

SAND SPRINGS — Transource Energy, an electric company based in Ohio, is planning to build a \$100 million, 80-mile electric transmission line from Noble County to just west of Sand Springs by 2025, and some residents whose property it could cross feel hopeless. Transource — a partnership between American Electric Power and Evergy — held an open house Thursday evening at the Case Community Center in Sand Springs to inform affected landowners about the plans and allow them to express concerns. AEP is the parent company of Tulsa-based Public Service Company of Oklahoma, which generates, transmits and distributes electric power to about 565,000 retail customers in eastern and southwestern Oklahoma. The proposed 345-kilovolt line would stretch from Oklahoma Gas & Electric's Sooner Substation in Noble County to PSO's Wekiwa Substation in western Tulsa County near Sand Springs. "We invited the public in to help us route a power line that was determined to be necessary for this area," Todd Burns, a Transource director, said Thursday evening. He said the goal is to analyze residents' concerns in order to map out the optimal pathway "that reasonably balances the impacts of the construction." But some landowners feel helpless against what they see as a "Goliath" corporation. Neva Alsip and her sister Leslie Harrison own 120 acres near Yale. Alsip operates a cottage-esque Airbnb alongside an organic farm, offering travelers a rural getaway or part-time employment. She said the power lines will be devastating, and she is willing to go to court against Transource, if need be. "It's like big, heavy-handed, huge corporation versus little Pete Pickens landowner," Alsip said. "It's heartbreaking because you know you're up against Goliath." Considering all possible routes, nearly 1,000 landowners have been notified. Once the final route is determined, impacted landowners can either agree to the terms and receive financial compensation from Transource or the company can impose eminent domain. Connie Smith, Transource's community affairs representative, said South Pool deemed the electric line to be necessary to avoid future power grid crashes and electricity bill increases. Transource said the proposed electric line is estimated to save consumers \$465.6 million over the next 40 years. They also plan to build the

new overhead electric transmission line connecting the two substations, each of which would make upgrades. One couple at the meeting said they already have one set of electric lines running through their property just outside of Mannford “ courtesy of the GRDA ” and don’t want two sets, especially because they had plans to plant an apple orchard on the swath of land Transource is considering. The couple, who asked that their names not be used, said they “ understand that people need power, but we just don’t know how much of our land we’re expected to give up. It’s OK for them to have their dreams, but we don’t want to give up ours, either.” Burns responded to landowners’ concerns about eminent domain, which allows for the taking of private property for public use through compulsory compensation agreements. He said he hopes to reach adequate financial compensation agreements in order to avoid using eminent domain. He declined to comment on the monetary value of the compensation until the final route is decided. Alsip said the only adequate compensation would be in the millions and that she is appalled by Oklahoma’s governmental regulations regarding eminent domain. Transource plans to finalize the transmission line’s route within the next two months. For more information about the project, visit bit.ly/SoonerWekiwaProject.