

ARKANSAS  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



CUSTOMER EDUCATION GUIDELINES  
ELECTRIC MARKET

## CUSTOMER EDUCATION GUIDELINES

### Section 1. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the state-wide Customer Education Plan shall be to:

- A. provide information to customers to increase awareness about opportunities available in the retail open access electric market through appropriate and cost effective use of print and broadcast media, corporate publications, Internet web sites, public presentations, and direct mail to reach the broadest spectrum of electric customers.
- B. provide customers with appropriate and cost effective information about customer protections and electricity provider rules that will apply in the retail open access electric market.
- C. provide appropriate, cost effective, and easily accessible sources of public information regarding issues related to retail open access.
- D. measure public understanding of the issues, rights and responsibilities before implementation of the Plan and periodically throughout the transition to retail open access.
- E. provide information in a competitively neutral manner.

### Section 2. Participation in Customer Education Plan

All electric utilities shall participate with Staff in the implementation and delivery of the Customer Education Plan in the following aspects:

- A. developing the Request for Proposal for the communications

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consultants;

- B. evaluating the proposals submitted by prospective communications consultants;
- C. selecting the communications consultant(s);
- D. monitoring the progress of the communications consultant's development of the Customer Education Plan;
- E. reviewing all invoices submitted by the communications consultant; and
- F. delivering the message developed by the communications consultant through various means which may include bill inserts and brochures.

### **Section 3. Funding of the Customer Education Plan**

Electric utilities shall fund the Customer Education Plan, including the services of any communications consultant and the implementation actions contained in the detailed Customer Education Plan. The electric utilities shall establish a reasonable allocation methodology to assign the cost of the Customer Education Plan to each electric utility.

### **Section 4. Conduct of the Customer Education Plan**

The Customer Education Plan shall be conducted in two phases that will continue through the transition period.

- A. In Phase I, Staff will visit customer groups across the state regarding retail open access, and Staff, the electric utilities, and other interested parties will engage in a collaborative effort to develop basic, introductory brochures to introduce customers to the concept of retail open access.
- B. Phase II will be an intensive detailed program which will include the bulk of the education activity.

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- (1) The Staff-retained research consultant, UALR-IEA, will assess customer awareness of electric choice and evaluate what educational methods/media are needed to reach the specific groups of customers. UALR-IEA will conduct by mid-summer of 2000 a benchmark survey of customer awareness of retail open access to determine the most effective means of communications for customer education purposes.
  - (2) The need to retain additional assistance to manage other aspects of the Customer Education Plan, such as a central call center to handle customer questions and concerns regarding retail open access, will be evaluated.
  - (3) A communications consultant shall be contracted with to develop the details of the Customer Education Plan and direct the implementation during Phase 11. Staff shall lead a collaborative effort in early summer of 2000 with all interested parties to develop a Request for Proposal for a communications consultant which will be disseminated to prospective bidders by mid-summer. The communications consultant will be hired in the early Fall, 2000.
  - (4) The educational materials developed should include, but not be limited to, information on the following items: standard service package; itemized billing; reliability and safety; customer

protections and rights; and, confidentiality of customer-specific information.

### **Section 5. Reporting Requirements**

Staff shall provide the Commission with progress reports when each of the following goals have been reached:

- A. first and as soon as practicable, an outline of the administrative structure Staff will use to (1) oversee the consultants' activities, (2) report to the utilities responsible for consultant payment, (3) process input from the utilities and other parties for the consultants, and (4) administer the payments for the consultants, call center, and other implementation charges;
- B. the scope and objectives of the "Request for Proposal";
- C. the retention of a communications consultant to include the name of the consultant retained;
- D. the timeline for each step of the Customer Education Plan; and
- E. periodic progress reports regarding the implementation of the Customer Education Plan.