

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

In the Matter of The Empire District            )  
Electric Company’s Request for Authority    )  
to File Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric   )  
Service Provided to Customers in its        )  
Missouri Service Area                            )  
Case No. ER-2019-0374

**PUBLIC COUNSEL’S LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS RECOMMENDATIONS**

**COMES NOW** the Office of Public Counsel (Public Counsel) and, after consultation with the other parties, recommends that in this case the Commission hold local public hearings at Bolivar (pop. 10,325 2010 census; 10,507 est. 2015), Branson (pop. 10,520 2010 census; 11, 084 est. 2015), Joplin (pop. 50,150 2010 census; 51,042 est. 2015) and Republic (pop. 14,751 2010 census; 15,594 est. 2015), Missouri.<sup>1</sup> Empire and Staff have stated to Public Counsel that they do not object to holding local public hearings in these municipalities. Public Counsel believes hearings in these municipalities can be accomplished in two days. Based on its research and input from Empire, Public Counsel suggests the following as potential venues for four local public hearings in this case:

**Bolivar**

Southwest Baptist University  
1600 University Ave, Bolivar, Missouri 65613  
(800) 526-5859; (417)328-5281

**Branson**

Branson/Lakes Area Convention and Visitors Bureau  
4100 Gretna Road  
Branson, Missouri 65616  
(800)296-0463; (417)334-4084

Branson Convention Center  
200 Sycamore Street, Branson, Missouri 65616  
(417)336-5401

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<sup>1</sup> 2010 census and 2015 estimates of population from *2017-2018 Official Manual of the State of Missouri*.

Branson City Hall  
City Council Chambers  
110 West Maddux Street, Branson, Missouri 65616  
(417)334-3345

**Joplin**

Missouri Southern State University,  
Plaster Hall Building,  
Cornell Auditorium– 2nd floor,  
3950 East Newman Road, Joplin, Missouri 64801

**Republic**

Republic Community Center and Activities Building  
711 E Miller Road, Republic, Missouri 65738  
(417)732-3500

Local hearings in these four cities will better cover Empire’s service area in Missouri than the two sites (Joplin and Reeds Spring (pop. 913; 2910 census; 905 est. 2015), Missouri) used in past Empire general electric rate cases, and reasonably can be held in two days by noon and evening hearings. Further, many of the public comments submitted into EFIS are from commenters identified with Buffalo, Oak Grove and Walnut Grove, Missouri, addresses.

The parties are working toward agreement on a local public hearings notice.

Respectfully,

          /s/ Nathan Williams          

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that copies of the foregoing have been mailed, hand-delivered, transmitted by facsimile or electronically mailed to all counsel of record this 31<sup>st</sup> day of October 2019.

/s/ Nathan Williams