

Consumer News... For You! September 2022

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SEPTEMBER SAVINGS

Since September is the 9th month of the year, here are 9 reminders:

1. Consider a home energy audit through your utility or [online](#).
2. Check toilets for leaks on a regular basis.
3. Consider a water-efficient showerhead. It will pay for itself in a few months.
4. Swap old lightbulbs for LEDs.
5. Keep exhaust fans off.
6. Water lawns & plants in the early morning or late evening to minimize evaporation.
7. Change your HVAC filter regularly.
8. Set your water heater at 115 or 120 degrees.
9. When purchasing new appliances, consider products with the [WaterSense](#) & [Energy Star](#) labels for maximum savings.

Interested in additional tips? The OUCC has more info on [water](#) and [energy](#) savings!

AES INDIANA

State law allows major electric utilities to adjust rates regularly to account for changes in generating fuel costs, which can be passed through to customers on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The adjustments can raise or lower rates & are reviewed by the OUCC before the IURC gives final approval. Utilities must show that they have shopped prudently in the competitive wholesale markets. Electricity costs, in general, are up nationwide due to increased prices for natural gas & coal.

AES Indiana's most recent fuel cost adjustment would have raised an average residential bill by \$24.39 as originally proposed. However, the OUCC recommended spreading the cost recovery out over a longer than normal period, reducing the monthly billing impact. This advocacy led to an \$8.60 reduction in the increase, with the [Commission's order](#) issued in late August.

In a separate docket, the OUCC is recommending denial of about \$41.5 million in proposed cost pass-throughs related to the recent 11-month outage at AES Indiana's [Eagle Valley Generating Station](#).

The OUCC offers a [YouTube video](#) with more info on the various parts of a typical electric bill.

WESTFIELD GAS

In a newly filed case, [Citizens Gas of Westfield](#) is seeking its first base rate increase since 2017. According to the utility's testimony, the increase would add approximately \$165 to the annual bill for a typical residential customer. OUCC attorneys and technical experts are reviewing the utility's testimony & exhibits, & expect to file testimony on Dec. 2. [Written consumer comments](#) are invited through Nov. 28. The case focuses solely on Westfield & would not affect Citizens customers in Marion County.

CASE UPDATES

Energy

- The OUCC has filed testimony on [Duke Energy's quarterly fuel adjustment](#), recommending a longer cost recovery period that would reduce the impact on monthly bills.
- The IURC's hearing on CenterPoint Energy's request to [securitize costs](#) for the A.B. Brown Generating Station is scheduled to start Sept. 7.
- OUCC testimony on Northern Indiana Public Service Company's (NIPSCO's) [plan to remove coal ash](#) at its Michigan City Generating Station is now due by Sept. 7.
- NIPSCO has notified the Commission of plans to file a new electric rate case on or after Sept. 15.

Water

- All hearings in the [American Suburban Utilities](#) rate case have concluded. The OUCC and ASU must submit their respective closing arguments in writing by Sept. 30.
- The OUCC has filed its proposed order in the [Community Utilities of Indiana](#) water & sewer rate case. An average residential water & sewer bill would rise by \$61.54 under the utility's request. The increase would be limited to \$22.94 under the OUCC's recommendations. A Commission order is expected this fall.
- [Brown County Water Utility](#) & the OUCC have reached a settlement agreement in the utility's pending rate case. Rates would rise by about 6.9 percent under the agreement. Brown County Water had requested an increase ranging from 9.9 to 14.4 percent. The agreement is pending before the IURC which may approve, deny, or modify any settlement it considers.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rate cases are similar to civil court cases. But due to the technical nature of utility regulation, utilities, the OUCC, & intervening parties submit their testimony in writing before the evidentiary hearing. A utility's initial filing may include hundreds or even thousands of pages of testimony, exhibits, charts, graphs, & accounting work papers.

The typical rate case in Indiana takes 10 months & has a number of filing deadlines. It also includes a 3 1/2 month written consumer comment period. Our rate case timeline walks through the steps in both [PDF](#) & [video](#) format.

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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