

IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Case No. PAC-E-05-1

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Dates for PacifiCorp workshops, hearings announced

Boise – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has announced dates for workshops, public hearings and a technical hearing in connection with PacifiCorp's application for an average 12.5 percent rate increase.

Public workshops, which allow citizens to ask questions of commission staff, are scheduled for May 18 at the Best Western CottonTree Inn in Rexburg and on May 19 at the Robinson Building in Preston. Both workshops begin at 7 p.m.

Public hearings, which allow members of the public to testify in front of the three commissioners, have been scheduled for Aug. 15 at the Senior Citizen Center in Rigby and for Aug. 16 at the Gem Valley Performing Arts Center in Grace. Both hearings begin at 7 p.m.

The technical hearing will begin Aug. 2 at 9:30 a.m. and continue on Aug. 3 and Aug. 4, if necessary, at the commission hearing room at 472 W. Washington St. in Boise.

PacifiCorp, which does business as Utah Power in southeastern Idaho, applied to the commission last January for an average 12.5 percent rate increase to be effective by Sept. 16. Because other surcharges expire on that same date, the net effect is an average increase of 9.2 percent, according to the company.

The commission's staff of attorneys, auditors and engineers has already begun a thorough examination of the company's proposal. The commission is free to accept, reject or modify the company's proposal.

If approved, the rate hike would increase annual revenues by \$15.1 million. The company claims the additional revenue is needed to meet expenses caused by inflation; employee pensions and health care; and investments in new generation. The company is asking to earn a return on equity of up to 11.125 percent. It is currently earning an ROE of 5.8 percent. The company has not had an adjustment to its ROE or existing base rate structure since 1986.

Representatives of commission staff will attend the workshops in May to explain the company's application and take questions from the public. At the public hearings in August, the three commissioners will hear formal testimony from the public. Questions are not permitted during public hearings. At the technical hearings, witnesses called by attorneys from the company, commission staff and intervenors, ask questions posed by attorneys from all the parties. The technical hearings are open to the public although members of the public do not testify.

Intervenors in the case include the Monsanto Company, the Idaho Irrigation Pumpers Association, Agrium, Inc., J.R. Simplot Co., the Community Action Partnership Association of Idaho and Timothy Shurtz of Firth.

PacifiCorp's application can be viewed on the commission's Web page at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click on "PacifiCorp rate case" under "Hot Items" on the top right-hand corner of the page. Copies of the application are also available at commission headquarters at 472 W. Washington St. in Boise and at company offices in Rexburg, Preston, Shelley and Montpelier.