

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

<p>IN RE:</p> <p>NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRIC UTILITY CUSTOMER NOTICE FOR INFORMATION AND COMPLAINTS [199 IAC 19.4(1) AND 20.4(2)]</p>	<p>DOCKET NO. RMU-06-9</p>
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ORDER COMMENCING RULE MAKING

(Issued October 19, 2006)

Pursuant to the authority of Iowa Code §§ 17A.4, 476.2, and 476.8, the Utilities Board (Board) proposes to amend 199 IAC 19.4(1) and 20.4(2) to require large rate-regulated utilities to provide monthly information about how natural gas and electric customers may contact the Board for assistance or information as described in the "Notice of Intended Action" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference. The amendments are being proposed to update contact information for the Board including the Board's e-mail address and to require that rate-regulated utilities with over 50,000 customers in Iowa provide the Board's contact information to customers on a monthly basis. This docket has been identified as Docket No. RMU-06-9.

Historically, rate-regulated utilities have included information about how to contact the Board on monthly billing statements. This was done voluntarily, since paragraph 19.4(1)"i" and subrule 20.4(2) only require the information to be provided

to customers on an annual basis. Recently, the Board was informed that one of the rate-regulated utilities decided to remove this information from the monthly bill. The Board considers publishing the Board contact information on monthly bills as an important and useful means of communicating information about contacting the Board to customers. Even with the monthly notice, many customers are still not aware they can contact the Board for information and help in resolution of problems with a utility. The Board considers the removal of the information from customer monthly bills to be counterproductive since it limits information customers can use to help in resolving utility problems.

Under current practice, when the Board's Customer Service section is contacted by a customer, staff asks if the customer has contacted the utility. Board staff does not become involved in resolving any problem until after the customer has been in contact with the utility. When it does become involved, Board staff usually can provide information to the customer that will help resolve the problem. By providing this service, the Board helps both the utility and the customer and usually prevents an escalation of the problem. Providing notice of the Board's contact information will allow this practice to continue, which will be beneficial to customers and utilities.

The Board understands that placing the contact information on the customer bill will not add significant additional cost to those affected utilities not currently doing this voluntarily. If any party believes this understanding is not correct, that entity

should include in its comments a cost estimate for adding the contact information to the customer bill, with supporting documentation.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. A rule making proceeding identified as Docket No. RMU-06-9 is commenced for the purpose of receiving comments on the proposed amendments and rescission in the notice attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference in this order.

2. The Executive Secretary is directed to submit for publication in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin a notice in the form attached to and incorporated by reference in this order.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ John R. Norris

/s/ Diane Munns

ATTEST:

/s/ Judi K. Cooper
Executive Secretary

/s/ Curtis W. Stamp

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 19th day of October, 2006.

UTILITIES DIVISION [199]

Notice of Intended Action

Pursuant to Iowa Code sections 17A.4, 476.2, and 476.8, the Utilities Board (Board) gives notice that on October 19, 2006, the Board issued an order in Docket No. RMU-06-9, In re: Natural Gas and Electric Utility Customer Notice For Information and Complaints [199 IAC 19.4(1) and 20.4(2)], "Order Commencing Rule Making." The proposed amendments update Board contact information and require rate-regulated utilities with more than 50,000 customers to include the contact information on monthly bills. The order containing the background and support for this rule making can be found on the Board's Web site, www.state.ia.us/iub.

Pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)"a" and "b," any interested person may file a written statement of position pertaining to the proposed amendments. The statement must be filed on or before November 28, 2006, by filing an original and ten copies in a form substantially complying with 199 IAC 2.2(2). All written statements should clearly state the author's name and address and should make specific reference to this docket. All communications should be directed to the Executive Secretary, Iowa Utilities Board, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069.

No oral presentation is scheduled at this time. Pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.4(1)"b," an oral presentation may be requested of the Board on its own motion

after reviewing the statements may determine that an oral presentation should be scheduled.

These amendments are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 17A.4, 476.2, and 476.8.

The following amendments are proposed.

Item 1. Amend paragraph 199—19.4(1)"i" as follows:

i. Promptly and courteously resolve inquiries ~~Inquiries~~ for information or complaints ~~to a utility shall be resolved promptly and courteously.~~ Employees who receive customer telephone calls and office visits shall be qualified and trained in screening and resolving complaints, to avoid a preliminary recitation of the entire complaint to employees without ability and authority to act. The employee shall provide identification to the customer ~~which~~ that will enable the customer to reach that employee again if needed.

Each utility shall notify its customers, by bill insert or notice on the bill form, of the address and telephone number where a utility representative qualified to assist in resolving the complaint can be reached. The bill insert or notice shall include the following statement: "If (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board ~~Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, by calling 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319,~~ (515)281-3839 or toll-free (877)565-4450, or by writing to 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by e-mail to iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us."

The bill insert or notice for municipal utilities shall include the following statement: "If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety, or renewable energy,

and (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, by calling (515)281-3839, or toll-free (877)565-4450, by writing to 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by e-mail to iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us."

The bill insert or notice on the bill will be provided monthly by utilities serving more than 50,000 Iowa retail customers and no less than annually for all other natural gas utilities. Any utility which does not use the standard ~~form contained herein~~ statement described in this paragraph shall file its proposed ~~form~~ statement in its tariff for approval. A utility, ~~which~~ that bills by postcard may place an advertisement in a local newspaper of general circulation or a customer newsletter instead of mailing. The advertisement must be of a type size that is easily legible and conspicuous and must contain the information set out above.

Item 2. Amend subrule **199 IAC 20.4(2)** as follows:

20.4(2) Customer contact employee qualifications. Promptly and courteously resolve inquiries ~~Inquiries~~ for information or complaints ~~to a utility shall be resolved promptly and courteously~~. Employees who receive customer telephone calls and office visits shall be qualified and trained in screening and resolving complaints, to avoid a preliminary recitation of the entire complaint to employees without ability and authority to act. The employee shall provide identification to the customer ~~which~~ that will enable the customer to reach that employee again if needed.

Each utility shall notify its customers, by bill insert or notice on the bill form, of the address and telephone number where a utility representative qualified to assist in

resolving the complaint can be reached. The bill insert or notice shall include the following statement: "If (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, by calling 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, (515)281-3839 or toll-free (877)565-4450, or by writing to 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by e-mail to iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us."

The bill insert or notice for municipal utilities shall include the following statement: "If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety, or renewable energy, and (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, by calling (515)281-3839, or toll-free (877)565-4450, by writing to 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by e-mail to iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us."

The bill insert or notice for non-rate-regulated rural electric cooperatives shall include the following statement: "If your complaint is related to the (utility name) service rather than its rates, and (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Iowa Utilities Board Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, by calling (515)281-3839, or toll-free (877)565-4450, by writing to 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, or by e-mail to iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us."

The bill insert or notice on the bill will be provided monthly by utilities serving more than 50,000 Iowa retail customers and no less than annually for all other electric utilities. Any utility which does not use the standard statement form

~~contained herein~~ described in this subrule shall file its proposed ~~form~~ statement in its tariff for approval. A utility ~~which~~ that bills by postcard may place an advertisement in a local newspaper of general circulation or a customer newsletter instead of mailing. The advertisement must be of a type size that is easily legible and conspicuous and must contain the information set out above.

October 19, 2006

/s/ John R. Norris

John R. Norris

Chairman