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Protest against 27,600-volt power line

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General Staff Writer

WINSTED — The town's community lawyer is calling on residents of city streets where the Connecticut Light & Power Co. is installing a 27,600-volt power line to voice their concerns to selectmen at a meeting Monday.

Charlene LaVole, the town's community lawyer, said Friday that copies of a newspaper story that detailed the route of the planned power line were hand-delivered to residents along the route by student canvassers and Jamie Springour, an associate with the community lawyer's office, which is funded through a grant from the Shafer-Nader Trust.

In a letter included with the story, LaVole said the power line will bring "an increase in the amount of electromagnetic radiation produced."

"Studies have shown an increased risk of contracting childhood leukemia and other concerns from exposure to electromagnetic radiation," her letter said.

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The new 27,600-volt line will have all three conductors wrapped in a jacket with an outside diameter of about 3 1/2 inches, the power company said. A power company spokeswoman said 4,800-volt lines usually are used in towns.

Robert E. Carberry, manager of substation engineering and design for Northeast Utilities, said Friday that because of the design of the 27,600-volt transmission line, it will not produce a magnetic field greater than that usually produced by the lower-voltage power lines already on Winsted streets.

Carberry also said there is no proof that electromagnetic fields could cause leukemia. But, he said,

"It is not possible to say 'never'." In her letter, LaVole also warned that the larger poles used for the lines could lower property values.

"Citizens are working to beautify our residential streets with shade trees and many citizens may object to a power line of this size and voltage running through their residential neighborhood. Other routes can be considered," she wrote.

The new line will travel about a mile along Winsted residential streets and then about a mile along Route 8 and a short distance on Route 20, also known as Riverton Road. It will improve electric service to across of Winsted and the Riverton section of Barkhamsted.

The line will leave the substation on Case Avenue and go east on Gay

Street a block to Chestnut Street and along Holbrook Avenue, crossing Oak Street to Walnut Street and then Brook Street, where it will turn right for a block to North Main Street, which is also Route 8.

This summer, trees were planted along Oak Street by the town's shade tree committee and volunteers. The trees were bought with a \$2,000 grant from Northeast Utilities.

Joanne Williams, town building inspector, said the town does not have to approve installation of the power line. That is governed by the state.

Town Manager David A. Maynard said the power company will have a representative at Monday's selectmen's meeting, which is scheduled for 7 p.m. in town hall.