

Share Bulletin



## Safe Digging Month

Did you know Indiana law requires you to have your yard marked for underground utility lines before you can put in a mailbox, build a fence, or plant a tree? April is Safe Digging Month across the United States, an important annual reminder as the weather starts to warm up.

Even small digging projects require utility markings because underground lines are often shallower than you'd expect.

Contact Indiana 811 at least two business days before digging. There is no charge to have your lines marked and the 8-1-1 call center is open around the clock, seven days a week. You can also complete the form at [Indiana811.org](https://www.indiana811.org). Markings are effective for 20 days.

## Spring Cleaning

As Hoosiers start watering lawns and using the air conditioner more often, it's important to remember the steps that will add up to savings.

- If you water plants or the lawn, do so in the mornings or evenings to prevent evaporation.
- Check your sprinkler systems to ensure you don't have leaks.
- Set your water heater to 115 or 120 degrees.
- Dust your thermostat. Make sure all vents are clean and uncovered.
- Be sure your HVAC unit has a clean filter.
- Set your ceiling fans to turn counterclockwise.

Get more [water savings](#) and [energy savings](#) tips on our website or by finding us on social media.

## Marion Municipal Water

An IURC public field hearing in the [Marion water rate case](#) has been scheduled for April 26. It will start at 6:00 p.m. at the Marion Public Library (600 S. Washington St.) in Meeting Room B. Comments presented at the field hearing will carry the same weight as [written consumer comments](#) the OUCC receives by May 2.

The OUCC is scheduled to file testimony on May 9.

Marion is proposing a gradual increase to be phased in over the next five years. Under the City's pending proposal, monthly water charges for a residential customer using 700 cubic feet (approximately 5,200 gallons) would rise from \$27.25 to \$41.35 when fully implemented in 2028.

## NIPSCO Electric Rates

A pending settlement agreement in the Northern Indiana Public Service Co. (NIPSCO) electric [rate case](#) would reduce the utility's request by approximately \$103 million. The OUCC, industrial customers, and additional parties have signed on to the agreement. Most of the revenue will pay for renewable generation resources and infrastructure improvements that have previously received Commission approval.

Any settlement before the IURC may be approved, denied, or modified. To approve any agreement, the IURC must find that it is in the public interest.

NIPSCO's original request would have raised an average monthly residential electric bill – at 668 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month – by \$19.69. Under the agreement, the increase would be limited to \$12.37 when fully phased in next year.

A final Commission order is expected this summer.

## Additional Cases

### Energy

- An Apr. 11 evidentiary hearing is scheduled on CenterPoint Energy's \$636 million wind generation proposal, with the OUCC [recommending](#) denial. According to the utility's testimony, the proposal would increase a monthly residential electric bill (1,000 kWh) by \$19.86, not including offsets from the potential sale of renewable energy credits.
- Citizens Thermal Energy has filed a [new rate case](#) for steam utility service to commercial and industrial customers in Indianapolis. OUCC testimony is due June 6. The request would not affect rates for other Citizens utilities.
- [Duke Energy](#), [NIPSCO](#), and [CenterPoint Energy](#) customers would see significant rate reductions under the utilities' pending and most recent fuel adjustment (FAC) cases. The OUCC filed testimony in March on the requests, which utilities file every three months. OUCC testimony on [AES Indiana's](#) requested reduction is due later this month. An FAC can raise or reduce bills based on changes in wholesale costs for coal, natural gas, and purchased power.

### Water/Wastewater

- [Indiana American Water Co.](#) has filed a new rate request, which would increase the utility's annual revenues by about 31 percent. OUCC attorneys and analysts are reviewing the utility's proposal with testimony to be filed this summer.
- Community Utilities of Indiana has filed a [motion](#) seeking reconsideration of the Commission's recent rate order. It has also filed a notice of appeal. The OUCC and Lakes of the Four Seasons Property Owners' Association have [responded](#) to the reconsideration motion, asking the IURC to not change its order, which significantly reduced the utility's rate requests.
- Fort Wayne's municipal water financing request has received Commission [approval](#). The OUCC filed testimony supporting the plan, which includes \$13 million in long-term debt for the replacement of customer-owned lead service lines.



After a 35-year legal career, the OUCC's Jeff Reed retired at the end of March.

Jeff practiced law in the Army for five years and spent another five in the private sector, including several years w/ Bose McKinney & Evans. He has spent more than 25 years at the OUCC as a friend, mentor, and tireless advocate. His passion for helping ratepayers has always been infectious and we are thankful for his many years of dedication. Jeff's retirement plans include traveling and spending more time with family. We wish him all the best!

## Our Mission

To represent all Indiana consumers to ensure quality, reliable utility services at the most reasonable prices possible through dedicated advocacy, consumer education, & creative problem solving.

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