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A new \$72.5 million investment fund that promises to invest in innovative smart grid technology in Illinois announced its debut today at the Great Lakes Symposium on Smart Grid and the New Energy Economy in Chicago.

The Illinois Science & Energy Innovation Foundation is being funded by utilities Commonwealth Edison Co. and Ameren Illinois as well as by ratepayers as part of legislation passed last year by the Illinois General Assembly.

The law allows utilities to spend up to \$3.2 billion modernizing the state's electrical grid, including more than \$1 billion in smart grid technology. The fund was one of several measures in the controversial legislation designed to win over the support of business leaders, startups, community organizations and environmentalists.

Much of the law is devoted to overhauling the regulatory system that decides electric rate hikes for consumers -- changes that mean millions of dollars per year to ComEd and Ameren Illinois. The utilities say the efficiencies gained from the new system will ultimately mean cheaper rates for consumers.

The investment fund, which will offer grants, loans and contracts to groups working on smart grid technology, will be overseen by a nine-member board set up to advise the utilities during smart grid deployment, along with one trustee from each of the utilities. A nonvoting trustee from the Clean Energy Trust is to give advice about early state investment in smart grid projects.

In addition, Jason Blumberg, an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business and a former member of McKinsey & Co.'s energy and climate change leadership team, will act as CEO and managing director of the fund. Sara Hochman, who previously worked at the renewable energy division of General Electric and as an adviser to entrepreneurs in the energy space, will also act as a managing director.

About \$22.5 million is funded by the utilities to pay for new and emerging technology. The rest of the fund, 70 percent of which will be paid for by electricity customers through their bills, is to be used for the purpose of educating consumers about the smart grid and smart devices.

"This new entity fills a gap that exists in the Illinois venture capital market today," said Mark Harris, president and CEO of the Illinois Science and Technology Coalition, which was instrumental in the fund's formation. "It is the only fund focuses on catalyzing the next game changing smart grid and energy ideas."

Electricity Pricing – Oct 2, 2012

	On-Peak	Off-Peak
2012	\$0.03516	\$0.02570
2013	\$0.03968	\$0.02627
2014	\$0.04094	\$0.02723

LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Sep, 2011	\$0.03058
Oct, 2011	\$0.02968
Nov, 2011	\$0.02816
Dec, 2011	\$0.02971
Jan, 2012	\$0.03043
Feb, 2012	\$0.02963
Mar, 2012	\$0.02894
April, 2012	\$0.02659
May, 2012	\$0.02816
June, 2012	\$0.03089
July, 2012	\$0.04303
Aug, 2012	\$0.03112
Sep 1 thru Sep 30	\$0.03034

Extended Temperature Forecast:

Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	68	66	78	57	54
Low	57	56	43	43	36

