IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF COLORADO FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR THE SAN LUIS VALLEY – CALUMET – COMANCHE TRANSMISSION PROJECT

DIRECT TESTIMONY AND EXHIBIT OF

RICK L. THOMPSON

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY OF COLORADO FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR THE SAN LUIS VALLEY - CALUMET – COMANCHE TRANSMISSION PROJECT	))))))	**DOCKET NO. 09A-____E**

DIRECT TESTIMONY AND EXHIBITS OF RICK THOMPSON

Q. WHAT IS YOUR NAME AND BUSINESS ADDRESS?

A. My name is Rick L. Thompson. My business address is 550 15th Street, Suite 700, Denver, Colorado 80202.

Q. BY WHOM ARE YOU EMPLOYED AND IN WHAT CAPACITY?

A. I am employed by Public Service Company of Colorado. My title is Supervisor, Siting and Land Rights. My primary responsibility is to supervise and coordinate the siting, permitting, and land rights acquisition for new electric transmission, substation and related utility projects.

Q. ON WHOSE BEHALF ARE YOU TESTIFYING IN THIS DOCKET?

A. I am testifying on behalf of Public Service Company of Colorado ("Public Service" or the "Company").

Q. HAVE YOU PREPARED A STATEMENT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS?

A. Yes. The statement is included with my testimony as Attachment A.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?

A. The purpose of my testimony is to characterize the siting, permitting and land rights acquisition activities associated with the Calumet – Comanche 345 kV transmission line ("Calumet - Comanche Segment" or the "Segment") of the San Luis Valley – Calumet – Comanche Transmission Project, which the Company is proposing to build with Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. ("Tri-State"). As explained by Messrs. Stellern and Green, Public Service is taking the lead in developing this segment of the overall project.

Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE THE ROUTING CHARACTERISTICS OF THIS SEGMENT OF THE OVERALL PROJECT.

A. This segment involves the siting, permitting, and acquisition of an approximately 200 feet-wide right-of-way to accommodate an estimated 45 miles of new 345 kV capable double-circuit transmission line between the Tri-State Calumet Substation site ("Calumet") located in Huerfano County, Colorado, and Public Service's Comanche Substation ("Comanche") located within the City of Pueblo, Colorado. Please see Exhibit No. RLT-1, which is a Vicinity Map depicting the Calumet - Comanche Project area.

The proposed new right-of-way for this Segment will contain double-circuit capable 345 kV transmission structures consisting primarily of self-weathering single steel poles with the circuits vertically configured on each side of the structure. The engineering design and configuration of the transmission line for this Segment is specifically described in Witness Pearson's testimony.

Q. DO YOU KNOW THE EXACT ROUTE FOR THE CALUMET - COMANCHE SEGMENT?

No. To date, we have not conducted a formal siting study to identify the transmission line route for this Segment. However, it is anticipated the corridor for this Segment will be identified through a siting study in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") and in conformance with applicable local land use permitting processes. During the siting study, paralleling existing linear corridors in the area will be evaluated while also investigating other opportunity areas for the new transmission line right-of-way.

Q. PLEASE CHARACTERIZE THE PROJECT AREA FOR THIS SEGMENT OF THE OVERALL PROJECT.

The area to be evaluated for siting the new transmission line is located in southeastern Colorado where the front range of the Rocky Mountains transitions into the plains. The general character of the region between Walsenburg and Pueblo consists primarily of undeveloped open semi-arid prairie rangeland interspersed with small canyons and ravines containing pinyon pine and juniper forested areas. The local jurisdictions in this area include portions of Huerfano County, Pueblo County and the City of Pueblo.

Q. WILL THIS SEGMENT OF THE OVERALL PROJECT BE CONSTRUCTED TO AVOID RESIDENTIAL AREAS?

A. Yes. Public Service and Tri-State believe this Segment can be sited to avoid "residentially zoned" areas. Vast undeveloped expanses exist between

Walsenburg and Pueblo with sparsely populated large parcel ownership being the prevailing land use between Calumet and Comanche Substations. There are subdivided parcels located in the general area with the lot sizes typically in the range of 35 acres or larger. Many of these subdivided parcels are in an area near Cedarwood, which is located east of Interstate 25 and north of the Huerfano and Pueblo County boundary line. Residential development exists on some of these large-lot parcels, but the majority of parcels do not have existing residences at this time. The prevailing zoning designation in the area is "Agriculture".

Q. WILL NEW LAND RIGHTS BE REQUIRED AT THE CALUMET SUBSTATION OR COMANCHE SUBSTATION SITES?

A. No. Acquisition of new land rights to accommodate required equipment additions is not anticipated at either substation site. Tri-State owns the Calumet Substation site and Public Service owns the Comanche Substation and surrounding lands.

Q. WHAT GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES WILL REVIEW THE PROJECT?

A. Beyond this Commission's review of the Calumet - Comanche Segment for issuance of the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service ("RUS") will review and monitor overall project activities, including this segment, due to Tri-State's use of RUS provided federal funds for their portion of the ownership of the overall San Luis Valley – Calumet - Comanche Transmission Project. Other federal, state and local agencies and entities will also review during the

NEPA compliance process. Local land use approvals will require reviews by Huerfano County, Pueblo County, the City of Pueblo and associated referral agencies. Issuance of construction related permits will allow further review by various agencies and entities.

Q. WILL THE COMPANY CONDUCT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND NOTIFICATION ACTIVITIES FOR THE CALUMET - COMANCHE SEGMENT?

A. Yes. As a part of the siting and permitting process for the overall San Luis Valley – Calumet - Comanche Transmission Project, Public Service and Tri-State will develop a comprehensive communication plan to involve and notify the public. We plan to develop routing alternatives and seek public input prior to determining the preferred alternative for all segments of the project. Public Service and Tri-State will work closely with the involved jurisdictions and the public in conformance with the NEPA scoping process. The public will also have opportunities to review and comment on the overall project during the local jurisdictions' land use review processes.

Q. CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE TIMING NECESSARY TO CONDUCT LOCAL LAND USE PERMITTING ACTIVITIES?

A. Yes. Public Service and Tri-State anticipate approximately 18 months will be required to conduct the required siting studies, prepare and submit land use permit applications, and obtain approvals. At this time, we anticipate local land use permit applications will be submitted to the jurisdictions in a 2010-11 timeframe.

Q. WHAT OTHER PROCESSES ARE NEEDED FOR THIS SEGMENT PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION?

A. Acquiring land rights from landowners for the new transmission line right-of-way is one process that will occur after the siting and permitting processes confirm selection of a preferred transmission route for this segment. Good faith negotiations will occur with the involved landowners during this acquisition process. Eminent domain proceedings may be required where agreements cannot be reached voluntarily. In addition, numerous other permits will be required prior to and during construction, such as grading permits, storm water management permits, highway crossing permits, and railroad crossing permits.

Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A. Yes.

Attachment A

Statement of Qualifications

Rick Thompson

Rick Thompson has over 16 years experience siting, permitting, and acquiring land rights for major utility facilities within Xcel Energy and its predecessor companies. He currently acts as supervisor for the group of Xcel Energy employees primarily responsible for siting, permitting and acquiring the land rights for Public Service Company of Colorado transmission lines, substations and other major utility facilities. Mr. Thompson and his team conduct siting studies, prepare permit applications, and present project recommendations to federal, state, and local regulatory land management agencies and commissions for approvals. He has specialized knowledge of federal, state, and local permitting and land rights acquisition processes; property valuation; property management; siting and environmental analysis; public involvement processes; and electric and gas utility systems (including mapping, surveying, and drafting). He has been extensively involved in the application of utility engineering and construction practices for major utility projects.

Positions Held at Xcel Energy/New Century Energies/Public Service Company of Colorado:

2007-Present	Supervisor: Siting and Land Rights - Denver
2006-2007	Manager: Renewable Energy Purchases
2005-2006	Manager: Siting and Land Rights
1998-2005	Team Lead: Siting and Land Rights - Denver
1991-1998	Agent: Siting & Environmental Planning/Siting and Land Rights

Education:

B.S. - Colorado State University-Landscape Architecture: 1979.

Coursework focused on land planning, visual analysis, public facility design and regional master planning. Mr. Thompson has also completed coursework in environmental policy, electric transmission line siting, business law, project management, public involvement processes, collaborative decision making, creative problem solving, and various real estate transaction related coursework. Rick has successfully passed the Colorado Real Estate Sales licensing exam and is a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and past member of the International Right-of-Way Association.