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Ameren customers: Your electric bill is going down

Lower wholesale electricity prices helps consumers

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The wholesale price of electricity is down, and Ameren customers can expect to pay a bit less for their power beginning June 1.

Part of the price reduction on wholesale power is a result of reduced demand for all forms of energy.

Ameren estimates that a typical residential customer who uses 10,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity a year will save about \$68, or, about \$6 a month.

"This is welcome news as we begin the cooling season, a time when most customers use more electricity than at other times of the year," said Stan Ogden, Ameren Illinois vice president of customer service and public relations.

Individual customer electric usage will determine the actual amount of individual residential bills.

Jim Chilsen, a spokesman for the Chicago-based Citizens Utility Board, applauded news of the drop in electricity prices.

"We're glad for Ameren customers; they get to enjoy lower electricity rates," Chilsen said.

But Chilsen also noted that CUB and other consumer groups are "locked in battle" with the utility giant to win a higher rate for electricity delivery on appeal.

In late April, the Illinois Commerce Commission rejected Ameren Illinois' request for a \$162 million rate increase. Instead, the commission approved a \$14 million in higher delivery fees.

The commission on Wednesday upheld its earlier ruling. Ameren Illinois has indicated it will ask the commission to reconsider once again.

A 2007 state law created the Illinois Power Agency to procure electricity through a competitive process on behalf of all Illinois investor-owned utilities, including Ameren Illinois. This process operates under the oversight of commission.

Through the power agency's power procurement process, Ameren Illinois has contracted for an amount of electricity that represents about one-third of its total needs for the next 12 months. Electricity supply contracts run for three years and about one-third of the total supply is procured annually to minimize the impact of possible wholesale price volatility. Contact reporter Jennifer A. Bowen at jbowen@bnd.com or 239-2667. Contact reporter Mike Fitzgerald at mfitzgerald@bnd.com or 239-2533.

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