

Inside Entergy Update

A message for: Entergy employees in Arkansas

2/28/13 - Arkansas SOC/TOC Site Selected

One of two locations for new centers

After sifting through the pros and cons of more than a dozen properties throughout central Arkansas, a company task force has announced the selection of a site within the Entergy owned Mabelvale substation property as the location for a brand new System Operations Center/Transmission Operations Center to be commissioned in 2015.

The new center is one of two planned for development beginning this fall-the other to be located in the Jackson, Miss. area. The site selection follows the announcement last October that six such operations centers would be consolidated into two new state-of-the-art centers by mid-2015.

"We considered existing ownership, proximity to Entergy fiber-optic networks and substations, personnel recruiting factors and more in evaluating 13 sites initially proposed," said Juan Jones, director of transmission operations, the task force chair. "In the final analysis, this was the one site that met or exceeded our critical success factors."

Entergy currently has an SOC in Pine Bluff and TOCs located in Beaumont, Gretna, West Monroe, Jackson, and Little Rock. Following extensive analysis last year, the company decided the greatest benefits for our customers would be delivered by replacing them entirely.

"Expiring leases, inadequate structures and aging technology all factored into this decision," said Rick Riley, vice president for energy delivery, at the time of the announcement. "It's time to upgrade all of these facilities, and when we ran the numbers it became clear-it's less expensive and more efficient to build new centers than try to update and upgrade these older facilities."

The consolidation will decrease overall business costs, provide for greater redundancy in operations (by allowing for more seamless back-up) and increase the shared resource efficiency at the two new operations centers.

Among the attributes that contributed to the Mabelvale selection were the facts that the property is already owned by the company, it is accessible to Entergy fiber-optic cable, it can be fed from two separate transformers at one nearby substation and it is near fire, police and medical facilities.

For the employees and communities affected, the changes are significant. Pine Bluff, Ark. is the most affected, with 80 energy delivery employees in that community. In discussing the site selection, Entergy Arkansas president and chief executive officer Hugh McDonald reiterated the company's support for employees and community leaders.

"We know this decision has a significant impact on both our Pine Bluff area employees and our friends in that community," he said. "While this move is a fundamental business decision designed to improve service over the long-term to our customers, we remain committed to working hand-in-glove with our economic development partners in Pine Bluff and Jefferson County to continue growing economic opportunity there."