

UI to occupy nearly 50 acres on Marsh Hill

By Bridget Albert
Editor

ORANGE - The business news keeps getting better for the town of Orange.

Not only has the United Illuminating Company purchased 34 acres of the old Showcase Cinemas on Marsh Hill Road but last week UI signed a 40-year lease for an additional 22 adjacent acres.

"We have leased almost 22 acres in close proximity to the Showcase Cinemas," UI Spokeswoman Anita Steeves said.

The leased property belongs to the Foyer/Smith Family, Zeoli said.

"The Foyers have had many offers over the years," Zeoli said. "They wanted to find something that they felt was a proper long term fit to the town. When I met with them to put this deal together they didn't jump, they met and discussed it and worked it out with the family," Zeoli said.

Zeoli said they were adamant in only leasing it while UI wanted to buy it.

Zeoli said this is the biggest single economic development that has come to town since the Dorothy Berger administration landed the gas company.

Paul Grimmer, executive director of the Orange Economic Development Corporation, was pleased with the recent agreement.

"This is absolutely a no-brainer in terms of what it means," Grimmer said.

"Whenever you add 500 plus employees to the community, a lot of good things will happen economically," Grimmer said.

Steeves said the cinema property will house field employees including line crews, meters and dispatch. The leased property will have a building for office functions.

Steeves said the existing cinema will be demolished and a new building will be built keeping the existing footprint.

She said she anticipates UI will occupy the site in phases.

"Right now the New Haven lease where the corporate offices are is until June 2012."

Steeves said UI has seven buildings in New Haven, North Haven and Shelton. These she said will be consolidated into the

UI: Sign lease for additional acreage

From page 1

two Orange buildings. She said doing this will save UI customers considerable money.

Selectman Anthony Nastri, who is a former chairman of the Board of Finance, said "This kind of economic development is the kind of development that will give residents a good return for their taxes."

Zeoli said the town will not know what the tax revenue will be until UI comes before the various commissions with plans for the development of the property.

Zeoli said it was not possible for him to discuss while the negotiations were ongoing.

"This was difficult due to the confidentiality that needed to be maintained while being criticized continually for lack of economic develop in our community," he said.

"The beauty of this is it is an appropriate use in a appropriate zone and it helps solidify the longterm goals of the economic development of the community."

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News > Milford

UI signs 40-year lease for Orange site

Thursday, January 15, 2009 6:35 AM EST

By Brian McCready, Milford Bureau Chief

ORANGE — United Illuminating Co. has cemented its long-term relationship with the town by agreeing to lease a 19-acre parcel to build a 140,000-square-foot corporate office building next to the land it bought on Marsh Hill Road last month, a company spokeswoman said.

UI Spokeswoman Anita Steeves said the utility has reached a 40-year lease agreement with the Foyer/Smith family for 19 acres located behind the 34-acre former Showcase Cinemas site just off Interstate 95 that the company purchased in December for \$21.25 million.

Steeves said the additional parcel was integral to consolidating operations around the state into one centralized location in Orange. She said the company plans to relocate about 400 employees who now work at its corporate offices in New Haven, at 157 Church St., to Orange by mid-2012. UI's lease in New Haven expires June 30, 2012.

The remaining approximately 600 employees who work at several satellite locations throughout the state will be relocated to the theater site, also in 2012.

“This is the second piece in completing the piece for a centralized facility,” Steeves said. “It’s an ideal location. We’re very excited about it.”

Steeves said the company was always hopeful that another parcel of land could be found in Orange to accommodate the corporate offices.

“Having them close together is close to our ultimate goal. We’re 99 percent happy. If we didn’t have the hotel (Marriott) and the restaurant (Outback Steakhouse) in between us,

we'd be even happier," Steeves said.

Orange First Selectman James Zeoli, who said he has been working three years to lure the utility there, said the announcement of the Foyer lease, coupled with UI's acquisition of the former theater site, is a "New Year's present to the town of Orange."

"It's a perfect fit," Zeoli said.

Zeoli said UI officials plan to file a zoning application for the office building this spring, but the project conforms with the zoning regulations. Zeoli said the redeveloped parcels will generate significantly more tax revenue and help keep the tax rate stable.

"It's one of the best things that could happen to the town of Orange for economic development purposes," Zeoli said. "UI is a strong sound company that will be here for the long-term. Other communities would give their eye teeth to land this."

Steeves said the company plans to demolish the theater building and construct a new 230,000-square-foot building there. She said it will include the operations center, housing field crews, a dispatch center, call center, garage and warehouse.

Steeves said despite the money the utility invested in the real estate transactions, it is estimated the company will save \$20 million to \$25 million over a 20-year period.

Orange Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Paul Grimmer said both the theater and Foyer site have been underutilized for years, and the fact that both sites will be redeveloped is an "absolute blessing."

Grimmer said it's impossible to predict how much the UI sites would generate in additional tax revenue because the buildings have not been fully designed yet. Currently, both parcels are generating about \$180,000 in annual tax revenue to the town.

"Stay tuned," Grimmer said. "It's an exciting opportunity for Orange."

UI chose the theater site after a five-year search for a location for its new operations center. UI bought the theater property from Summit Development LLC of Norwalk, which had purchased it from National Amusements of Massachusetts.

National Amusements, owner of the Showcase Cinemas chain, closed the theater in March, saying it was no longer financially viable.

Company officials chose Orange because of its location, parking availability and proximity to I-95. The site is directly off the highway at Exit 41 and across the street from a site that for about 12 years has been the target of unsuccessful attempts to gain approval for a Stew Leonard's dairy store.

NEW HAVEN INDEPENDENT

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Public Power Pitched

BY MELISSA BAILEY | JANUARY 23, 2009 7:46 AM | [PERMALINK](#) | [COMMENTS \(1\)](#)



Thomas Macmillan File
Photo

Now that UI is ditching its downtown offices, aldermen propose ditching UI

— for a new municipal power authority.

The proposal was submitted by Aldermen Moti Sandman (pictured), Roland Lemar and Carl Goldfield at the Board of Aldermen's meeting Thursday evening in City Hall.

The seething missive blasts United Illuminating for its rate hikes and its flight to the suburbs.

UI "has demonstrated through its incessant demands for unjustified rate increases that its paramount concern is the interests of its shareholders and management, and not the interest of the public," the resolution reads. [Click here](#) for the full text.

"They're not really concerned about any of the issues we brought up," said Sandman Thursday. "We have to look at alternative services and production."

As citizens clashed with the company over soaring electric rates, aldermen were already thinking about alternatives to UI.

The tipping point came last week, when the company announced it will leave its offices in downtown New Haven and relocating to the suburbs — a move the mayor blasted as the opposite of smart growth.

Hearing the news, Sandman and company rushed a last-minute item onto the aldermanic agenda. The resolution calls for aldermanic hearings on alternatives to UI, including the feasibility of creating a publicly owned power system for city homes and businesses.

"I'm not kidding myself that this would be easy," said Goldfield, the board's president. But "I want to look at it, because I don't consider UI to be our friends."

In the resolution, aldermen ripped into the company for "blindness to environmental concerns" and "lack of foresight as to the future." Moving to a suburban campus away from dense development and mass transit lines will only waste energy, they argued.

Fresh out of law school in the 1970s, Goldfield spent three years working as a D.C. lobbyist for the American Public Power Association, a not-for-profit group representing the interests of community-owned electric utilities.

Publicly owned utilities are more likely to be "progressive," he argued. For example, companies which need to turn a profit for shareholders have no incentive to encourage conservation, while public authorities do. One of the arguments UI gave for requesting a rate hike recently: that its customers were conserving too much electricity.

Standing Alone

At least four towns in Connecticut have municipal power authorities: Groton, Norwalk, Jewett City and Wallingford.

George Adair, director of public utilities for the town of Wallingford, said the town has been distributing its own electricity since 1899. In recent times, he said, the municipal power system has shielded its residents from the blow of statewide rate hikes. Connecticut continues to have one of the highest electric rates in the nation.

"We've done very well compared to the region," he said. Under the most

recent data available, in November 2008, the town was undercutting UI by nearly 50 percent.

For the average residential electric bill (750 kilowatt hours per month), Wallingford residents paid \$86.20. For the same usage, UI was charging \$168.99, and Connecticut Light and Power charged \$147.38, according to Adair's calculations.

The system he oversees provides electricity to 25,000 electric customers over 50 square miles. The town doesn't generate the power; it buys it wholesale from the Connecticut Municipal Electrical Energy Cooperative.

Residents are getting a great bang for their buck, Adair said: On every dollar a resident spends on electricity, 80 percent goes directly to purchased power. The rest goes to maintaining the poles and wires, making capital improvements, reading meters, and doing billing and other administrative work.

Shifting to such a system "would be a huge undertaking," acknowledged Goldfield, "but I think it's worth talking about."

Hill Alderman Jorge Perez said the idea has long been discussed by the activist group Fight the Hike and is worth probing further.

One way to establish the system would be to create an independent authority, like the new municipal waste authority, so the debt wouldn't fall on the city's lap, Goldfield said. Aldermen also want to examine whether it makes sense for the city to create its own power through a generation plant.

In order to make the vision possible, the city would need to buy the infrastructure from UI.



"It's not an inexpensive proposition," warned

Anita Steeves, UI's spokeswoman Monday. She said the company currently pays New Haven \$3.4 million in taxes on its wires, poles and transformers — revenue the city would lose if it bought the equipment.

Any such sale would need approval from the state Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC), said the agency's spokeswoman, Beryl Lyons. Beyond the sale, a municipal utility authority would not be regulated by the DPUC, she said.

In response to aldermen's accusations, Steeves said the company is doing its best to cater to all ratepayers.

"Our company serves 17 towns and municipalities," she said. "We do feel that we take their issues and interests seriously across all of our territory."

"Moving to a central facility will be better for our ratepayers," she argued, because it will cost less than upgrading and maintaining the company's current facilities.

Asked why Wallingford was able to undercut UI, Steeves surmised that some of the difference may be due to DPUC regulations. For example, the DPUC has ordered UI to spend money on conservation and load management and renewable energy. "Regulation does add to what the ratepayer does pay," she said.

Goldfield agreed that the state "screwed up" in some ways when it regulated the energy markets. But he said the price difference boils down to something more fundamental: Private companies like UI are looking for a return to provide dividends to their investors; municipalities are just trying to cover costs.

"For it to be in the hands of someone out to make a profit" doesn't make sense, said Sandman. "Let's see if we can create anything better."

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POSTED BY: ROBERT MEGNA | JANUARY 23, 2009 7:58 AM

There are about 2000 public power authorities across the country. They have an association in DC. On average the cost of electricity is 15% less when there is a public power authority.

Wallingford is lucky to have a power plant. They sell off the power which reduces their bills much further then the average 15%.

With a power authority the people of New Haven are in control of their energy future. New Haven has great electric infastructure as a result of power plants. It would be a great benefit to the city if a public power authority was created.

I always liked the idea of the public power authority

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News > New Haven

UI move may trigger city power struggle

Friday, January 23, 2009 5:36 AM EST

By Elizabeth Benton and Luther Turmelle, Register Staff

NEW HAVEN — Three aldermen submitted a resolution Thursday to investigate the creation of a public power system for the city, lambasting United Illuminating's decision to move its offices to Orange.

"We don't think UI is doing what it should be for the city," said aldermanic President Carl Goldfield, D-29. "It's now picking up and moving, continually asking for rate increases. It's showing no loyalty to the city."

The strongly worded resolution, drafted by aldermen Goldfield, Moti Sandman, D-28, and Roland Lemar, D-9, blasts UI's decision to move to Orange and claims the company has "demonstrated through its incessant demands for unjustified rate increases that its paramount concern is the interests of its shareholders and management and not the interest of the public."

The resolution calls for hearings on alternatives to UI, including a publicly owned power system and local electric power generation, but does not recommend specific action.

"If UI can't get the job done, this might be the way to do it," said city spokeswoman Jessica Mayorga. "With all the costs they are going to incur with this move (to Orange), it's no wonder we're paying some of the highest rates in the nation."

UI defended its record Thursday, claiming research showed the Orange move would save ratepayers \$20-25 million over the next 20 years.

"We service 17 municipalities in our service area. We make our business decisions based on what is best for all of those municipalities," UI spokeswoman Anita Steeves said.

Steeves said a public power system would be cost-prohibitive, claiming the city would lose \$3.4 million annually in taxes UI pays on its equipment, poles, wires and substations.

“When we leave New Haven, we still pay taxes on that,” she said.

Wallingford and five other Connecticut communities — Groton, Norwich, Jewett City, Norwalk and Bozrah — as well as the Mohegan Tribe have public power entities.

If such a system were to become a reality in New Haven, the city would have two choices: either acquiring existing power lines from UI or building its own network of transmission lines, an option Goldfield said the city would not pursue.

Acquisition of UI’s lines would be overseen in part by the state Department of Public Utility Control, said Beryl Lyons, a spokeswoman for the New Britain-based regulatory agency.

“We would hold hearings to make sure that the purchase price was fair and how it would affect customers,” Lyons said.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal said if the city were to go forward with its plan, it would be “a huge and historic step in the right direction, not just for New Haven, but for municipalities around the state.”

Blumenthal has urged state lawmakers for several years to create a statewide power authority to help lower electric costs in Connecticut, which are among the nation’s highest.

Converting from being served by an investor-owned utility to a public power entity “is not an easy process,” said Ursula Schryver, director of customer programs for the American Public Power Association, a Washington-based group that serves the more than 2,000 nonprofit, community- and state-owned electric utilities in the United States.

“They’re going to be in for a fight because the investor-owned utility isn’t going to sell its power lines willingly,” Schryver said.

But between 1997 and 2007, 20 communities served by investor-owned utilities converted to public power systems, she said.

Schryver said the main driving forces behind converting to public power are the rising cost of electricity and a desire to have better control over the types of power — particularly from renewable sources — that are used.

If a community and the investor-owned utility cannot reach an agreement over how much

to pay for power lines, they could be acquired through eminent domain, Schryver said.

Elizabeth Benton can be reached at 789-5714 or ebenton@nhregister.com.

Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of nhregister.com.

City Hall Watch wrote on Jan 23, 2009 6:26 AM:

" I support looking at converting to a public utility system and cutting UI out of the picture. This company is arrogant, self absorbed and downright reckless with ratepayers money despite having a monopoly. Nevertheless, the city's ability to oversee such a move and to operate it is dubious at best. These people can't figure out how to run a transfer station so that it breaks even which is why Carl Goldfield, Roland Lemar and Moti Sandman all voted to sell it to a new authority, controlled by the mayor and which then borrowed a lot of money on the taxpayers' credit card. This move is significantly more complicated to accomplish on the front end, and to run in the long term. This may well be a case of these alders playing the who has the bigger balls, grab a headline game than reality. But hey, UI has been a jerk and Steeves is just lying that it's going to save us money. That's a real pantload of spin. "

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redman wrote on Jan 23, 2009 7:44 AM:

" Why does New Havana believe it owns the UI? It's a regional power company not a city power company. "

Report Abuse

ozzy6900 wrote on Jan 23, 2009 7:48 AM:

" The UI (not one of my favorites) may be a public utility but when you get down to brass tacks, it is a business. This business (like any other) is there to make money and that cannot be denied.

No one likes the UI because they are the only game in town and we can not survive without them. Complaining that they do not care about the public will get you no where because the job of the company is to make a profit, pay it's bills and wages, pay the stock holders (who invested money into the company), THEN worry about the customers. UI is no different than any other company. I am not defending them, I am just looking at them as a business.

Now, you say they are a utility and Government controlled. Well what has the DPUC done for YOU lately? They are just another example of how Government can not control

businesses. They deny rate hikes today and next week give in because they know that the business HAS to make money or it will cease to be!

So, the best thing that the area can do would be to look at the Wallingford Electric. They are close to us and their rates are much lower. They provide power to the Wallingford area and they sell power back to the grid. i believe that they also make the power by using a trash-to-energy system. Of course, this will involve arguing with the Environmentalists and the Not-In-My-Backyard groups to get this done and that could take years! But maybe it is time we ask ourselves if it isn't time to get some competition to the UI. "

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SaveOurShores wrote on Jan 23, 2009 8:21 AM:

" Where there is monopoly, there is arrogance and unaccountability-always, and that is precisely where and when public intervention through government is the answer, as the lesser evil. "

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Updated: Thursday, January 29, 2009 at 3:24am

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Electricity sparks debate

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Aldermen propose municipal power system to replace current company, United Illuminating

Greta Stetson
Staff Reporter

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Published Wednesday, January 28, 2009

United Illuminating spokeswoman Anita Steeves said UI, an electricity company, believes it is doing a good job. But three New Haven aldermen think the city can do it better.

That is why Mordechai Sandman, Roland Lemar and Carl Goldfield, aldermen of wards 28, 9 and 29, respectively, submitted a resolution at the board's meeting Thursday to propose that the city start looking into a publicly owned power system, rather than continuing their business with a company taking jobs — and money — out of the city.

UI, a New Haven based electrical distribution company, announced last week that it would be consolidating its seven locations into one, which will be located on more than 50 acres in Orange, Conn. While Steeves said the move will save customers \$25 million over the next 20 years, New Haven officials have criticized it as being a waste of energy and contrary to smart growth — not to mention that many city residents are upset over the short term spike in their electricity bills.

Goldfield admitted that creating a publicly owned transmissions system would be a long-term process — “But we have to start the discussions somewhere,” he said.

Both the aldermen and UI representatives said implementing municipal electricity in New Haven would be a significant undertaking. Along with losing \$3.4 million in property taxes, the city would need to buy UI's equipment, which includes poles, wires and transformers. UI, Steeves said, is not in favor of selling. She said calls for municipally owned power are nothing new; cities and towns often back down once they see the costly bottom lines, she noted.

“These things pop up periodically,” Steeves said. “Some towns wanted to just buy their streetlights and found it was too cost prohibitive.”

Goldfield said he realizes past attempts to break away from private companies have failed, but he thinks the new economic climate provides new incentives. By selling bonds and creating a separate authority, public power would become a legitimate option for the city, he said. City officials said municipal power lowers rates because the provider would not have shareholders and bureaucracy to support.

UI's higher rates are in part because of their regulation by Connecticut's Department of Public Utility Control, whose stringent reliability standards, Steeves said, increase the bill. Furthermore, their system of buying electricity futures from the state forces UI to increase rates if customers' demand falls short, Steeves explained.

“We don't hike up rates lightly,” Steeves added.

Goldfield said he acknowledged that base energy costs are not UI's fault, but said the lack of competition in the energy industry increases rates for New Haven residents. Sandman agreed, adding that often UI's reasons for rate hikes, which included higher salaries for its workers and CEO, were unacceptable.

“In this economic climate, should we really be subsidizing someone else's pay raise?” Sandman asked.

If the city succeeded in this process, New Haven would become one of at least four other Connecticut towns with municipal power authorities.

Nearby Wallingford, for example, has transmitted its own power since 1899. Per month, its

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average resident's electric bill is about half that of a UI customer, said George Adair, director of public utilities for Wallingfor. He added that while publicly owned power is a commitment, it is also a great asset because the electricity provider answers to the people: "Local control is important," he said.

Beyond easing residents' bills, a municipal power authority could make New Haven more attractive to companies looking for low operating costs, Sandman said. He added that owning its own power equipment would give the city the opportunity to move toward more environmentally friendly electricity generators in the future.

The Board of Aldermen will further discuss the proposition at a meeting Feb. 19.

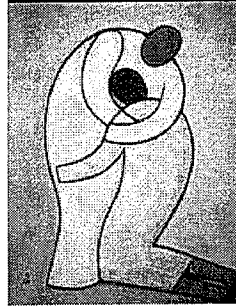
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now requires utilities to generate 8% of electricity from Tier 1 resources by May 2021. The state also requires at least 0.5% of solar photovoltaic energy use by June 2020. Under the bill, those requirements would increase from 2021 through 2026.

Full filing

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New Haven, Conn., board to explore alternative utility service to United Illuminating

by Corina Rivera

Dissatisfied with electric service provided by United Illuminating Co., the city of New Haven, Conn., is looking into the feasibility of creating a publicly owned power system.

According to a resolution presented to the city's Board of Aldermen on Jan. 22, the board will hold hearings on alternatives to UI as the transmitter of electricity to residential and commercial customers, including the feasibility of creating a publicly owned power system and generating electric power and energy locally.

The consumer cost of electricity has jumped exponentially since deregulation in Connecticut, the resolution said. The city's residents "have made their voices clearly heard ... that they need relief from outrageous electric costs," and UI "has demonstrated through its incessant demands for unjustified rate increases that it's paramount concern is the interests of its shareholders and management and not the interest of the public."

On Jan. 20, the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control issued a draft decision indicating it would not approve UI's request, made in August 2008, for a \$51.4 million distribution rate increase in 2009 and put off ruling on a distribution rate increase for 2010.

The resolution also addressed a decision by UI to consolidate up to 600 employees in a new operations center in Orange, Conn., by 2012. It said the consolidation would require most employees to drive. UI's choice "illustrates its blindness to environmental concerns and lack of foresight as to the future of work and residential development in southern Connecticut," the resolution said.

Alderman Moti Sandman said Jan. 26: "By 2003, we started getting hit with increases every year. Not all of it was UI's fault, but that really hurt the end-user. Now, it's like 12.4 cents per kWh — that's just generation, not transmission. UI, which used to be a real corporate partner in the city of New Haven, has decided to move out of New Haven and that has really turned off a lot of people as well."

The city is "getting an inordinate burden of transmission costs. There are a lot more households per mile of wire in New Haven than there are in the suburbs, but there's not a mechanism in UI to balance that out. We know we're paying a couple cents per kWh over others because we're carrying others' burdens."

Sandman said the city is looking at the feasibility of whether it can become a municipal power authority or perhaps join other towns and expand that way.

As for the company's move to Orange, Conn., which was announced in November 2008, UI spokeswoman Anita Steeves said Jan. 27 that the company did a business case showing that consolidating its current six locations in three different towns into one center facility will save ratepayers money.

The consolidation was endorsed by state regulators, Steeves said, adding that UI worked for almost five years to find a suitable prop-

erty and that proposals on land from towns and others were taken seriously. "Our business decisions are based on what's good for all ratepayers, not any one town in particular," she said.

She noted that rates have increased the same for all UI customers, and most of the increase is due to power generation costs.

In 2007, UI paid the city of New Haven \$3.4 million in property tax, and the majority of that was for poles, infrastructure, substations and things of that nature, she said, noting that such infrastructure is there to stay.

"We pride ourselves in being good corporate citizens, and we do that in all towns we're located in," Steeves said.

UI, a subsidiary of UIL Holdings Corp., is one of the more reliable electric companies in the Northeast, Steeves said. "We take pride in really good customer service, and we think we serve our customers really well," she said.

COMPANIES REFERENCED IN THIS ARTICLE:

United Illuminating Co.

UIL Holdings Corp.

UIL

E-mail this story.

Ice storm causes more than a million outages from Southwest to New England

by Jay Hodgkins

A massive ice and snow storm blanketing much of the country from Texas to Maine the past two days has left large power outages in its wake.

The Associated Press reported Jan. 28 that at least 470,000 were without power in Kentucky, about 300,000 were without power in Arkansas, and an additional 300,000 customers were without power in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Entergy Corp. subsidiary Entergy Arkansas Inc. on Jan. 28 reported 111,000 power outages at midday, particularly in the northern part of the state.

"Damage is extensive, every bit as devastating in some areas as the twin ice storms of December 2000. Entergy Arkansas' transmission network in north Arkansas suffered severe damage," the company said.

American Electric Power Co. Inc. subsidiary Southwestern Electric Power Co. reported Jan. 28 that its northern Arkansas service area is still experiencing significant outages, with the peak number of outages reaching 59,000 on the night of Jan. 27 and standing at about 53,000 during the morning of Jan. 28.

AEP's Ohio utilities reported more than 116,000 outages as of the late afternoon Jan. 28.

E.ON AG said 275,000 of its customers in Kentucky were without power on Jan. 28, including 100,000 customers at its utility subsidiary Louisville Gas and Electric Co. and 175,000 customers at its Kentucky Utilities Co. subsidiary.

AEP subsidiary Appalachian Power Co. reported Jan. 28 that about 46,000 customers were still without power as of late afternoon Jan. 28 in West Virginia.

Allegheny Energy Inc. as of late afternoon Jan. 28 reported a few thousand outages in each of Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Ameren Corp. reported in the morning hours of Jan. 28 that it was working to restore 35,000 outages in southern Missouri and about 8,600 outages in southern Illinois.

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DPUC rejects UI rate increase

By Rob Varnon
STAFF WRITER

Posted: 02/04/2009 05:24:46 PM EST

The United Illuminating Co.'s customers will not be paying more for power this year after state regulators denied the electric utility's request for a rate increase.

The Department of Public Utility Control said Wednesday that New Haven-based UI did not prove it needed the \$51.4 million in additional revenues to provide safe and reliable electricity.

UI filed the request in August, citing the need to make up revenue lost as a result of a higher number of unpaid bills, lower electricity sales and pension and infrastructure improvement costs.

The original request would have added about \$6.60 per month to the average bill this year and asked for a \$29.7 million increase in 2010.

Regulators only decided the 2009 rate increase, ruling UI would not get a hike this year and instead would provide a one-time credit reflecting a drop in allowable revenue collection of \$970,000. UI's revenues are capped by the DPUC. When the credit will be given out is unclear, but it's not expected to amount to much.

Regulators, who were upholding a draft decision issued two weeks ago, said they would revisit the rate-increase request for 2010 at a later date.

As part of its ruling, the DPUC told UI to cut expenses in several areas, including \$3.7 million slated for executive bonuses.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who opposed the rate increase, credited the denial to UI customers who flooded the DPUC with e-mails and letters during the more than five months of review. The DPUC received more than 1,000 pieces of correspondence demanding the rate request be rejected.

"This victory belongs to consumers who deluged the DPUC with their outrage and opposition to United Illuminating's overreaching, unsupportable \$81.5 million grab," Blumenthal said in a press release. He also called the request "absurd" and "unconscionably loaded with steep raises for high-paid executives." Blumenthal has expressed concern that the regulated utilities are using rate increases to boost executive pay, when that money should come from shareholders.

The company issued a cautious statement on the ruling.

"We recognize these are difficult times, economically," said UI spokeswoman Anita Steeves. "We're going to review the decision and see how it's going to affect our operations."

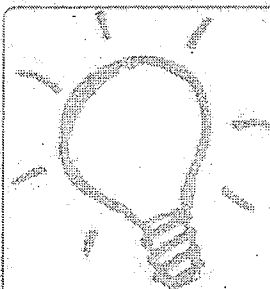
Steeves said the company recognizes that regulators were in a difficult situation, but UI believes it submitted a credible request. She said the company would withhold making further comments until after it reads the entire decision.

Typically, a company that disagrees with a final decision can appeal it in court.

Mary J. Healey, the state's consumer counsel, also lauded the DPUC decision. Like Blumenthal, Healey opposed the hike.

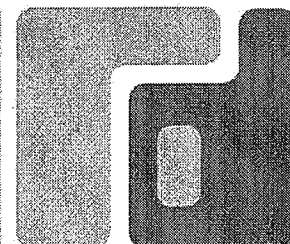
"UI's ratepayers have had enough of rate increases the last few years, and this decision puts all the

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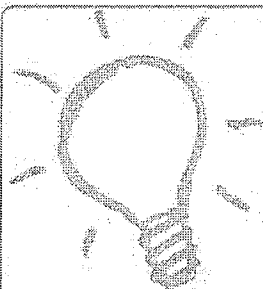
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state's utility companies on notice that in tough economic times they need to tighten their belts and live within their allowed expense levels, especially when it comes to salaries, benefits and incentive compensation," Healey said in a press release.

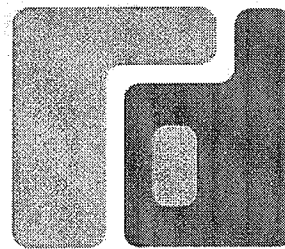
Slashing costs The DPUC has ordered UI to make cuts to a number of its business expenses: n Return on equity from 9.75 percent to 8.75 percent n Executive bonuses by \$3.7 million n Payroll and salaries by \$6 million

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Electric rates fall for a top commercial users

By Pam Dawkins
Staff writer

Posted: 02/17/2009 08:01:47 PM EST

Approximately 100 of the state's largest commercial power users will pay considerably less for electricity, after regulators reduced their rates.

The Department of Public Utility Control cited lower fuel costs and lower federal congestion penalties Tuesday as reasons for reducing the rates the Connecticut Light & Power Co. and The United Illuminating Co. can charge their largest customers.

CL&P's rates for the second quarter of 2009 will be about 22 percent lower than in the first quarter, while UI's will be down by about 13 percent.

Because of the amount of power they use, these customers -- 39 for UI and about 80 for CL&P -- must take service under Last Resort rates, said DPUC spokeswoman Beryl Lyons. This is done to encourage them to switch to an alternative supplier in Connecticut's competitive

marketplace.

"No one would intentionally go on Last Resort service," because its always been more expensive than other rates, Lyons said.

"It's a very small amount of our total customer count," said CL&P spokesman Jeff Tilghman of the 80 or so companies on its Last Resort service.

The utilities bill residential customers by the kilowatt hour, which reflects how much power they

use, UI spokeswoman Anita Steeves said.

The DPUC estimates the average residential usage at 700 kilowatt hours a month.

But these largest commercial users are billed in kilowatt hours plus the amount of power they pull during their time of peak demand, Steeves said.

A level of 500 kilowatts or more puts them into the Last Resort service category. In essence, Steeves said, a kilowatt is the car, while a kilowatt hour measures how

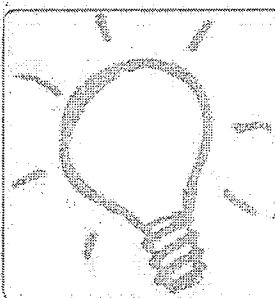
far its been driven.

CL&P's customers will save \$3,500 each quarter for every 100,000 kilowatt hours used; UI's customers will save \$2,100, according to the DPUC.

Lyons said the rate reductions won't affect the utilities' bottom lines, because they just pass through the costs of supplying the power to customers.

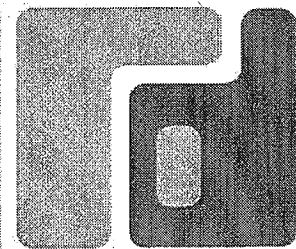
"The commodity side -- they don't make money on, they don't lose money on. This is not distribution, it's supply," she said, adding, "But it will make a huge difference to the businesses that are on it [Last Resort service]."

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So Long — And Thanks!

BY LEONARD J. HONEYMAN | APRIL 23, 2009 12:53 PM | [PERMALINK](#) | [COMMENTS \(0\)](#)



Leonard Honeyman Photo

A little over three months after United Illuminating announced it's leaving downtown New Haven, the business community congratulated the company at the Omni Thursday morning for longstanding "business leadership."

UI received the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce Corporate Heritage Award during the business group's annual meeting.

UI announced in January that it plans to move all its facilities, and 400 jobs, to the former Showcase Cinema site in Orange. At the time New Haven's mayor blasted the company for making a decision that both hurt the city's tax base and hurt the environment. UI said it was making the decision in the best interest of its ratepayers and shareholders.

The Corporate Heritage Award, according to a pamphlet distributed at the breakfast event; "is presented each year at our Annual Meeting to a company in the New Haven region to recognize business leadership for over 100 years."

UI won't completely clear out of New Haven if the local Chamber of Commerce has anything to say about it, the Chamber's chief said Thursday. UI said no decision has yet been made about keeping any offices and field service yards in New Haven.

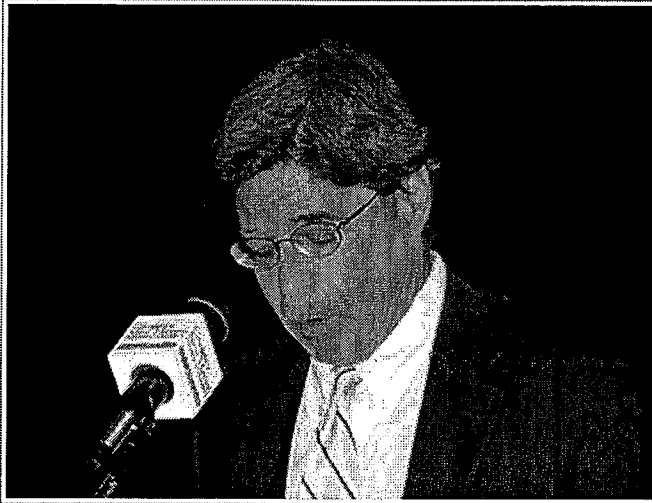
Chamber President Anthony Rescigno (pictured) said after the event that the Chamber had no qualms about giving the award to UI. The chamber is a regional group, he noted, and UI has done so much good in the region. He said he has been in talks with UI chief executive James Torgerson about the company keeping a physical presence in the city.

UI spokeswoman Anita Steeves confirmed that the Rescigno has spoken with Torgerson about keeping some office or field office presence in the city.

"We listened to them, but no decision has been made," she said. UI leases seven floors in the Connecticut Financial Center on Church Street, a lease that runs until June of 2012. The company also maintains a service yard in the East Shore of the city.

Steeves said the plan now is to have all UI personnel working out of the Orange facility by that time. She said the field service people will move in before office staff, but that the move will be done in stages.

Because engineering work on the Orange site is ongoing, Steeves said she could not give a start date for UI workers moving into the site. She emphasized that the utility's commitment to good works in New Haven will not diminish regardless of the location of the utility's headquarters.



The Chamber breakfast, the 215th annual meeting at the Omni New

Haven Hotel at Yale, was a decidedly upbeat affair given the down economy.

The featured speaker, state budget director Robert Genuario (pictured), told the crowd that because everyone recognizes the seriousness of economic downturn, Connecticut has an opportunity to make changes that would have been difficult in easier times.

Speaking in front of an estimated 550 people who packed the hotel's main ballroom, Genuario spoke "opportunities to downsize government" and make "the right decisions" as far as government is concerned. That doesn't mean there won't be pain, he said.

"I expect that in the next fiscal year, we will have 3,000 or 4,000 fewer state employees than we had at the start of this fiscal year," he said. He said since most state employees "are not bureaucrats" but direct-service people, it will be difficult to maintain state services at current levels, but the state intends to do that.

Since Connecticut is one of the five highest taxing states in the nation, "we want to avoid taking money out of your pockets," he said. After his talk, he said Gov. M. Jodi Rell has "consistently" said she will not increase taxes until all other ways to raise or save money had been tried. But she has never had a "read my lips, no new taxes" stand.

He pegged the current estimated state budget deficit at \$6.8 billion. "This can't be fixed by tweaking around the edges" but would require a real commitment to savings, he said.

"Do you know what \$1 billion means to the state?" he asked the audience. "If we cut taxpayer support for all the community colleges, all four universities of the Connecticut State University and UConn, we would save less than \$1 billion."

The opportunity, he said, comes because all the surrounding states have already raised taxes. So if Connecticut can raise them little or not at all, it gives the state a competitive opportunity.

The state stands to receive \$381 million this year and \$up to \$1.3 billion next year in stimulus funds, he said.

Chamber president Roscigno welcomed new Chairman Dennis Regan of McGladrey & Pullen LLP, accountants. He thanked the outgoing chairman, Michael Morand of Yale University. Roscigno said the New

Haven region's businesses will thrive because "we work harder than most."

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UI begins demolition of Orange theater for new operations center

CT POST APRIL 24, 2009

By Pam Dawkins
STAFF WRITER

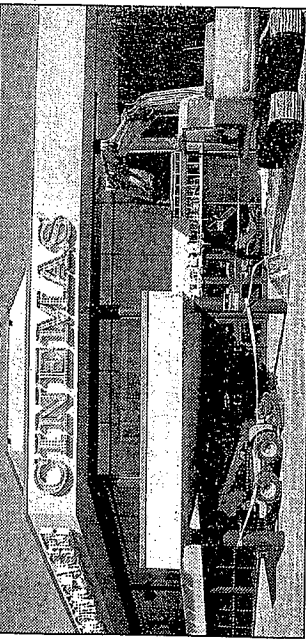
ORANGE — Soon, there'll be nothing left but the memories of the tubs of hot, butter-drenched popcorn, liters of soda, pounds of chocolate and nachos oozing cheese that moviegoers once enjoyed at the Showcase Cinemas on Marsh Hill Road.

Now, piles of rubble sit in the former lobby, waiting to be sent for recycling, as work begins on the site that will, by 2012, be home to The United Illuminating Co.'s operations center and headquarters.

The company stills needs to get some permits and zoning changes, and spokeswoman Anita Steeves said UI is planning a community meeting before it submits its site plan. UI's early estimate for the project's cost is between \$80 million and \$90 million, she said.

"We're very excited by this project," said Orange First Selectman James Zeoli, while taking one last walk through the theater's lobby Thursday. "It was a long time in the works."

In addition to a garage, dispatch center and engineering facility, the Orange building



PHIL NOEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A crew from Cherry Hill Construction has begun demolishing the former Showcase Cinemas in Orange.

will be home to the system operations center, which monitors the transmission and distribution of electricity on the power grid. The company needed to build a new monitoring center to comply with new national security standards, she added.

UI bought the 34-acre site in November for \$21.25 million. Steeves said the company will bring in all its field crews to this site, which should eventually be the home base for 550 to 600 people. She said UI will probably sell its property on

Bridgeport Avenue in Shelton, which now houses engineers and field crews that will be working out of Orange.

At the end of December, UI signed a 40-year lease, with options relating to extension and purchase — for the 21-acre Marsh Hill Road parcel that will house its administrative and managerial staff of 400 to 500 people. That parcel is on the other side of Outback Steakhouse and the Courtyard by Marriott, down the street from the operations center site.

The company's lease in New Haven is up in June 2012, she said, so that is the date by which all construction should be completed.

Weather permitting, demolition on the former movie theater should be complete by May 25, said Bobby Santillo, project executive for Cherry Hill Construction & Demolition in Branford. The long time frame doesn't reflect the size of the job but, rather, its color — green.

Instead of the big machine waiting outside, the demolition crew is using small bobcats inside, Santillo said, in order to salvage the materials.

"Ninety-five percent of this building is going to be either diverted or left on site," Santillo said. For instance, all the metal and chairs will be recycled, sheet rock will be recycled into wallboard for retail sale and the carpets have already been sent to a company in New Hampshire, which will use the yarn to make new carpets. The steel beams will be cut and smelted for re-use, Santillo said, and the concrete will be crushed and

left on site for future use. The latter item might not sound like much, but it earns UI a point for avoiding the extra traffic moving the concrete would create. The company needs a specific number of points — based on design and material choices as well as sustainability of development — to be certified under

the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System by the U.S. Green Building Council.

UI has been working with customers to be more energy efficient, Steeves said, so "We have to do the same thing. We're really talking about sustainability. This is going to be our home."

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SNL EXTRA

April 27, 2009 6:04 PM ET

By [Rosy Lum](#)

The [NRG Energy Inc.](#) and [United Illuminating Co.](#) joint venture, GenConn Energy LLC, on April 27 said it closed on a \$534 million financing for the planned [Devon](#) and [Middletown Peaking](#) power plants.

The financing was syndicated by RBS Securities Inc., Union Bank NA, Bank of America, BNP Paribas, CoBank ACB, ING Capital LLC, Natixis' New York branch, TD Bank NA and WestLB AG's New York branch, [United Illuminating](#) spokeswoman [Anita Steeves](#) said in an e-mail to SNL.

The financing for the two 200-MW plants includes a seven-year project-backed term loan and a five-year working capital facility, totaling \$291 million. United Illuminating and NRG Energy also each closed an equity bridge loan of \$121.5 million.

The combined financing package is supported by 30-year contracts approved by the Department of Public Utility Control, the companies said in a news release.

"Securing the financing for these projects is an essential step in moving these projects forward and meeting our contractual and regulatory objectives," said Anthony Marone, GenConn president and United Illuminating vice president of client services. "In addition, GenConn has executed all major equipment, construction and service contracts associated with the projects. We were looking to minimize the cost of capital, reduce interest rate uncertainty, mitigate financing risk and maintain full transparency of the structure, compatible with the cost-of-service approach mandated for these projects."

The projects are located at NRG Energy's existing sites in Milford and Middletown, Conn., and feature four new fast-start, 50-MW General Electric LM 6000 dual-fuel capable combustion turbines. Construction at Devon has begun and is expected to be completed in June 2010, the companies said. Construction at Middletown will begin in February 2010 and is expected to be completed in June 2011, the companies said.

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energy technologies, including loans, loan guarantees and secondary market support to develop products such as clean energy-backed bonds that would allow less expensive lending in the private sector. "The agency would also seek to accommodate riskier debt and thus provide a mechanism for deployment of the most innovative technologies," the summary said.

A main mission of the agency is to encourage the deployment of technologies that are perceived as too risky by commercial lenders, particularly those projects with a high potential to address the nation's climate and energy security needs. The agency is expected to use a portfolio investment approach to mitigate risk. It also is expected to try to "become self-sustaining over the long term by balancing riskier investments with revenues from other services and less risky investments."

Under the bill, the agency would be an "autonomous entity with strong guidance and aggressive goals for technology deployment set by an independent advisory council, in consultation with the Secretary." The legislation sets out a process for goal-setting and mandates numerical targets for achieving the goals, against which the performance of the agency is to be judged.

Financial oversight would include audits by the comptroller general and unfettered access to the agency's books by the secretary of energy.

Full filing

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Allegheny again seeks to move up Pennsylvania power purchases

by Kelly Harrington

Wanting to continue to take advantage in the drop in wholesale power prices, Allegheny Energy Inc. subsidiary Allegheny Power has again asked Pennsylvania regulators to accelerate its power procurement schedule for residential customers.

Allegheny Power, known legally as West Penn Power Co., on April 24 asked the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission to expand the amount of power to be purchased in June for residential customers to about 550 MW. The previously approved plan calls for procuring 250 MW in June.

The request is similar to one made in February and approved in March. In that successful petition, Allegheny Power sought to move up the date of its initial procurement from June to April to take advantage of the significant decrease in market prices. Allegheny Power said the procurements, which took place the week of April 13, have been successful and will significantly benefit its residential default service customers.

"Given that a market-altering event is still occurring due to the significant downturn in market price, along with the success of Allegheny Power's early procurement, the company requests to advance additional bid blocks to take advantage of current market conditions for its residential customers," the company said in its petition. "As in its prior petition, the essence of the company's instant petition is that an unmistakable significant downturn in the market price for generation service has occurred, that the downturn is continuing, and that the downturn in market prices justifies the

commission's consideration of an advancement of the procurement schedule to take advantage of significantly lower market prices for the benefit of Allegheny Power's residential default service customers."

Contracts awarded in the company's recent procurement represent about 2 million MWh of generation supply, or roughly 5% of the purchases authorized by state regulators following the expiration of rate caps Dec. 31, 2010. The three 17-month and two 29-month contracts have an average weighted retail generation supply price of \$72.80 per MWh. Should average prices for the remaining auctions stay the same, a typical bill for a residential customer in 2011 will increase about \$7.75, or 8.5% from 2010 levels.

Allegheny Power noted that prices in PJM Interconnection LLC's Western Hub for 24-hour energy for the term of Jan. 1, 2011, through May 31, 2012, have dropped nearly \$30 since July 2008.

"Allegheny Power believes that it should take the opportunity to lock in significantly lower prices for its residential default service customers that continue to take default service from the company after January 1, 2011," the company said.

The company specifically asked for approval to advance to June the procurement dates of six residential bid blocks, which are currently scheduled for October, and January, June and October of 2010.

In the category of 17-month-long procurements, Allegheny Power proposed to move the procurement dates of five 17-month bid blocks to its June procurements. Of those blocks, two will come from the October 2009 schedule, and one from each of the January, June and October 2010 schedules. In the category of 29-month-long procurements, the company also proposed to add one 29-month bid block to its June schedule. That bid block will come from the October schedule.

Allegheny Power wants a decision by May 14.

COMPANIES REFERENCED IN THIS ARTICLE:

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PJM Interconnection LLC

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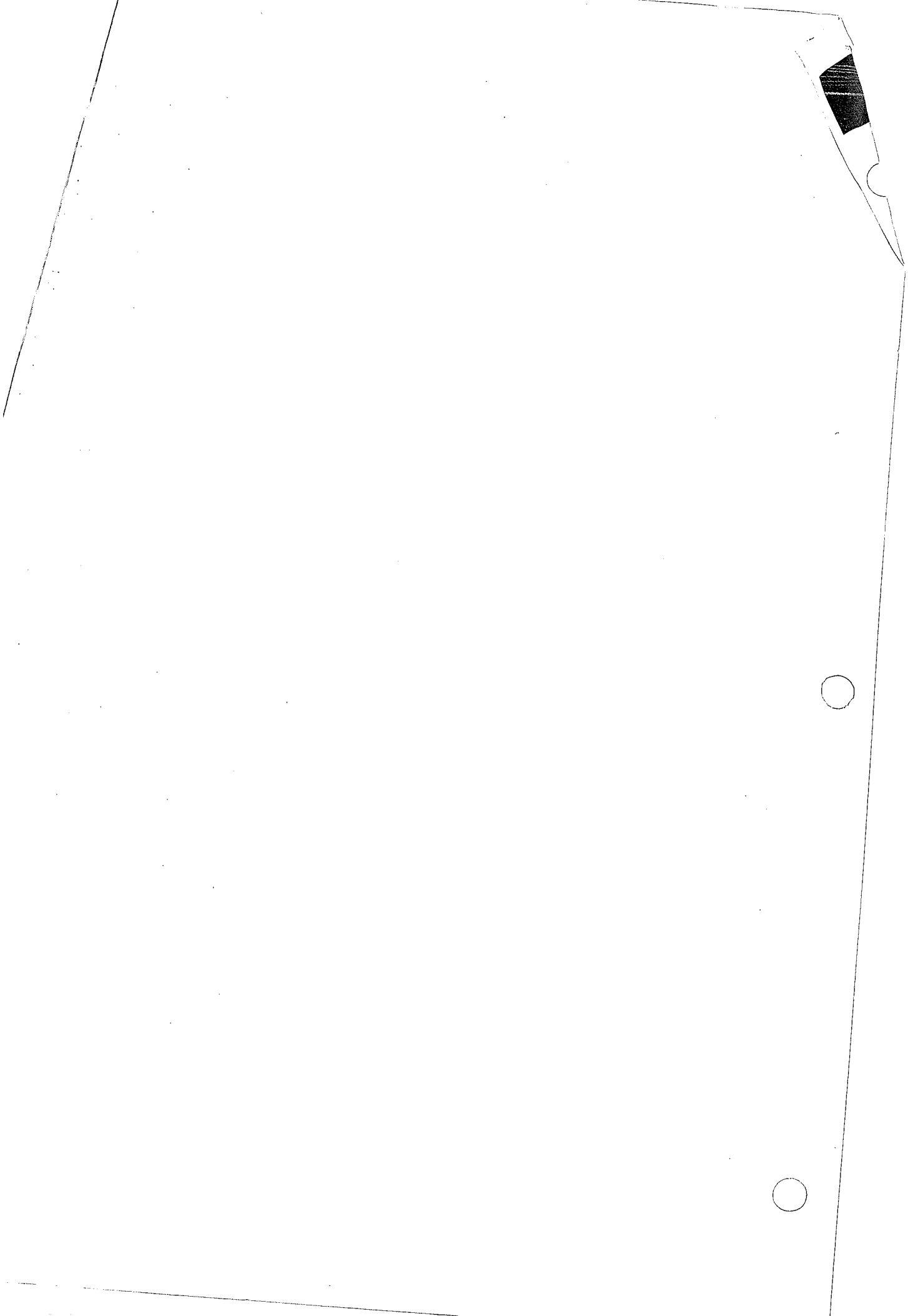
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NRG, United Illuminating JV closes on \$534 million project financing

by Rosy Lum

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The financing was syndicated by RBS Securities Inc., Union Bank NA, Bank of America, BNP Paribas, CoBank ACB, ING Capital LLC, Natixis' New York branch, TD Bank NA and WestLB AG's New York branch, United Illuminating spokeswoman Anita Steeves said in an e-mail to SNL.



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AG proposes utility executives' pay cap

By Mark Davis, WTNH Chief Political Correspondent, on Jul 21, 2009

Hartford (WTNH) – How do you feel about paying million dollar salaries to utility executives? The Attorney General said it's time that Connecticut placed a cap on how much rate payers should fork over for high-ranking executive pay.

"Ratepayers, literally, are funding millions of dollars in executive compensation, pay increases, for utility executives, who have decreased service and increased our rates," said Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.

For 2008, United Illuminating CEO James Torgerson received over \$2.25 million; a raise of nearly half a million. Almost all of it came from rate payers.

For 2008, Northeast Utilities CEO Charles Shivery received over \$8 million; it's a raise of almost a million dollars and over a million coming from rate payers.

"The only thing that's open to question here is how much the rate payer is going to be responsible for," said Rep. Vickie Nardello of the Energy and Technology Committee.

Rep. Nardello and Attorney General Blumenthal announced that they will seek legislation next year capping the CEO'S compensation from rate payers at \$300,000.

A spokesperson for U.I. said, "We need to provide compensation that will attract and retain quality executives. If the rules change, then how we do business will change. It should be noted that these are figures for 2008 and the board of directors did not seek salary increases for 2009."

A Northeast Utilities spokesman said, "We have not filed a rate case in Connecticut since 2007 and have also frozen executive and management salaries for 2009. We already provide controls on executive compensation through the use of shareholder funded incentives tied to performance."

"If their share holders think these executives are worth a gazillion dollars, let them pay," said Attorney General Blumenthal.

Northeast Utilities, which is the larger of the two, also notes that they employ over 4,000 people and support hundreds of non-profit organizations through various grants.

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UTILITY EXECs

CT WATCHDOG By GEORGE COMBOSSY

CONSUMER PRYBACK

Blumenthal: Limit How Much Utility Customers Pay Toward Executive Salaries

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Attorney General Richard Blumenthal urged state officials Tuesday to again consider limiting how much ratepayer money can be used to pay salaries of public utility executives.

Blumenthal said utility customers contributed millions of dollars toward executive salaries last year.

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Charles W. Shivery, CEO of Northeast Utilities, parent of Connecticut Light & Power Co., received \$8.09 million in compensation last year, \$1.3 million of which was paid by the company's Connecticut customers, Blumenthal said.

Ratepayers also paid for nearly all of the \$2.26 million in compensation that United Illuminating Co. CEO James P. Torgerson was paid last year, he said.

Blumenthal and state consumer counsel Mary J. Healey pushed for a cap on ratepayer contributions last year, but it was not taken up by the legislature.

Under the cap proposal, ratepayers would not be responsible for any more than \$300,000 of a utility executive's compensation — double the salary of Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

"Electric and gas consumers — many losing jobs and homes — are compelled to provide pay raises to utility executive millionaires," Blumenthal said in a statement. "These compensation disclosures should drive reform, and energize consumers who have endured rate increases over the past year."

Robert Alessio, CEO of Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas companies, received \$869,817 in compensation last year, \$748,480 of which was paid for by state ratepayers, Blumenthal said.

A spokesman for CNG and SCG declined to comment Tuesday, and a Northeast Utilities spokesman did not return calls.

United Illuminating spokeswoman Anita Steeves said Tuesday that the utility's executive salaries are "market-based" and that the company pays for independent compensation audits to ensure that the salaries it pays are in line with those at similarly sized utilities.

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COMMENTS (2) | Add Comment

Blumenthal is a fool. This is the same guy that wants to put the utilities fully back in charge of procuring billions of dollars worth of power with the risk on the ratepayer. Yet on the other hand he feels that they don't know how to allocate money to their own employees.
mmagnan(07/22/2009)

All bonuses should be eliminated. They receive a hugh salary as it is. Whyshould they be paid extra to do a good job????? Doesn't make sense. Justanother burdon on the public.
dickmcsw(07/22/2009)

The New Haven Register (nhregister.com), Serving New Haven, CT

Business

Cap on utilities CEO pay revisited

Thursday, July 23, 2009

By Luther Turmelle, North Bureau Chief

Having failed to convince Connecticut lawmakers last year of the need to cap the amount of ratepayer money used for utility executives' salaries, state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal is making another attempt at getting the reforms approved.

To bolster his claims that such a cap is needed, Blumenthal points to data showing that in the 2008 fiscal year:

Ç James Torgerson, chief executive officer of the United Illuminating Co. had all but \$50,000 of his \$2.26 million in total compensation paid by the New Haven-based utility's ratepayers.

Ç All but \$121,337 of the \$869,817 compensation package of Robert Alessio, president and chief executive officer of Southern Connecticut Gas Co. in Bridgeport, was paid for by ratepayers.

Ç Northeast Utilities Chief Executive Officer Charles W. Shivery had \$1.3 million of his \$8.09 million compensation package paid for by customers.

Blumenthal this week issued a statement saying utility customers "are compelled to provide pay raises to utility executive millionaires."

"These compensation disclosures should drive reform and energize consumers who have endured rate increases over the past year," he said. "Ratepayers should be spared this outrageous burden when they are tightening financial belts and budgets and struggling to make ends meet. I urge legislation again to cap the expense to ratepayers for excessive executive pay."

Blumenthal was unsuccessful last year in convincing state lawmakers to put a cap on how much ratepayer money can be used for executive compensation at the state's utilities.

His proposal, which also had the support of the state Office of Consumer Counsel, stipulated that ratepayers could not be charged more than \$300,000 for any executive compensation — an amount equal to twice the governor's salary.

Spokespeople for both UI and NU said there are already controls in place for their executives salaries.

"We already provide controls on executive compensation through the use of shareholder-funded incentives tied to performance that benefits both our customers and our shareholders," Al Lara, an NU spokesman, said Wednesday. "We have not filed a rate case in Connecticut since 2007 and have also frozen executive and management salaries for 2009."

Anita Steeves, a UI spokeswoman, said in addition to having its executives' salaries reviewed by the board of directors, the company also has a consultant that looks how much other utilities are paying their executives.

"We want to be sure that we are competitive so that we can continue to attract the best people in the business to work for us," Steeves said.

The state's Department of Public Utility Control requires that Connecticut's public utility companies disclose all compensation paid to their executives and officers each year in an easy-to-understand format.

Luther Tumelle can be reached at ltumelle@nhregister.com or 789-5706.

URL: <http://www.nhregister.com/articles/2009/07/23/business/d1-paycap23.prt>

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Close \$966.30

S&P 500
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UI seeks \$37.5M to expand services

By Luther Turmelle
North Bureau Chief

NEW HAVEN — The United Illuminating Co. is seeking \$37.5 million in federal Department of Energy grant money as it seeks to make its electric power distribution network more interactive with its customers.

The money the utility aims to get would come from DOE's Smart Grid Investment Program and is part of the federal government's economic stimulus package, according to UI officials.

A decision on whether UI will get the grant money is expected in late October or early November, said company spokeswoman Anita Steeves.

If the grant is awarded, UI would pair

the federal money with \$37.5 million of its own to do distribution network upgrades.

"These funds would help accelerate the programs we have in place or have planned to implement," James Torgerson, UI's chief executive officer, said in a statement. "As a result, we will be able to bring the benefits of new technology to our customers much faster."

Smart grid technology refers to devices that transmit real-time price information for electricity or sends some other kind of signal directly to consumers, allowing them to determine how to use energy more efficiently. Among the proposed uses the federal grant money would help fund are:

- Improving consumers' ability to

monitor and manage their energy usage and save money on monthly electric bills.

- Allowing more efficient integration of emerging technologies, such as distributed energy projects and power from renewable sources.

- Enhancing the reliability of the utility's distribution network by expanding technology that is used to detect, isolate and respond to power outages more quickly and effectively.

Additionally, some grant money would be used to prepare the company's distribution network to meet the expected consumer demand for electric vehicles, said Joseph Ballantine, UI's associate vice president of business strategy and development, the unit within the company that

is leading the grant application effort. One of the nation's first mass market electric cars, the Chevy Volt, is expected to make its debut in late 2010.

"You need to have a smart grid that recognizes when a customer is plugging their car in," said Ballantine. "They take a lot of current and there could be a problem if you and your neighbors all try to plug in at the same time."

That phase of the upgrade is expected to be ready for use sometime before the end of 2012, he said.

Luther Turmelle can be reached at lturmelle@nhregister.com or 789-5706. For more details on UI's Smart Grid plans, visit his blog, [Power To The People at http://powertothepointer.blogspot.com](http://powertothepointer.blogspot.com).

'A temporary blip'

House GOP members hear family





Utility pole menaces neighborhood for 2 days

By Rob Varnon
STAFF WRITER

Updated: 08/31/2009 09:58:56 PM EDT
BRIDGEPORT – Twice last week the fire department had to put out a smoldering utility pole at Madison Avenue and Rooster River Boulevard.

On Monday, there was still no definitive answer as to why the incidents occurred and sent police and firefighters to the scene two days in a row.

"Thank God it was raining," said Lorraine James, who lives at the same corner and can see the AT&T-owned utility pole out her window. She reported the pole catching on fire on Friday night and then reported it again Saturday morning. She said the rain on Saturday probably slowed it down.

Police shut down a block of Madison Avenue for several hours Saturday awaiting utility workers to deal with the problem.

There are actually two poles at the site, an older pole, marked with a white "X" and loaded with electric utility equipment, and a newer green pole with nothing on it. James said a crew put the new pole up a couple of weeks ago.

On Saturday, the old pole listed away from Madison Avenue, and the wires struck the new pole and burned a hole in it.

A utility crew did arrive that day and cut the top off the new pole around 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

The United Illuminating Co. reported they had cut

the power to the pole sometime around noon.

Anita Steeves, a UI spokeswoman, confirmed the pole is owned by AT&T. She said no one in the neighborhood lost power as a result of the problem because UI builds redundancies in the system.

An AT&T spokesman said the company is looking into the incident.

Steeves said the utility has up to 60 days to transfer its equipment to a new pole, but it has to be notified the new pole is up and ready to bear equipment. "We have not received a work order from AT&T," she said.

James, who has small children in the house, said it was a scary situation to wake up to. So far she hasn't heard anything about what is going to happen with the old pole.

"They haven't told us anything," she said.

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