



OFFICE OF THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY OFFERING LOWER THAN MARKET ELECTRICITY RATES

Champaign County is pleased to announce we have renewed our municipal electricity aggregation program **below** the utility rate with Constellation New Energy. The County's primary goal is to protect our residents from the continued volatility in electric supply rates.

Since the inception of the program over a decade ago, every community has realized savings for their residents over the length of the program. The residents in the Champaign County's program have saved nearly \$2,000,000 during the life of the program. While there is no guarantee, the success of the program speaks for itself.

Since February 2023, the County's residents and small businesses participating in the municipal electricity aggregation program have been receiving rates of \$0.0999 from their current supplier, Energy Harbor. The new contract will be with Constellation New Energy, a locally based company. The new rate will be \$0.0807, which equates to a \$0.0192 savings per kilowatt hour (kWh) using the current program rate. The savings for an average account using 800 kwh will amount to over \$16.00 of monthly savings for those accounts currently participating in the aggregation program. Also, the delivery rate will change from the higher summer rate period to lower non-summer rate period which will result in **additional savings**.

Unlike our previous contracts for the aggregation program, Champaign County, along with their consultant Good Energy, have deliberately secured the new rate for a shorter period due to the uncertainty in the energy market. The new shorter program will commence on the December 2024 meter read date and will continue through the May 2025 meter read date. This new 5-month program rate is a fully fixed rate and will not change during that timeframe. A new follow-on rate will be negotiated with suppliers prior to the expiration in May 2025. Meanwhile, the utility rate can change throughout the period and is scheduled for an annual change in January 2025, which in the past several years has been an increase. The County aggregation program rate provides protection against higher rates as well as stability. For while those participating in the program since its inception have had only 7 rate changes since 2012, the Utility has had 30 rate changes.

Although this program is designed to protect our residents from the volatility in the energy market and provide insurance against large increases in rates as we experienced in 2021 and 2022, it also provides the ability to opt-out of the program at any time without penalty if the account holder desires. An opt-out letter will be mailed to all eligible residents within the County starting October 17, 2024. If the account holder desires to continue participating in the program, then they need do nothing with the opt-out notice and they will be automatically enrolled. If the account holder chooses not to participate in the program, there are several ways to do this. Simply return the opt-

out notice by mail, call the new Supplier, Constellation New Energy at (833) 636-8357, or go to the website as referenced in the letter. If residents have questions about the program, it's important they do not call the County, the County cannot opt them out of the program. Again, they may call Constellation New Energy direct at (833) 636-8357 or call with any questions on Good Energy's direct line to speak to Vicki Browning at 844-686-4244.

In addition to the opt-out letter from Constellation New Energy, each account holder may receive a notice from Ameren that their current supplier contract with Energy Harbor is expiring, and that they must make a new choice in suppliers. Don't be alarmed with the letter, it is part of the process required by the State of Illinois. Again, the opt-out letter remedies any letter received from Ameren. If residents and small businesses wish to continue participating in the program, they simply do nothing. They will be automatically enrolled when the program transitions to the new supplier in December 2024. Lastly, Ameren will also send a letter confirming the account holder has chosen Constellation New Energy as their new supplier, providing another opportunity to decline enrollment. Unless account holders actively opt-out of the program they are automatically enrolled.

We are fortunate to partner with Good Energy, the largest municipal aggregation consultant in the US, whose headquarters are in New York, and have regional offices in Peoria and Edwardsville, IL.

More than ever before, especially during these times of newly mandated clean air standards, global unrest, extreme weather disasters, and increasing volatility within the energy market, the Champaign County officials feel an obligation to give our residents an option to help reduce their energy costs and protect them during these uncertain times.

Questions or concerns about the municipal aggregation program can be addressed via email at gecsi@goodenergy.com or by phone at 844-686-4244.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How can a community enroll residents without their approval?**

The aggregation program was voted on and passed by the residents of Champaign County in November 2012 by referendum of the electors. The referendum stated:

"Shall tChampaign County, Illinois, have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers who have not opted out of such program?

YES / NO.

- **Who is eligible for the municipal aggregation ?**

Residential and small commercial customers (under 15000 kWh per year usage) located in the participating governmental entity boundaries may participate. Customers enrolled in real time pricing, Power Smart Pricing, electric space heat rate, or already being served by an alternative retail electric supplier are eligible under the law but are not automatically enrolled. If you are in one of these programs or with a different supplier, you will need to review your pricing and contractual obligations in order to determine which options are available to you at this time.

- **What action must I take to participate in the aggregation program and I want to have my electric supply included in the program?**

Each eligible account holder will receive an opt-out letter. The account holders do not need to take any action to participate in the aggregation program and to get the negotiated electric supply rate.

- **How do I opt-out of an aggregation program?**

The chosen supplier will send opt-out notices to all eligible residents and eligible small businesses within the municipality or county. You will need to fill out and return the opt-out notice to be excluded from the aggregation program. You may also do so by phone or on the supplier website.

- **Who do I call if my power goes out?**

You continue to call your local Utility company which is Ameren Illinois. Ameren Illinois provides the delivery services for your electricity, delivering the electricity to your home, and is responsible for service and reliability issues, regardless of whom you choose for your electric supplier.

- **What does opt-out aggregation mean for customers that already have a contract with a supplier or are on the Utility's real time pricing programs?**

If you are enrolled with a different alternative supplier or participate in one of the Utility's residential real-time pricing programs at the time the opt-out notices are being sent out, you will not be included in your municipality's or county's aggregation program. You may receive a different notification letter (opt-in) about the program than your neighbors, explaining that your electric supply will not be included in the program unless you request it to be. We suggest you check your rates and look to see if there are any penalties involved by canceling your current program.

- **Who will send out my monthly bill and who do I pay? Do I still only get one bill?**

Yes, you will continue to receive one monthly bill from your Utility. The bill will include the charges for electricity supplied by us, as well as the delivery service charges from your Utility.

- **Can I stay on budget billing?**

Yes, your budget billing will not be affected by your participation in this program.

- **What if I decide to opt-out after the opt-out period?**

You may opt-out anytime during the term of the agreement with **NO** fee. However, if you opt-out and remain out of the program for a period of 60 days or more without choosing a new alternative supplier, you will be required by the Utility to stay with the Utility for one year regardless of the rate.

- **Do Municipal Electric Aggregations really work?**

Yes, the programs Good Energy LP oversee in Illinois have been very successful in several ways.

1. Nearly 80% of all eligible residential and small businesses participate in the programs.
2. Good Energy LP has secured the lowest group rate of any program in Ameren Utility history.
3. With our longer-term fixed supply rate pricing program, we have avoided the volatility in the energy market.
4. With our fixed pricing programs, residents know what their supply rate will be. This makes forecasting and budgeting households much easier.
5. Throughout the length of the program, participating customers have saved millions of dollars on energy costs. This benefits the residents and the area. It allows residents to purchase items they would much rather purchase, other than electricity. Allowing them to spend the savings in their local community therefore benefiting the overall economic impact for the area.

- **How does municipal aggregations affect solar programs such as community solar and net solar participants?**

Community solar customers can participate in the aggregation program and earn any discounts allocated to them. Those discounts will be applied to the aggregation program rate instead of the Utility rate.

- **How do new residents enroll in the aggregation program?**

New residents or residents moving to new addresses within their community have two options to re-enroll. First, they may contact the aggregation Supplier by phone, email, or on their website and opt into the program. Two, periodically during the program the supplier will request a list of newly eligible accounts. Those customers will receive new opt-out notices and will automatically be enrolled if they do not opt-out of the program. We urge customers to enroll on their own and not wait for the supplier opt-out, which may take several months.

- **If I have previously opted out of the aggregation, do I have to opt out again?**

Yes, new opt outs are sent out to customers each time there is a rate change, or a new supplier is chosen. State regulations require every customer who is eligible to participate in the program must receive new opt out notices even if they previously opted out of the program.

- **Does the aggregation prevent all portions of my bill from going up during the program period?**

There are two portions of customer power bills, supply and delivery. Aggregation programs can only negotiate and bid the supply rate. The Utility company sets all delivery rates which are the same for both participating aggregation customers and non-participating customers.