Energy's standard is in line with the National Electric Safety Code, industry standards and

company best practices. We expect this work to begin in 2024. We will use our existing line route whenever possible.

When will construction begin?

We expect forestry work to begin in 2024, and construction is planned to be completed by the end of 2025. Once new electrical poles are installed, crews will be back in the area to string upgrades wire and make any equipment upgrades necessary. Consumers Energy is committed to communicating with the community and providing updates.

Are you building anything else in the area?

To further strengthen the power grid and deliver more reliable service to our customers in the region, we will be constructing a new substation near the Crandall Business Park to connect the new line.

Will there be any road closures to other impacts to customers during construction?

We will work to minimize impacts to customers during the construction process. When there are interruptions – such as minor traffic disruptions – it is our commitment to let you know as many details as possible. We will also contact landowners along the route to discuss the project plan and necessary access needs.

How did you determine the route of the new line?

Our team worked diligently to identify the route for this electric line considering all relevant factors, including, among other things, the potential impact to the community, the impact to the Company's customers, environmental impacts, sound engineering practices, as well as financial considerations to avoid undue costs to the Company's customers. Through this process, the Company evaluated multiple routes using environmental maps, field visits, and sound engineering design practices to develop the proposed route that includes following our existing infrastructure where possible.

Why can't you just follow existing power line corridors?

Van Buren County is served by multiple utility providers, and some landowners may be under the impression that Consumers Energy owns and operates all of these utility assets. However, the Company owns only a portion of the utility assets in Van Buren County. The Company's general policy is to follow our existing lines where possible in order to maintain appropriate clearances from other utility providers and surrounding structures that might threaten the integrity of the assets.