

Pipeline Replacement Speeds through Tyler County

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As though a giant mowed a swath of trees 75-150 feet wide through Tyler County, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, a Kinder Morgan company, has been steadily working on replacing 11 sections of pipe along a 16-mile path.

Perhaps the most visible site is a few miles north of Woodville on the left of Hwy. 69, just before Doucette. The old is out and the new 24-inch pipe has been welded, inspected, and ready to bury. It will go through a sleeve under Hwy. 69 as the crews work from the southwest to the northeast.



Kinder Morgan is replacing 11 sections of 24-inch pipe over 16 miles. In the photo is section #5, a 2,600-foot section, seen on the left going north from Woodville on Hwy. 69, just short of Doucette. The sections in Tyler County are part of the \$165-million, 900-mile South System Flexibility Project for Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company, L.L.C., which is a Kinder Morgan company.

Usually, a Tyler County Deputy Sheriff is parked there. According to Sheriff Bryan Weatherford, they received a report that someone wanted to shoot the workers, but it could not be verified. Weatherford felt it best to provide some security, and, given that the hill of Hwy. 69 slightly obstructs a view of fast-moving traffic, the deputy could also help with traffic as the unending loads of pipe and materials crisscross the highway.

Kinder Morgan is the largest energy infrastructure company in North America, owning or operating about 84,000 miles of pipelines transporting natural gas, gasoline, crude oil, CO₂ and other products (www.KinderMorgan.com). The 11 sections being replaced in Tyler County begin about five miles to the southwest of Woodville near Hwys. 190 and 256, and, following the pipe in a nearly straight northeast line go under Hwy. 287 and further past Hwy. 69. In all, about 3 miles of total pipe will be replaced in the 11 sections along that 16-mile length.

The site seen on the left of Hwy. 69 just north of Woodville is Site #5, where they are replacing about 2,600 feet of 24-inch pipe.

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Richard Wheatley, director of corporate communications for Kinder Morgan, said, “We seek to maintain amicable local landowner relationships and maintain a minimal project footprint.” Working closely with landowners they will “re-route fence lines” or “provide alternative water sources for livestock.” In restoration, Wheatley said, “We will ask landowners which type of grass they prefer to have planted (Bermuda, Pensacola Bahia, Argentina Bahia, etc.)”

The Tyler County work is contracted to PECCI, which has about 100 men working steadily.

Local businessman David Emmons, who has leased the land the contractors are using for a lay-down area, recalled that some of the pipe was laid down in 1940 as WWII cranked up. Many of the contractors reside at Emmons’ RV Park just a mile south of the Hwy. 69 work and lay-down areas.

According to Wheatley, the work in Tyler County is part of the \$165-million, 900-mile South System Flexibility Project that will provide about 500 million cubic feet of gas per day for customers of TGPC. When complete, the flow will be reversed at the compressor stations, like the one just north of Jasper on Hwy. 93, and the new route will pump gas north-to-south from Tennessee and Louisiana through Texas and to Mexico.

When finished, Kinder Morgan will retain a 50-foot permanent right-of-way to maintain its pipeline. The work in Tyler County should be complete by Oct. 1, 2016, and the remainder of the overall project should become operational in late 2016.

