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April 30, 2004

Mr. Dale Hardy Roberts  
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge  
Missouri Public Service Commission  
P.O. Box 360  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

**Re: The Empire District Electric Company**

Dear Mr. Roberts:

On behalf of The Empire District Electric Company ("Empire"), I am providing herewith to the Missouri Public Service Commission ("Commission") for filing in electronic form certain tariff sheets consisting of revised electric rate schedules which are designed to increase Empire's gross annual electric revenues by approximately \$38,282,000, exclusive of applicable gross receipts, sales, franchise or occupational fees or taxes. The rate schedules bear a date of issue of April 30, 2004, an effective date of May 30, 2004.

The proposed rate increase is driven by several factors. These include the higher cost of fuel utilized in the generation of electricity, the increased cost of purchased power, increased operation and maintenance expense and depreciation expense, the cost of capital investments and other costs associated with providing safe and reliable electric service to Empire's customers.

Also provided in electronic form is a letter from David W. Gibson, Empire's Vice President, Regulatory and General Services, which sets forth a list of the rate schedules being provided and explains the purpose of the filing. Also included please find Empire's Minimum Filing Requirements in electronic form, as required by 4 CSR 240-3.030(3)(B).

In addition, in accordance with 4 CSR 240-2.065(1), please find provided in electronic form the verified direct testimony and schedules of the following Empire witnesses: W.L. Gipson, Brad P. Beecher, Mike Palmer, Kelly Walters, Blake A. Mertens (NP and HC), Donald A. Murry, James H. Vander Weide, Jill S. Tietjen, Donald S. Roff, H. Edwin Overcast, and C. Kenneth Vogel. Included with Mr. Roff's testimony is a depreciation study. The database for the depreciation study

will be provided to the Missouri Public Service Commission Staff ("Staff"). The involved property unit catalog has previously been provided to the Staff.

Finally, please find provided for filing in electronic form Empire's Motion for Protective Order.

A copy of this entire filing will be provided to the Commission's General Counsel and to the Office of the Public Counsel.

Would you please bring this filing to the attention of the appropriate Commission personnel and see that a copy of all correspondence, notices, orders and other communications in connection with this matter and proceeding are furnished to David W. Gibson, Vice President, Regulatory and General Services, The Empire District Electric Company, 602 Joplin Street, Joplin, MO 64802, as well as to the undersigned counsel.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "James C. Swearengen", written over a horizontal line.

James C. Swearengen

JCS/lar

Enclosures

cc: Missouri Public Service Commission General Counsel  
Office of the Public Counsel