



Citizens Utility Board

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CUB ALERTS CENTRAL, SOUTHERN IL CONSUMERS ABOUT JUNE 1 POWER PRICES

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) on Wednesday alerted consumers in Central and Southern Illinois about a decrease in Ameren Illinois' summer electricity supply rates.

As of June 1, Ameren's "price to compare"—the rate customers compare to alternative supplier offers—is roughly 4-5 percent lower than the June 2015 price. According to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC), these are the new Ameren Illinois prices over the next year:

New Rates

June – September 2016:

Zones 1, 2, 3: **5.654 cents/kilowatt-hour (kWh)***

**Note: This price includes Ameren's supply rate (4.637 cents per kWh), plus a transmission services charge (0.911 cents per kWh), plus a Supply Cost Adjustment (0.106 cents per kWh).*

October 2016-May 2017:

All Zones: **6.427 cents/kWh for the first 800 kWh; 4.7 cents per kWh for usage over 800 kWh***

**Note: The non-summer rates, October 2016 through May 2017, have not been finalized. This figure is an ICC estimate of the price.*

Ameren has estimated that customers on its supply rate who use about 10,000 kWh a year will save roughly \$1.75 a month, or \$21 over the next 12 months.

Any consumer with an alternative power supplier—including those on community power deals—should compare his or her price to Ameren's supply rates above. CUB also has a free calculator, at www.CUBPowerCalculator.com, to help consumers determine the best deal for them.

Last June, Ameren's prices shot up about 30 percent. The spike was due to an increase in capacity costs—what consumers pay to ensure power plants are able to deliver electricity on the highest-demand days of the year. Every spring, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)—the power grid operator in Central and Southern Illinois and other states—holds an auction to determine capacity costs for the next year (June 1 through May 31). In the 2015 auction, Illinois' capacity cost was roughly 50 times higher than 14 other states in MISO territory.

The increase generated questions, given that Illinois has a surplus of electricity. After calls from consumer advocates, including Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan and CUB, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) made changes to the auction process that helped secure lower prices this year.

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“We’re glad that Central and Southern Illinois consumers are paying slightly lower power prices this summer,” CUB Communications Director Jim Chilsen said. “We still have a long way to go to better protect Illinois consumers from price spikes in the electricity market, but this is a step in the right direction.”

CUB recommended the following efficiency tips to help keep summer power bills in check.

1. **Don’t crank up the AC.** Raising your thermostat by only two degrees and using a ceiling fan can lower air conditioning costs by up to 14 percent over the summer. Run fans counter-clockwise, from your position looking up at it, to create a gentle downdraft—and make sure to turn off your fan when you leave the room. (Fans cool people, not rooms.)

2. **Beat the heat.** Delay heat-producing tasks, such as dishwashing, baking, or laundry, until the cooler evening hours or early morning.

3. **Clean filters.** Clean your air conditioning unit’s filter at least once every three months. It’s an easy way to improve the unit’s performance and to save energy.

4. **Give your AC a break.** Prevent hot air from seeping in by sealing the gaps around windows and doors. Close doors to rooms that you don’t use as often. Shut blinds or shades during the sunny daytime hours to prevent your air conditioner from working harder to cool the home.

5. **Shut it off.** It’s a myth that if you go out for part of the day, you should keep the air conditioner running so it won’t have to work so hard to cool you off when you get home. You will save energy by turning off the air conditioner when you leave the house.

CUB is Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$10 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more details, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556 or visit CUB’s award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

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