

Amish community to see impact from Ameren
Transmission Project

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GREENTOP, MO. -- Local landowners have been very vocal regarding the proposed route of the Mark Twain Transmission Project. However, one community has not been as vocal, but will still feel an impact.

Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois could impact an Amish community if they choose one of the two planned routes for the Mark Twain Transmission Project. 300 Amish individuals on a span of 4,000 acres of land live in Greentop, and they say this project would tear apart their land, and their lives.

Jason Haxton, the former mayor of Greentop was named the official spokesperson for the community by the Bishop.

"I was one of the first people to welcome them, and I told them I would do anything to help protect them. They've invested their life savings and 10 years of work," said Haxton.

The members of the community received letters from Ameren and attended the open houses just like other landowners, but because of their way of life, they had little information about the planned project.

"They have gone to the meetings and they are very upset about this, but they don't know what to do because they don't have the technology and skills, and they are not used to these kinds of things and so they need to be protected," added Haxton.

The proposed route would take the transmission line right through the center of the community, where the school house and cemetery are located.

Jonas Schwartz, son of the Bishop says that he is not happy after learning more about the project.

"We just would rather that it wouldn't go through the property. It would affect the school house and the graveyard and everything there. With the children playing there, they say it gives this high voltage power from the line, and we don't think that sounds like a healthy thing for the children to be playing near," said Jonas Schwartz.

The members of this Amish community moved to the area 10 years ago from Indiana, in order to build and provide a better lifestyle for their families.

"It would be horrible for the community. It would rip it apart. It would

devalue their land, and they have already made one sacrifice leaving their family and friends to come here and start fresh, and now the attitude is so what, we will just move you again," said Haxton.

At the open house that was recently held in Kirksville, Ameren officials were surprised to learn that such an extensive Amish community lives in the area. KTVO reached out to Ameren Spokesman Leigh Morris for comment regarding how this line would impact the Amish if this route is chosen. Morris has yet to return a statement.

The final route for the line is expected to be decided by the end of the year. Once the final route is decided, construction on the transmission line is set to begin in 2016.