ALASKA NATURAL GAS TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS
OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL COORDINATOR

NEWS

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Federal gas line office helps pay for state data mapping project along pipeline route

WASHINGTON, DC – The federal coordinator's office for the Alaska natural gas pipeline is contributing $250,000 toward a state contract for detailed aerial laser-imaging data along the proposed gas line route from Prudhoe Bay to the Canadian border.

"The state needs the data, federal agencies and the public need the detailed information, so it just makes sense to chip in and help the state pay for the work so that everyone can share and save money," said Larry Persily, Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects.

The State of Alaska Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys issued a request for proposals July 26 to collect LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data that will be helpful to state and federal agencies reviewing gas line plans. The data will be used in evaluating "active faulting, slope instability, thaw settlement, erosion and other engineering constraints along the proposed pipeline routes," according to the state's request for proposals. Following comprehensive technical review and quality control, the data will be released to the public.

"LiDAR has proven to be one of the most useful forms of remotely sensed data for identification and characterization of potentially active faults and other geologic landforms and hazards," the state's notice said. The work involves a LiDAR-equipped aircraft traveling back and forth along the route, sending laser signals to earth and collecting the reflected data.

The state estimates the project at $1.75 million, which includes a $250,000 contribution from the Office of the Federal Coordinator for Alaska Natural Gas Transportation Projects. The Alaska Gasline Project office is providing the remaining funds.

The state request for data collection covers 2,440 square miles, which includes the proposed natural gas pipeline route to the Canadian border, along with the proposed pipeline route from Delta Junction to Valdez. The aerial work will cover a corridor approximately 1 mile wide, with wider zones of laser imaging at active faults and other areas of potential hazards. Existing primary oil pipeline support roads and adjacent highways will also be included.

"The data will be useful not only for helping state and federal regulators identify large-scale hazards like active faults and landslides that could affect pipeline integrity, but can be used for locating potential sources of construction materials and planning other future development that may occur along these corridors," said Rod Combellick, deputy director of the Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys.

The Office of Federal Coordinator is looking to use the data as a basemap for its GIS (Geographic Information Systems) project, layering other information on top of the LiDAR data — such as wetlands, buildings and land ownership maps — to provide a comprehensive, web-based view of the gas line route. “The GIS project would be helpful in evaluating permit applications and construction plans for the gas line, while also allowing public access to the same information as permit decision makers”, Persily said.

Responses to the state’s request for proposals are due Aug. 17. The Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys plans to issue a contract Sept. 1.

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