

### Volume 278 March 20, 2012

#### Illinois communities to vote on electric rate negotiation

Voters in almost 300 cities, villages and counties across Illinois on Tuesday March 20, 2012 will get the chance to authorize local leaders to negotiate lower electric rates on their behalf.

Metro East cities including Alton, Belleville, Collinsville, Columbia, Glen Carbon and Granite City have referendums on Tuesday's ballot, following the lead of community's upstate that pooled their residents' power purchases to leverage discounts of up to 30 percent with an alternative electricity supplier.

The concept is called municipal aggregation, and for thousands of residential utility customers in Illinois, it represents the first real opportunity to realize the benefits of competition in the state's retail electric markets. Illinois deregulated the state's retail electricity markets in 1997, a measure expected to usher in lower electric rates and better service.

For most commercial and industrial electricity consumers, it already has. Most big electricity users now buy power from alternative suppliers. But the vast majority of residential and small business customers, especially downstate, are still tethered to incumbent utilities. A law enacted in 2007 allows communities to vote to pool, or aggregate, their power purchases and broker deals for lower electricity prices. But local leaders first need voter approval.

The law also gives consumers the right to opt out of municipal aggregation programs. Any savings for those who participate would apply only to the energy supply portion of electric bills, which makes up about two thirds of the overall bill. The remainder of the bill consists of electricity delivery charges and taxes.

In fact, even if municipalities in the Metro East choose a new electricity supplier, Ameren would still deliver the power via its poles and wires, maintain the lines and respond to outages. Customers would also continue to receive bills from the utility, not the new power supplier. Consumer advocates such as the Chicago-based Citizens Utility Board urge consumers to learn how their local program works, and that switching power suppliers doesn't isolate them from delivery rate increases.

CUB officials say aggregation should produce savings on electricity, at least for the next year to 16 months. Beyond that, savings could lessen or evaporate entirely as more expensive existing utility power-supply contracts expire.

#### Electricity Pricing Areas – Mar 20, 2012

##### April

On-Peak	Per kWh
Cinergy	<b>\$.02843</b>
PJM West	<b>\$.03405</b>

#### ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
<b>Mar 1- Mar 31,2011</b>	<b>\$.03668</b>
<b>April 1 – April 30</b>	<b>\$.03448</b>
<b>May1- May 31</b>	<b>\$.03954</b>
<b>June 1 - June 30</b>	<b>\$.03851</b>
<b>July 1 thru July 31</b>	<b>\$.05170</b>
<b>Aug 1 – Aug 31</b>	<b>\$.04064</b>
<b>Sep 1 - Sep 30</b>	<b>\$.03058</b>
<b>Oct 1- Oct31</b>	<b>\$.02968</b>
<b>Nov 1- Nov 30</b>	<b>\$.02816</b>
<b>Dec 1 – Dec 31</b>	<b>\$.02971</b>
<b>Jan 1 –Jan 31</b>	<b>\$.03043</b>
<b>Feb 1–Feb 29</b>	<b>\$.02963</b>
<b>Mar 1 thru Mar 19</b>	<b>\$.02839</b>

**Weather Today:** Partly cloudy. Very warm. High 83F. Winds S at 20 to 30 mph. **Tonight:** A few passing clouds. Low 63F. Winds SSE at 10 to 20 mph. **Wed:** Partly cloudy. Very warm. High 84F. Winds SSE at 15 to 25 mph. **Wed night:** Mostly cloudy skies. Low 63F. Winds SE at 5 to 10 mph. **Thu:** Partly cloudy with a stray thunderstorm. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the low 60s. **Fri:** A few thunderstorms possible. Highs in the low 70s and lows in the mid 50s. **Saturday:** Cloudy with showers. Highs in the mid 60s and lows in the low 50s.

