

Public Service Commission to Hold Town Hall Meetings on Black Hills Energy Rate Increase

LINCOLN---

The Public Service Commission announced that it will hold town hall meetings at locations in Black Hills Energy service territory from March 29th through April 1st. At the meetings, customers can learn more about the company's proposal and express their views.

Black Hills Energy is requesting an increase in its customer service and distribution charges, which include costs of operating and maintaining the natural gas system. The affected rates do not include the cost of gas, which is a separate, unregulated charge.

At the town hall meetings, executives from Black Hills Energy, the Public Advocate and members of the Commission will provide a brief presentation, explaining the proposal and the rate case process. The public will be invited to comment and ask questions.

Commissioner Tim Schram of Gretna said, "I strongly encourage anyone who has an interest in their natural gas rates to attend one of the meetings. We want this process to be open and accessible to Nebraskans."

Commissioner Rod Johnson of Sutton reiterated, "We want to hear from customers of Black Hills Energy. The town hall meetings are a great opportunity to ask questions and speak in person with a Commissioner and other representatives."

The schedule of town hall meetings is as follows:

Monday, March 29, 2010:

- 10:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 444 South Main, West Point
- 1:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 218 South 16th Street, Blair
- 4:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 210 West Mission Avenue, Bellevue
- 6:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 8116 Park View Boulevard, La Vista

Tuesday, March 30, 2010:

- 5:30 Nebraska Public Service Commission, Hearing Room, Lincoln

Wednesday, March 31, 2010:

- 5:30 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 2304 Silver, Ashland

Thursday, April 1, 2010:

- 10:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 309 Madison Avenue, Norfolk
- 1:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1369 25th Avenue, Columbus
- 6:00 City Council Chambers, City Hall, 100 East 4th, York

Beginning May 24th, the Commission will hold a formal hearing at its offices in Lincoln. The purpose of the formal hearing is to receive evidence and testimony regarding the proposal.

Customers are represented by the Public Advocate, an attorney with experience in natural gas matters. Lincoln lawyer Roger Cox was first appointed to the office in 2003, and has advocated on behalf of customers in all rate cases in front of the Commission.

Following the formal hearing in May, Commissioners will make a final determination on the company's proposal. A decision is anticipated in mid-August.

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