



Papers filed for 3rd power plant near Iatan

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IATAN, Mo. — Great Plains Power may build yet another coal-fired power plant along the Missouri river, this one in Atchison County, Kan.

Tom Robinson, a spokesman for Great Plains, said the company hasn't committed itself to actually building the plant. However, it began filing paperwork for the necessary permits earlier this year.

If those permits are approved — a process that can take up to two years — the company would be able to start construction on what could be a third power plant in the Weston, Mo., area.

Great Plains, a holding company that owns Kansas City Power & Light, is simultaneously pursuing permits for its Weston Bend I plant near Iatan, Mo. The Atchison plant would be built in the extreme southeast corner of Atchison County, across the Missouri River from Iatan.

"We're proceeding with both permitting processes," Mr. Robinson said.

That plant, which would sit next to the existing Iatan Power Plant, would be the first coal-fired plant to be built in the area in about two decades. Mr. Robinson said the Atchison County plant also would be coal-fired, with each plant capable of producing 850 megawatts of electricity.

In 2001, Great Plains announced it would build up to five coal-fired plants, each capable of producing 500 to 900 megawatts.

Great Plains officials haven't officially committed themselves to building either plant, Mr. Robinson said. However, the Weston Bend project is much further along in the permitting process.

Initially, Great Plains had hoped to open Weston Bend in 2005. It backed off that date in December, saying market conditions weren't right for the plant. However, Mr. Robinson said the company could begin construction on Weston Bend in 2004 if its permits are approved.

Earlier this week, officials from a number of government agencies discussed the project in a closed meeting at the Iatan plant. Officials from URS, an Overland Park, Kan., consulting company working with Great Plains, provided answers to the groups' written questions, clearing some apparent confusion over whether the Atchison site was just an alternative for the Weston bend plant.

"When the permit application was submitted for Weston Bend, the Atchison site was an alternative but now (Great Plains) is proceeding with simultaneous permitting of both sites," the URS memo says. "The two projects are NOT alternatives to each other."

Although Great Plains has set no target date, if any, for opening the Atchison plant, it is clear that its construction is still a few years down the road.

Clark Duffy, director of the Kansas Bureau of Air and Radiation, said he received the project's air quality application in February but doesn't foresee a draft permit being issued until next year or later, if the proper data is submitted on time.

"It's still a dialog of information," he said.

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