

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

In the Matter of The Empire District Electric)
Company of Joplin, Missouri Tariffs)
Increasing Rates for Electric Service)
Provided to Customers in the Missouri Service)
Area of the Company)

File No. ER-2012-0345

**ORDER SETTING LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS
AND DIRECTING NOTICE**

Issue Date: November 20, 2012

Effective Date: November 20, 2012

On July 6, 2012, The Empire District Electric Company (“Empire”), submitted proposed tariff sheets designed to implement a general rate increase for retail electric service. In an order issued on July 9, 2012, the Commission directed the parties to file a joint proposed procedural schedule, including recommendations regarding the times, dates, and locations for local public hearings.

On July 25, 2012, the parties filed a proposed procedural schedule asking the Commission to schedule local public hearings in two locations in Empire’s service territory. The agreement also proposed language to be included in the notice to be given to Empire’s customers regarding the local public hearings and the evidentiary hearing.

The Commission will schedule local public hearings at the proposed locations in Empire’s service area. The agreed upon notice language is acceptable, and Empire will be directed to provide notice of the hearings to its customers.

THE COMMISSION ORDERS THAT:

1. The Commission’s Public Information Office shall make an informational presentation and conduct a question-and-answer session for the public at the beginning of each local public hearing.

2. The Empire District Electric Company, the Commission's Staff, and the Office of the Public Counsel shall each prepare a one-page statement outlining their current assessment of the case, and shall bring sufficient copies for distribution at the question-and-answer session that begins each local public hearing.

3. The Empire District Electric Company, the Commission's Staff, and the Office of the Public Counsel shall make a representative available to address substantive issues during the question-and-answer session.

4. Any other party, at its discretion, may prepare a statement and make a representative available to address substantive issues during the question and answer session.

5. The Commission shall hold a local public hearing at Corley Auditorium, Webster Hall, Missouri Southern State University, 3950 Newman Road, Joplin, Missouri, on Thursday, January 3, 2013, beginning at 12:00 p.m.

6. The Commission shall hold a local public hearing at Corley Auditorium, Webster Hall, Missouri Southern State University, 3950 Newman Road, Joplin, Missouri, on Thursday, January 3, 2013, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

7. The Commission shall hold a local public hearing in the City Council Chambers, Reeds Spring City Hall, 22601 Main Street, Reeds Spring, Missouri, on Friday, January 4, 2013, beginning at 12:00 p.m.

8. No later than ten days before the local public hearings, The Empire District Electric Company shall provide individual notice to each of its electric service customers including the notice as set out below.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

On July 6, 2012, The Empire District Electric Company filed revised electric service tariff sheets with the Missouri Public Service Commission

("MPSC"), which would increase base rates by approximately \$30.7 million. Because of changes in the costs of fuel since the last rate case, the net impact to customers would be \$22.1 million, or an increase of about 5.3 percent over current levels. If approved by the MPSC, a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours would see a monthly net increase in rates of about \$6.60.

Empire is asking to continue the use of the Fuel Adjustment Clause, that was previously approved by the MPSC. This appears as the Fuel Charge on customers' bills. The continuation of the Fuel Charge will allow Empire to adjust customers' bills twice each year, on June 1st and December 1st, based on increases or decreases in the cost of fuel used to generate electricity at the Company's generating units and electric energy Empire purchases on behalf of its customers.

Empire states that the rate increase is needed to recover costs from the May 2011 tornado and because of increased charges from the regional transmission organization, software replacements, increased tree-trimming costs, and other increases in costs.

Local public hearings regarding Empire's rate increase request have been set before the MPSC as follows:

- At 12:00 p.m., January 3, 2013, at Webster Hall, Missouri Southern State University, 3950 East Newman Road, Joplin, Missouri.
- At 6:00 p.m., January 3, 2013, at Webster Hall, Missouri Southern State University, 3950 East Newman Road, Joplin, Missouri.
- At 12:00 p.m., January 4, 2013, in the City Council Chambers, Reeds Spring City Hall, 22601 Main Street, Reeds Spring, Missouri.

If you wish to comment or secure information, you may contact the Missouri Public Service Commission, Post Office Box 360 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102, telephone 800-392-4211, email pscinfo@psc.mo.gov or the Office of the Public Counsel, Post Office Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102, telephone (866) 922-2959 email opcservice@ded.mo.gov.

The Commission will also conduct evidentiary hearings at its offices in Jefferson City February 18 through March 1, 2013.

The buildings where the hearings will be held meet accessibility standards required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If a customer needs additional accommodations to participate in these hearings, please call the Public Service Commission's Hotline at 1-800-392-4211 (voice) or Relay Missouri at 711 prior to the hearing.

9. The local public hearings shall be held in facilities that meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any person who needs additional

accommodation to participate in the hearings should call the Public Service Commission's Hotline at 1-800-392-4211 (voice) or Relay Missouri at 711 before the hearings.

10. The Data Center of the Missouri Public Service Commission shall serve a copy of this order upon the county commission of each county in Empire's service area.

11. The Public Information Office of the Missouri Public Service Commission shall send a copy of this order to members of the General Assembly and to the media that serve Empire's service area.

12. The Empire District Electric Company shall place advertisements in the newspapers serving its service territory. The advertisements shall contain the information from the customer notice relevant to the customers in the newspaper's circulation area.

13. This order shall become effective immediately upon issuance.

BY THE COMMISSION



Steven C. Reed
Secretary

(S E A L)

Michael Bushmann, Regulatory Law
Judge, by delegation of authority
pursuant to Section 386.240, RSMo 2000.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 20th day of November, 2012.