STATE OF MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

At a session of the Public Service Commission held at its office in Jefferson City on the 31st day of March, 2010.

In the Matter of the Empire District Electric Company of Joplin, Missouri for Authority to File Tariff Increasing Rates for Electric Service Provided to Customers in the) Tariff No. YE-2010-0303 Missouri Service Area of the Company

) File No. ER-2010-0130

ORDER DIRECTING THE PARTIES TO ADDRESS THE CONCERNS RAISED BY LOW-INCOME RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

Issue Date: March 31, 2010 Effective Date: March 31, 2010

The Commission has conducted several local public hearings around the state regarding The Empire District Electric Company's request for a rate increase. Many witnesses at those hearings have testified that any rate increase would increase the already heavy financial burden on Empire's low-income residential customers. The Commission wants to hear from the parties about ideas for reducing the financial burden on low-income residential customers while providing a fair and adequate return to Empire. To that end, the Commission will establish a procedural schedule for the filing of additional testimony regarding the needs of Empire's low-income residential customers.

In addition to the mechanisms traditionally utilized to assist low-income customers, the Commission would like the parties in their testimony to address the feasibility of establishing an experimental "very low-income" customer class that would be based upon the federal poverty level. The Commission would like any testimony filed on this issue to: 1) analyze the practicality of establishing such a class, including the effect on revenues and

costs; 2) propose guidelines for inclusion in such a class, 3) propose verification

procedures for participants in such a class; 4) analyze the possible effect on the company's

bad debt expense of such a class; and 5) state an opinion as to whether such a class

should be tied to the current industrial rate class or propose an alternate rate.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The parties may file additional direct testimony addressing the reduction of

the financial burden on The Empire District Electric Company's low-income residential

customers no later than April 9, 2010.

2. The parties may file rebuttal testimony addressing the reduction of the

financial burden on The Empire District Electric Company's low-income residential

customers no later than April 16, 2010.

3. The parties may file surrebuttal testimony addressing the reduction of the

financial burden on The Empire District Electric Company's low-income residential

customers no later than April 23, 2010.

4. This order shall become effective immediately upon issuance.

BY THE COMMISSION

Steven C. Reed

Secretary

(SEAL)

Clayton, Chm., Davis, Jarrett, Gunn, and Kenney, CC., concur.

Jones, Senior Regulatory Law Judge

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