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Midwest should have ample electricity for hottest summer days

A national electricity reliability organization is forecasting electricity supply challenges in Texas and southern California this summer but says the Midwest region should continue to have more than enough power to meet its needs.

The North American Electric Reliability Corp. published its summer outlook this week. The Midwest regional grid coordinator, now known as Midcontinent Independent System Operator, said it expects to have 28% more power than will be needed on the hottest summer day. Demand is expected to peak at 91,532 megawatts in the region, but utilities are projected to have more than 117,000 megawatts available to meet that demand. The 28% cushion is roughly double the required cushion of 14.2%, according to MISO, based in Carmel, Ind.

In eastern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, utilities are forecasting total demand of 11,839 megawatts this summer -- and will have 15,324 megawatts available to meet those needs. That gives the region a 29% cushion, even with the shutdown of the 578-megawatt Kewaunee Power Station, the Midwest ISO said.

The strong power outlook was one of the factors leading We Energies to discontinue its "energy partners" program, which gave customers a \$50 summertime discount if they agreed to let the Milwaukee utility turn off their air conditioners during periods of heavy electricity use.

We Energies recently notified customers of the change, which was approved by state regulators late last year. MISO said its models don't forecast any scenarios under which customers will be asked to turn their power off this summer.

Expanded electricity supplies thanks to construction of new power plants coupled with the loss of large energy-intensive manufacturers during the Great Recession have combined to give the region ample supply. With the price of natural gas remaining low and new environmental standards being implemented across the country, utilities are moving to retire or retrofit aging coal-fired power plants to reduce air pollution. But those moves shouldn't cause any reliability concerns this summer, the Midwest and national reports found.

Electricity Pricing – May 14 2013 Com Ed LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
May, 2012	\$.02816
June, 2012	\$.03089
July, 2012	\$.04303
Aug, 2012	\$.03112
Sep, 2012	\$.03034
Oct, 2012	\$.02829
Nov, 2012	\$.03327
Dec, 2012	\$.03081
Jan, 2013	\$.03111
Feb, 2013	\$.03219
Mar, 2013	\$.03665
April, 2013	\$.03821
May 1–May 2013	\$.03370

Extended Temperature Forecast: **Chicago Area**

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	83	71	55	64	65
Low	65	54	46	49	54

