



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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CUB TO NORTHWEST SUBURBS: BEWARE OF BAD ELECTRIC DEALS

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) on Thursday issued a consumer alert in seven northwest suburbs that are ending their community power deals, concerned that residents will soon face a marketing barrage from alternative suppliers pitching bad deals.

CUB has released a new publication, “CUB’s Guide to Avoiding Electric Rip-offs,” to help consumers in Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Lincolnshire, Long Grove, Palatine, Vernon Hills, and Wheeling. People can get the free guide emailed to them by visiting www.CUBHelpCenter.com.

The guide includes tips on avoiding rip-offs and a comprehensive list of alternative supplier offers and how they compare with the electricity price of the regulated utility, Commonwealth Edison.

In recent years, the seven suburbs participated in a “municipal aggregation” program in which local officials negotiate with alternative electricity suppliers to secure power deals for residents. However, the Northwest Aggregation Consortium, which manages the power deals for those communities, recently announced that it was suspending the program and sending residents back to ComEd in May. In the current market, it has become more difficult for suppliers to offer savings, compared with the electricity price of ComEd.

With the end of the community power deals in these seven suburbs, CUB is concerned that residents could be inundated with pitches from alternative suppliers peddling bad deals.

“It’s important for consumers to have good information to protect themselves from bad deals, and that’s why CUB created our ‘Guide to Avoiding Electric Rip-offs,’” CUB Communications Director Jim Chilsen said. “People should know that it’s likely that ComEd is your best bet in the current market.”

Other important information:

*Residents of the seven communities will receive a letter informing them of the change in April. They don’t have to do anything to switch back to ComEd. The change will be automatic, and it will be reflected on June bills.

*If people want to shop for an electricity supplier, they should beware of exorbitant rates, introductory rates that increase, and monthly fees.

*Residents also are advised not to provide ComEd account numbers or ComEd bills to alternative supplier sales representatives unless they are absolutely sure they want to sign up for another offer.

CUB is Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, it has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, 1-800-669-5556, or visit its award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.

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