

**PRESS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Contact:****MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS**

Amy Bass
Director of Corporate Communications
417-625-5114
abass@empiredistrict.com

INVESTOR RELATIONS

Jan Watson
Secretary - Treasurer
(417) 625-5108
jwatson@empiredistrict.com

**THE EMPIRE DISTRICT ELECTRIC COMPANY
PRICES OFFERING OF COMMON STOCK**

JOPLIN, MO, December 11, 2003 -- The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE:EDE) announced the pricing of 2,000,000 newly issued shares of its common stock at a price per share of \$21.15. In addition, the underwriters will have an option to purchase from the Company up to an additional 300,000 shares to cover over-allotments, if any. UBS Investment Bank is the sole book-running manager. A.G. Edwards & Sons, Inc., Jefferies & Company, Inc. and Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Incorporated are acting as co-managers. The closing of the offering is anticipated to occur on or about December 17, 2003.

This press release does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any shares of Empire's common stock. The offering of shares was made by means of a prospectus, including a prospectus supplement, forming a part of Empire's effective shelf registration statement, a copy of which can be obtained from UBS Investment Bank, ECMG Syndicate, 299 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10171.

Based in Joplin, Missouri, The Empire District Electric Company is an investor-owned utility providing electric service to approximately 154,000 customers in southwest Missouri, southeast Kansas, northeast Oklahoma, and northwest Arkansas. The Company also provides fiber optic and Internet services, customer information software services, utility industry technical training, and has an investment in close-tolerance, custom manufacturing. Empire provides water service in three incorporated communities in Missouri.

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Certain matters discussed in this press release are "forward-looking statements" intended to qualify for the safe harbor from liability established by the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Such statements address future plans, objectives, expectations, and events or conditions concerning various matters. Actual results in each case could differ materially from those currently anticipated in such statements, by reason of the factors noted in our filings with the SEC, including the most recent Form 10-K and Form 10-Q.

THE EMPIRE DISTRICT ELECTRIC COMPANY • 802 JOPLIN STREET • JOPLIN, MISSOURI 64802 • 417-625-5100 • FAX: 417-625-5169 • www.empiredistrict.com

Appendix A