
ILLINOIS ENERGY FORUM

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ICC Opens Investigation Into DG Valuation

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) has voted unanimously to initiate an investigation into an annual process and formula for calculating rebate values for customers with solar, wind or other renewable energy systems on their property within Ameren Illinois' territory. A provision of the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA), which became effective in 2017, requires the ICC to determine compensation for retail customers for the benefits distributed energy resources provide to the grid. The compensation must reflect the value of the distributed generation and consider geographic, time-based, and performance-based benefits, for present and future grid needs.

"One of the primary goals of FEJA is to encourage the growth of renewable energy in Illinois. A program that fairly compensates consumers who own or operate solar, wind or other renewable energy sources to power their homes, transmitting excess capacity onto the grid is one way to stimulate private investment into renewable energy resources," said ICC Public Utilities Bureau Chief Jim Zolnierek.

President Signs Executive Order Securing Bulk-Power System

On May 1, President Trump issued an Executive Order that he indicated was designed to secure the nation's bulk-power system. The Order essentially allows the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) the work with companies involved in operating the bulk-power market to safeguard their systems from possible security breaches caused by equipment and services purchased from foreign sources.

The bulk-power market is essentially the wholesale power market operated by various regional transmission organizations. In Illinois, two regional transmission organizations operate competitive markets and system dispatch – PJM Interconnection in the northern one-third of the state and MISO Interconnection in the southern two-thirds of the state.

Edison Electric Institute (EEI) President Tom Kuhn issued the following statement on President Trump's Executive

Order (EO) on securing the U.S. bulk-power system.

"EEI and our member companies appreciate that President Trump, through his new Executive Order, continues to make energy grid security a priority for his Administration and for our nation. We have long maintained that grid security is a shared responsibility, and addressing dynamic threats to the grid requires vigilance and coordination that leverages both government and industry resources.

"EEI's members, through the CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council, work closely with the Department of Energy (DOE) to address underlying threats to supply chain security. This EO reflects this ongoing collaboration with the federal government and provides new ways to mitigate threats to electric-sector critical infrastructure.

"Reliable electricity and a secure energy grid are essential to the nation's economy and our

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FROM THE STAFF

We hope everyone is hanging in there and making the best of a most unusual situation. Legislators, staff and lobbyists are all trying to adjust to the new (hopefully temporary) normal and be as effective in their jobs and services as possible. It's certainly a challenge but Illinois seems to be faring better than most states in terms of forging this new path forward. In spite of everything, there are some remarkable people doing some amazing things to help all of us get through this crisis. Stay safe.

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ICC

Under the Public Utilities Act, the Commission is required to initiate an investigation 'when the total generating capacity of the electricity provider's net metering customers is equal to 3% of the total peak demand supplied by the electricity provider.' Earlier this month, Ameren Illinois notified the ICC that the company's total generating capacity for net metering customers has reached the 3% level and is expected to exceed 5% by the end of 2020, triggering the need for the investigation.

By state statute, the investigation in Docket No. 20-3089 must include diverse sets of stakeholders, calculations for valuing distributed energy resource benefits to the grid based on best practices, and assessments of present and future technological capabilities of distributed energy resources.

In 2018, the ICC hosted a series of workshops to facilitate an initial discussion around determining the value of distributed generation to the distribution grid. The effort was supported through a grant by the U.S. Department of Energy and, working in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory.

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EEI

Way of life. We look forward to our continued partnership with the Administration and to working with DOE and other government stakeholders to implement this new EO, and we will continue to ensure that we are sourcing critical equipment from reputable manufacturers."

IEF

Nicor Gas and Southern Company Gas Develops New Digital Arcade for Kids to Stay Engaged from Home During National Safe Digging Month

School may be out for most, but the learning doesn't have to stop — especially for Nicor Gas customers. Thanks to a digital arcade developed by Nicor Gas and its parent company, Southern Company Gas, millions of customers now have a new digital learning tool to educate children on natural gas safety — and to keep them occupied.

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and stay at home orders, parents are getting creative to keep their kids entertained. The online Safe Digging Arcade, developed in honor of National Safe Digging Month, utilizes

science, engineering, technology and math (STEM) games to teach future excavators to become safe digging champions.

"We are constantly looking for new and innovative ways to educate our communities about the importance of natural gas safety — and that starts with our kids," said Melvin D. Williams, Nicor Gas president. "We have been providing safety and educational programs to school children for generations, but it is clear that now we needed a digital solution."

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities can result in damage to gas, electric, communications, water and sewer lines, ultimately leading to service disruptions, serious injuries and costly repairs. The Safe Digging Arcade offers eight games, including puzzles and problem-solving activities, that educate children about how their families can stay avoid these types of accidents when digging around their homes.

National Safe Digging Month reminds homeowners to call 811, a communication system established to provide a place of contact for excavating professionals and the public, before starting any project involving digging, tunneling, grading, boring, blasting, demolition or similar work. After registering a project with JULIE, Illinois' one-call center, utilities mark underground services like gas, power, phone and cable lines with paint or flags so excavators and homeowners know where they are located and can dig safely.

IEF

Natural Gas Utilities Lead Charge on Achieving Exemplary Employee and Vehicular Safety

The American Gas Association (AGA) is pleased to recognize a number of natural gas utility and transmission companies for their outstanding commitment to employee and vehicular safety in 2019. The selection was based upon the companies that submitted their annual safety statistical data for calendar year 2019, based upon OSHA Recordable Injuries and Illnesses and Reportable Vehicle Incidents.

"Now more than ever it is important to recognize our industry's commitment to the safe delivery of natural gas," said AGA President and CEO Karen Harbert. "Promoting safe practices and a safety culture that holds the protection of customers, communities and employees at the highest level is essential, and our Safety Award recipients are leaders in upholding and exemplifying this at its best. I applaud their staunch commitment to safety and congratulate them for this outstanding recognition."

The following AGA member companies earned Safety Achievement Awards in 2019 by achieving the lowest motor vehicle accident rate for companies of their type.

Aspire Energy (Orrville, OH)

Florida Public Utilities (Fernandina Beach, FL)


Dominion Energy Carolina Gas Transmission (Columbia, SC)

National Gas & Oil Cooperative (Newark, OH)

The following AGA member companies earned Safety Achievement Awards in 2019 for excellence in employee safety by achieving the lowest incident rate for the number of days away from work, restricted or transferred (DART) among companies of their size and type.

Ameren Missouri (Saint Louis, MO)

MidAmerican Energy Company (Des Moines, IA)

The American Gas Association, founded in 1918, represents more than 200 local energy companies that deliver clean natural gas throughout the United States. There are more than 75 million residential, commercial and industrial natural gas customers in the U.S., of which 95 percent — more than 71 million customers — receive their gas from AGA members. Today, natural gas meets more than three-tenths of the United States' energy needs. 


Ameren's 2020 Sustainability Report Focuses on Commitment to Customers and Major Environmental, Social and Governance Topics

Ameren Corporation published a new interactive report detailing the company's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. The report, *Our Sustainability Story: Customers at the Center*, offers a comprehensive view of the actions taken on key environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters.

"Customers can count on us to know we're listening and taking actions to meet their expectations to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electric and natural gas service," said **Warner Baxter**, chairman, president and CEO, Ameren. "Our 2020 sustainability report showcases our commitment to delivering significant long-term value by, among other things, investing in clean energy and supporting the communities we serve. We do this while holding ourselves to the highest standards of business conduct."


Notable highlights of the report include:

- Addressing significant immediate and long-term needs of our communities, which include wide-ranging support during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as ongoing energy assistance support, philanthropy and apprenticeships.
- Plans to significantly increase clean, renewable energy into our generation portfolio while reducing carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions.
- Improving reliability by investing in rate-regulated energy infrastructure while, at the same time, keeping electric rates more stable for customers.
- Actions we have taken to enhance our robust risk management and governance with respect to ESG matters.

"This report clearly lays out the forward-thinking actions Ameren has taken on important ESG matters, which include reducing carbon emissions as well as helping tackle larger societal issues, such as the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion," said **Gwen Mizell**, vice president of sustainability and electrification for Ameren. "Across our company, we're integrating sustainability principles in our day-to-day operations." 

Current Issues Seminar in New Mexico September 27-30


The annual Current Issues Seminar hosted by the Center for Public Utilities at New Mexico State University will be held in the state Capitol of Santa Fe on September 27-30, 2020. Among this year's participants are some of the nation's leading experts on energy policy issues.

Registration information for the Current Issues Seminar can be obtained by contacting Jeanette Walker of the Center for Public Utilities at 505-646-4812. 

Austin EEI Convention/Expo Cancelled

This year's Annual Convention/Expo of the Edison Electric Institute (EEI) has been cancelled. The event was scheduled to be held at the JW Marriott Downtown in Austin, Texas from June 7-9.

More than 1,200 top decision-makers of domestic and international firm from energy-related fields were scheduled to be on hand to discuss critical industry issues. In addition, attendees would have been able to attend the Expo 2020 Exhibit Hall featuring new products and services.

Convention 2021 information will be available from EEI later this year. 

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