



PRESS RELEASE

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**THE EMPIRE DISTRICT ELECTRIC COMPANY FILES REQUEST
TO IMPLEMENT DEMAND-SIDE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS
WITH MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Joplin, Mo. (February 28, 2012) – The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE: EDE), today filed a request with the Missouri Public Service Commission (MPSC) to implement a portfolio of demand-side management programs. The request, subject to regulatory approval, would implement new energy efficiency programs for customers in 2012. Empire continues to actively develop and promote programs to help its customers save energy.

The request also includes a Demand-Side Program Investment Mechanism (DSIM) rider that will be added to monthly Empire bills beginning in July 2013. This additional DSIM charge recovers the cost of program development for Empire and establishes an incentive mechanism enabling the customer and the Company to benefit from demand-side program savings.

By helping customers save energy, Empire can more effectively manage energy demand, keep long-term costs more affordable, support environmental initiatives, and defer the costs associated with the construction of new power plants. The DSIM charge will appear as a new line item on customers' bills and be based on the number of kilowatt hours used each month. Under Empire's proposal, the DSIM rate will be reviewed and adjusted by the Commission annually to account for any changes in the cost of the energy efficiency programs. Under the efficiency program spending levels proposed by Empire and the DSIM rider, a Missouri residential customer using 1,000 kWh per month can expect to see an increase of about \$1.39 per month, or approximately 1.23 percent, beginning in July 2013.

(more)

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Customers may learn more about efficiency programs by visiting Empire's Web site, www.empiredistrict.com, or by calling 800-206-2300.

Based in Joplin, Missouri, The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE: EDE) is an investor-owned, regulated utility providing electricity, natural gas (through its wholly owned subsidiary The Empire District Gas Company), and water service, with approximately 215,000 customers in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. A subsidiary of the company provides fiber optic services. For more information regarding Empire, visit www.empiredistrict.com.

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