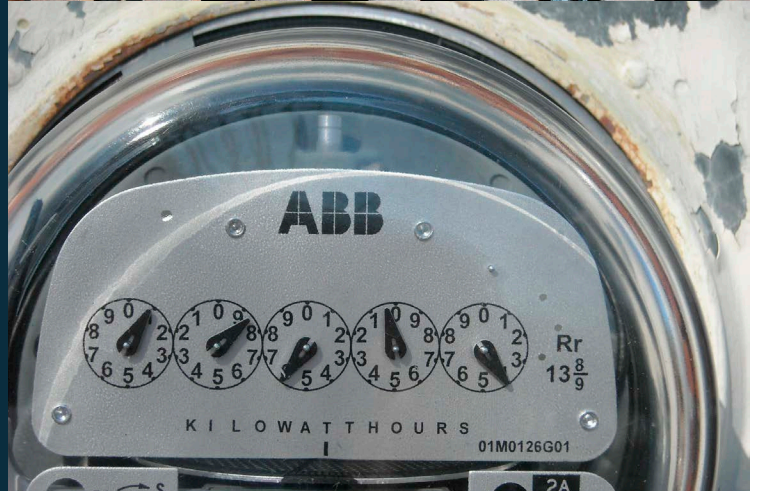
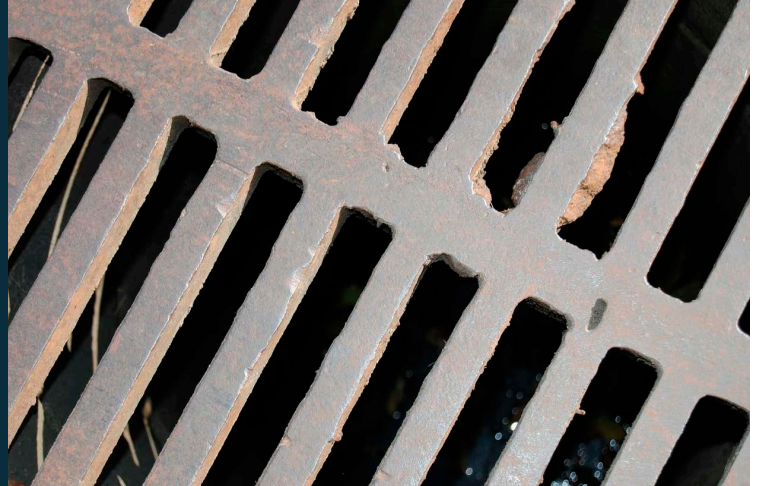
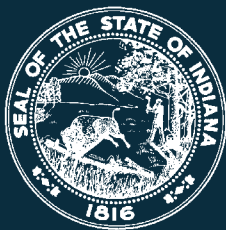


OUCCC

INDIANA OFFICE OF UTILITY
CONSUMER COUNSELOR

ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018

**ENSURING QUALITY,
RELIABLE UTILITY SERVICES
AT THE MOST REASONABLE
PRICES POSSIBLE**



WELCOME!

Fellow Hoosiers:

I am pleased to share the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor's (OUCC's) 2017-2018 Annual Report. In this report, you will see how our highly dedicated team of attorneys, technical experts, and support personnel is working every day to make the utility ratepayer's voice heard before state and federal regulators.

As Indiana's Utility Consumer Counselor, my overriding goal is to drive efficiency and promote effectiveness in all that the OUCC does. I continuously call on all of our highly skilled employees to perform their work with the agency's mission statement in mind. Dedicated advocacy, consumer education, and creative problem solving are critical to the OUCC in both its day-to-day work and its long-term vision.

As numerous forces continue to put upward pressure on utility rates, the OUCC's efforts are more important than ever. Maintaining reasonable prices while preserving the viability of service providers is a crucial balance we strive to maintain. In meeting our statutory obligation to serve as the consumers' representative in utility matters, we are committed to providing the public with the strongest legal and technical representation possible in the state and federal regulatory arenas.

We hope you will find this report helpful and informative. To stay informed throughout the year, please visit our website, sign up for our monthly newsletter at www.IN.gov/oucc/2877.htm, and follow us on social media.

Bill Fine

Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor



THE OUCC'S 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

Our mission statement guides us in all we do on behalf of Hoosier ratepayers.

State law charges the Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC) with representing the interests of all utility consumers, ratepayers, and the public in cases before the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC). The OUCC also represents the public in Indiana appellate court cases involving IURC orders.

In addition, the OUCC represents Indiana ratepayer interests before federal agencies, including the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). We especially focus on matters involving regional electric transmission operators that maintain and oversee the multi-state power grid.

Our attorneys have a combined total of 372 years of legal experience, while our accountants, economists, engineers and additional technical staff bring nearly 840

years of combined professional experience to the table on behalf of Hoosier consumers.

In the State of Indiana's 2017-2018 fiscal year, the OUCC:

- Participated in 450 cases before the IURC, FERC, the Indiana Supreme Court, and the Indiana Court of Appeals.
- Helped achieve approximately \$359 million in savings for Indiana ratepayers. For each dollar in the OUCC's budget, consumers received more than \$54 in reductions to utility rate increase requests.
- Helped achieve millions of dollars in additional consumer savings due to federal corporate income tax cuts, which took effect on January 1, 2018.
- Continued to play a major role in leadership positions with national and regional utility consumer advocacy organizations.

As this report shows, the 56 professionals who work at the OUCC are committed to the agency's mission and bringing their best efforts on a daily basis. Due to legislative changes in utility law and IURC-adopted timeframes, we are under tighter case timelines than ever before while our caseload complexity continues to grow.

Theresa Davis (right), our Electric Division's Administrative Assistant, recently marked 25 years of service with the State (23 with the OUCC). She is pictured with Electric Division Director Stacie Gruca.



DEDICATED ADVOCACY

The OUCC continues to achieve measurable economic savings for consumers. During the State's 2018 fiscal year (July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018), the OUCC's work directly contributed to more than \$359 million in reductions to utility requested rate increases.

Throughout the fiscal year, the OUCC participated in 355 docketed cases before the IURC and 95 non-docketed cases. Non-docketed cases included 30-day filings, rulemakings, appeals, General Administrative Orders (GAOs), and federal cases. While the number of cases is significant, it is important to note the increasing complexity of these cases, addressing novel and emerging issues raised by and affecting the utility industry today.

BASE RATE CASES provide the OUCC and IURC with the only opportunity to thoroughly examine a utility's finances and fiscal health. OUCC legal and technical experts work diligently in these cases to limit proposed rate increases to amounts that are fair for customers, while providing sufficient revenues for the utility to provide safe, reliable service throughout its service territory.

The State's 2017-2018 fiscal year featured rate requests from three of Indiana's large investor-owned energy utilities. The OUCC filed strong cases following weeks of extensive technical and legal reviews, recommending that the proposed increases either be denied or substantially limited. Ultimately, the OUCC and intervening parties succeeded in negotiating settlement agreements, dramatically reducing the utilities' requests.

- Indiana Michigan Power's (I&M's) base rate request [44967] was the largest of the three major rate cases during the fiscal year. I&M initially requested a rate increase of more than \$263.2 million (19.74%) on an annual basis. As a result of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA), I&M's request was adjusted to \$191.5 million (14.36%). The OUCC and numerous additional parties ultimately negotiated a settlement agreement reducing the rate increase to \$96.8 million (7.26%).

EACH CASE BEFORE THE IURC IS ASSIGNED A FIVE-DIGIT CAUSE NUMBER.

CAUSE NUMBERS FOR EACH CASE DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT ARE NOTED IN BRACKETS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IURC CAUSE NO. 44967 IS NOTED SIMPLY AS [44967].

A key factor within the rate case was I&M's proposal to raise its monthly residential customer charge from \$7.30 to \$18.00. The settlement agreement capped the charge at \$10.50. This case drew particularly vigorous public interest with more than 2,700 consumers submitting written comments for the formal case record. The IURC approved the agreement in May 2018.

- Indianapolis Power & Light Company (IPL) requested an annual rate increase [45029] of \$124.5 million (9.10%), which was adjusted downward to \$96.7 million due to the TCJA. After the OUCC and intervenors presented robust cases, weeks of negotiations led to a settlement agreement limiting the annual rate increase to \$43.9 million (3.20%). The settlement received IURC approval in October 2018. It will hold IPL's monthly residential customer charge at its current amount of \$17.00. The utility had proposed raising the charge to \$27.00.
- Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) requested a \$143.5 million (45.5%) rate increase [44988] for its natural gas utility. In the end, the OUCC and additional parties negotiated a settlement agreement limiting the increase to \$84.3 million (26.7%). This agreement mitigates the rate increase as much as possible while allowing for major capital improvements for the safety and reliability of the gas utility's transmission and distribution system. It received Commission approval in September 2018.

The OUCC's Natural Gas Division participated in four additional general rate cases involving smaller investor-owned utilities in Southern Indiana.

DEDICATED ADVOCACY

A settlement agreement on South Eastern Indiana Natural Gas Company's rates [45027] received IURC approval, reducing the utility's request by nearly \$79,000 annually. The OUCC was also able to negotiate a settlement in the Indiana Utilities Corporation [45116] rate case and to resolve most issues through negotiations in the Sycamore Natural Gas [45072] rate case. Switzerland County Gas Co. filed a new rate case [45117] near the end of the fiscal year.

Our Water/Wastewater Division evaluated and filed testimony in a number of rate cases including requests from the municipal water utilities in Evansville [45073], Fort Wayne [45125], Lafayette [45006], South Bend [44951], and additional communities. Aging infrastructure is the common driver in all of these cases, as it continues to be a major concern nationwide. Among these cases' highlights:

- The OUCC and City of Lafayette negotiated a settlement agreement in the utility's first rate case in more than 15 years. A thorough financial and engineering review from the OUCC showed the utility to be well-managed and well-operated.
- In the Fort Wayne rate case, the city has proposed an annual phase-in of its rate request over five years. It is a unique approach since a utility typically implements new rates in one, two, or three phases.
- The Evansville rate case is being litigated with the OUCC recommending approval of roughly half the city's request. At issue is how clearly the utility has defined the specific projects for which it wants additional funds.

Since the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the state's largest investor-owned water utility – Indiana American Water Co. (IAWC) – and the state's largest sewer utility – Citizens Energy Group in Indianapolis – have filed new rate cases. NIPSCO has also filed a new electric rate case. These dockets will keep the OUCC's staff busy and challenged throughout the next several months.

SEVEN-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS, coupled with subsequent, incremental rate increases, continue to require substantial OUCC staff time.

A 2013 Indiana law allows energy utilities to seek IURC approval of these plans, and then recover

most of the plan costs as they are incurred. This is a significant departure from traditional ratemaking, in which a utility seeks rate increases for capital projects after finishing construction and putting them in service. Through the Transportation, Distribution, and Storage System Improvement Charge (TDSIC) rate mechanism, utilities with approved seven-year plans may seek rate adjustments every six months as the projects are being built.

Plans approved to date have implicated a total of nearly \$4.2 billion that is expected to be recovered from consumers through rates in the coming years. Utilities using these plans include:

- Duke Energy [44720]
- NIPSCO Electric and Gas [44733, 44403]
- Vectren Electric and Gas [44910, 44429, 44430]
- Community Natural Gas Co. [44710]
- Midwest Natural Gas Corp. [44952]

Community and Midwest Natural Gas have both used their seven-year plans to expand service to previously unserved rural areas without using the TDSIC tracker. Both utilities received approval of new base rates in 2017.

The larger utilities' plans primarily focus on infrastructure improvements, including replacements of aging gas and electric transmission and distribution lines, substations, transformers, and other equipment in their delivery systems.

Each tracker filing receives a close review from the OUCC's accountants, engineers, and attorneys



External Affairs Director Anthony Swinger discusses the IPL rate case during an AARP interview that was webcast statewide.

DEDICATED ADVOCACY

to ensure compliance with the statute and make sure that all costs are consistent with the plans and prudently incurred.

ADDITIONAL TRACKERS allow utilities to make periodic rate adjustments for specific items, subject to OUCS review and IURC approval. OUCS staff participated in nearly 160 tracker proceedings in fiscal 2017-2018, through which electric and natural gas utilities track billions of dollars in capital and operations expenses for rate recovery each year, including environmental compliance projects, energy efficiency programs, regional electric transmission costs, federal mandate compliance, natural gas pipeline safety costs, and most frequently, costs for electric generating fuels and wholesale natural gas purchases.

Rates can be changed through trackers every three, six, or 12 months depending on the tracker. Fuel Adjustment Clause (FAC) cases allow for quarterly reviews of costs for coal, natural gas, and other fuels at electric generation facilities. The only exception is I&M's FAC which is reviewed every six months.

The OUCS may request a disallowance if its review finds accounting or legal concerns with the filing. One recent example is the Duke Energy FAC proceeding [38707 FAC-111-S1] in which the OUCS and intervening parties discovered that one of the utility's generating units had an unplanned outage due to masking tape being left on a ventilation duct during a maintenance outage. Duke Energy agreed to credit customers \$3 million after the costs were challenged and after a settlement agreement was negotiated.

In Gas Cost Adjustment (GCA) cases, the OUCS protects consumer interests by scrutinizing wholesale natural gas costs that are passed through customer bills as allowed by Indiana law. A major part of this involves ensuring that regulated utilities meet their legal obligations regarding prudent wholesale fuel purchases, and ensuring that wholesale costs are recovered on a dollar-for-dollar basis without mark-up.

Water and wastewater utilities also use trackers to a smaller extent. Distribution System Improvement Charges (DSICs) allow investor-owned water and wastewater utilities to seek expedited rate recovery between full rate cases to pay for replacement of aging infrastructure. Since 2016, Indiana American

Water Co. (IAWC) has filed three such requests [42351 DSIC 9, 10, & 11] with the IURC and received approval to raise rates accordingly. Citizens Energy Group has also requested two rate increases [44990 & 44990 SIA 2] through the System Integrity Adjustment (SIA), which received legislative approval in 2016. This tracker allows a utility to increase rates if it does not recover the revenue levels that were authorized in its most recent general rate case.

While tracker cases are handled within short timeframes, the use of trackers in a broader sense, especially the implementation of new trackers, will need to be watched closely for their potential long-term effects on the ratemaking process in Indiana.

The **TAX CUTS AND JOBS ACT OF 2017**

reduced the federal income tax rate for most investor-owned utilities from 35 percent to 21 percent, effective January 1, 2018. As a result, the IURC opened an investigation [45032] regarding the short- and long-term effects on utility rates due to the tax cuts. Utilities are allowed to include federal income taxes in their rates, as long as they recover those costs on a dollar-for-dollar basis.

The OUCS's case team committed numerous technical and legal staff hours to the investigation. All affected utilities have been ordered to adjust their tariffs to reflect the new 21 percent tax rate. Longer term issues including customer credits for rates collected at the old tax levels since January 1, 2018, have been resolved with many utilities (including Aqua Indiana and large electric and gas



Tiffany Murray, OUCS Deputy Consumer Counselor and lead attorney in the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act investigation, discusses the agency's efforts at the 2018 NASUCA mid-year meeting in Minneapolis.

DEDICATED ADVOCACY

utilities) but are being litigated with others (such as Indiana American Water Co. and several small natural gas utilities).

FEDERAL REGULATORY ISSUES are also an important focus for the OUCC. The Deputy Consumer Counselor for Federal Affairs is responsible for representing Indiana ratepayer interests before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and other federal agencies in which the outcome of a pending proceeding will affect Indiana utility consumers.

Federal issues may also involve an unusually wide range of highly technical matters that can have a direct and immediate impact on state issues. Increasingly, the OUCC is seeing appreciable growth of federal issues impacting Indiana ratepayer interests, especially in the environmental area. This trend is expected to continue in light of the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) changing mandates and the growth of regional transmission organizations (RTOs), particularly the Carmel-based Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) and the Pennsylvania-based PJM Interconnection.

ACQUISITIONS are a growing area of interest in the water/wastewater industry, especially under a 2016 Indiana statute that eases the process for an investor-owned utility to acquire other utilities and then recover the costs from all of its ratepayers.

To date, Indiana American Water Co. has received Commission approval of four such requests, including acquisitions of the Georgetown water [44915] and Sheridan water and sewer [45050] utilities under approved settlement agreements with the OUCC. The other two municipal water acquisitions – Lake Station [45041] and Charlestown [44976] – have been appealed to the Indiana Court of Appeals. The Lake Station appeal, in particular, focuses on whether IAWC's customers should be required to pay for utility infrastructure that will not be used and useful for them. As consolidation continues in the water and wastewater utility industry, the OUCC advocates positions to ensure customers receive the appropriate value for provided services, particularly as the acquiring utility makes major infrastructure improvements.



OUCC Deputy Consumer Counselor Jeffrey Reed prepares for oral arguments before the Indiana Supreme Court in October 2018.

APPELLATE ACTIVITY has increased for the OUCC in the last year, with cases before the Indiana Court of Appeals and the Indiana Supreme Court.

Since June 30, 2016, 19 IURC orders have been appealed involving a number of utilities, including NIPSCO, Vectren, Duke Energy, and Hamilton Southeastern Utilities.

The OUCC has taken an active role in many of these appeals, which tend to be complex and extremely time and labor intensive. Many other agencies outsource appellate work to the Indiana Attorney General's office, or to private law firms specializing in appellate practice. However, all OUCC attorneys are, by training and experience, able to handle these appeals – from writing briefs to participating in oral arguments before the Courts.



OUCC Deputy Consumer Counselors Scott Franson and Dan LeVay prepare to argue a case before the Indiana Supreme Court in March 2018.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Certain cases require creative solutions, especially those dealing with new laws, emerging technologies, and changing federal mandates.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANDATES from the US EPA, combined with federal court activity regarding EPA rules, have created a shifting landscape in which utilities continue to seek cost-effective ways to comply. The landscape is further complicated by various challenges to these mandates in the federal courts, with cases likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

Utility compliance efforts may involve new technology aimed at continuing to use coal-fired power plants in a cleaner and more efficient way, proposals to develop new natural gas-fired generation, and efforts to expand the state's use of renewable energy.

Many of these cases have given the OUCC opportunities to work collaboratively with utilities to address compliance as well as to help mitigate the rate impact for consumers as much as possible.

At the same time, the future of Indiana's **electric generation sources** is a crucial issue with long-term implications for both consumer rates and environmental compliance. The state's generation mix has shifted dramatically from coal to other sources, especially natural gas, over the last decade and will continue to do so. As utilities consider their approaches, it is essential that they thoroughly research their options and the ramifications for their customers.

Combined, these issues present a very complicated puzzle for each utility to consider with scopes and complexities ranging among utilities.

- Vectren Energy Delivery is proposing to overhaul its generation fleet [45052] in a case that is pending at the time of this report. Under its proposal, Vectren would close four of its five coal-fired generating units in southwestern Indiana in 2023, implement \$95 million in new

emissions technology at the remaining coal unit, and build a new natural gas-fired plant in Posey County at an estimated construction cost of \$781 million. Following a five-month review, the OUCC and several additional parties have recommended denial of the request based on several factors, including the need for the utility to more fully evaluate all options for meeting its customers' future power supply needs.

- NIPSCO received approval for a plan [44872] to close ash ponds in compliance with the US EPA's coal combustion residuals (CCR) rule. This case was complicated due to certain capital costs the OUCC objected to and ultimately resolved through settlement discussions, as well as the inclusion of Effluent Limitation Guidelines (ELG) rule projects in the request. After the EPA stayed the ELG rule, NIPSCO re-filed its case to remove the ELG portion.
- Duke Energy [44765] and IPL [44794] started implementing previously approved plans that will allow for compliance with various EPA rules.
- Illustrating the magnitude of these projects, four of Indiana's electric utilities (Duke Energy, IPL, I&M, and NIPSCO) recovered approximately \$526 million through their Environmental Compliance Riders (ECRs) during the state's most recent fiscal year. Utilities recovered about \$1.17 billion through these trackers during the previous two fiscal years.

RENEWABLE ENERGY continues to grow in Indiana. As it does, the OUCC reviews and makes recommendations on utility requests to develop renewable projects and recover the costs through rates. In addition to legal and accounting reviews, engineers examine these proposals to ensure the projects are compatible with the multi-state power grid. Battery storage technology continues to advance and improve, with the use of this technology going hand-in-hand with renewable energy development.

- Recent proposals the OUCC has supported include Duke Energy's purchased power agreement with a new solar facility near Brazil, Indiana [44593].
- In addition, the OUCC, Vectren, and Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana reached an agreement on the utility's proposed new solar farm in Spencer County [45086]. The agreement reduced the proposed consumer rate for this 50-megawatt facility.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

- The OUCC's agreement with Duke Energy in the Camp Atterbury Microgrid [45002] case will allow the utility to construct a new solar-powered generating facility, combined with a new battery energy storage facility at Camp Atterbury, that will be leased to the State of Indiana. Provisions of the agreement, which also allows a new battery energy storage facility in Nabb, Indiana, will protect customers from potential unexpected cost increases.

CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

funded with shareholder dollars, can benefit ratepayers significantly. The OUCC seeks to create these programs whenever possible in case settlements. For example:

- In the I&M rate case settlement [44967], the Commission approved recommendations for I&M to provide funding of up to \$500,000 for a two-year low-income forgiveness pilot program that will provide an opportunity for low-income customers to catch up on their electric bills, contribute new funds for low-income weatherization projects, and create and fund a \$700,000 grant program to assist with economic development in its service territory.
- The latest in a series of settlement agreements on Duke Energy's Edwardsport generating plant [43114 IGCC 17] will provide \$1.7 million for low-income energy assistance and renewable energy development, in addition to a \$30 million reduction in consumer costs if approved.
- Programs in the IPL rate case settlement [45029] include a \$650,000 pilot to forgive low-income customer arrearages, \$150,000 for weatherization projects, and shareholder funds to cover operational costs for a new "roundup" initiative. The "roundup" program is similar to those offered by many rural electric membership cooperatives (REMCs), allowing customers to round their bill payments up to the next dollar. The difference goes toward low-income customer assistance.

INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLANS (IRPs)

are 20-year plans for future generation needs which each major Indiana electric utility must develop and submit to the IURC. An updated plan is required every three years, with the utility holding multiple stakeholder meetings and seeking input from various stakeholders. The OUCC actively participates in these meetings, with I&M, Duke Energy, and NIPSCO developing IRPs in 2018.

IRPs are not formally docketed cases, do not require formal IURC approval, and do not result in immediate changes to rates and charges. Approval to build specific generation, transmission, and distribution projects, including approval to recover costs through rates, comes later in separate, docketed proceedings.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY is another area in which the OUCC engages regularly in creative problem solving. Each major electric and natural gas utility has an oversight board for its energy efficiency plans and programs – referred to in industry parlance as demand side management (DSM). As a voting member of each oversight board, the OUCC provides a crucial and balanced voice on behalf of ratepayers. Each board makes decisions related to program budgets, planning, additions, discontinuation, modifications, and evaluation of energy efficiency programs. In addition, OUCC analysts are heavily involved in IURC cases presented by the state's energy utilities seeking to renew and revise their individually tailored energy efficiency plans.

WATER ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS

can prolong the life of infrastructure and help provide direction on maintenance decisions, while meeting consumer demands and setting rates based on sound operational and financial planning. The OUCC actively encourages this type of planning by the state's water utilities.

TROUBLED UTILITIES present unique challenges and opportunities. Most Indiana utilities are well-operated and well-managed. However,



Jennifer Reed, Leon Golden, and Brien Krieger (left to right), with the OUCC's Natural Gas Division, discuss a pending case.

CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

customers of poorly-run, or troubled, utilities may need long-term solutions to serious service quality and environmental concerns. The OUC seeks investigations of troubled utilities when necessary, and works regularly with the IURC, IDEM, the Indiana Attorney General's Office, and the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA) to identify and address these concerns.

As an example, each agency played an important role in resolving serious environmental concerns with the Harbor Town Sanitary Sewage Corporation in southwestern Indiana [44468]. Following several years of state- and local-level legal proceedings, this utility's assets were purchased by the Posey County Regional Sewer District, which is now providing service to the former Harbor Town customers.

LEAD SERVICE LINES are a serious public health concern for water utilities of all sizes throughout Indiana and the United States. Emerging efforts to address the problem include those to replace customer-owned service lines and socialize the costs among all of the utility's customers.

Within the State's last fiscal year, Indiana American Water Co. requested and received approval for a lead service line replacement plan [45043]. The OUC supports the replacement of lead service lines, but took issue with a specific provision in IAWC's plan that could hold customers responsible for any construction accidents made by the utility or its contractors. The indemnification language in this plan is the subject of a pending appeal.



Muncie utility consumers fill the seats for an IURC public field hearing. State law requires one field hearing in a utility's service territory if the utility requests a general rate increase of at least \$2.5 million annually. Field hearings can also be held at the Commission's discretion.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Fostering public participation in the regulatory process is vital. The OUCC's External Affairs Division maximizes consumer opportunities to learn about their utility services and the regulatory process. The division also promotes public input in the state's process of setting utility rates and customer service standards.

"CONSUMER NEWS... FOR YOU," the OUCC's monthly electronic newsletter, continues to evolve as the agency's primary means of reaching consumers throughout the state and keeping them informed of developments in significant cases.

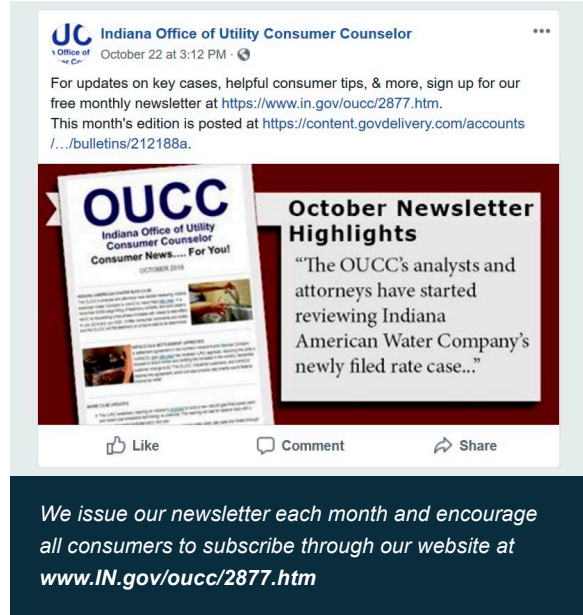
Each month, the newsletter includes case updates and additional items of note, and is structured to allow for a quick, user-friendly read while giving the reader options to look at any case or issue in greater detail. Over the last year, the agency has made it a priority to increase the number of consumer subscriptions to the newsletter, and these efforts continue. Consumers can sign up to receive our newsletter at www.IN.gov/oucc/2877.htm.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH has been another focus for the division over the last year. Through Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, the agency is able to communicate directly with consumers, including general consumer education on electric, gas, and water/wastewater issues, along with updates on pending cases.

ONLINE AT WWW.IN.GOV/OUCC, our website continues to provide the public with timely and relevant information on pending cases and general utility issues, with content specifically focused on consumer interests, needs, and concerns.

IMPROVING THE PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS in pending IURC rate cases involves several steps, including efforts the agency has made on its own and collaborative efforts with IURC staff.

- These efforts include the consumer experience at IURC **public field hearings**, including new signage, improved communications, and clearer consumer check-in procedures. As a result, consumers who attend are well-informed as to the procedures, as well as ways in which they can communicate most effectively. The OUCC has also encouraged more of these hearings in cases with strong public concerns.
- The OUCC has worked to improve the processes for **written consumer comments**. Written comments are invited for the case record in each Commission docket, regardless of whether a public field hearing is held. The agency continues to invite comments proactively through social media channels and other external communiqués. Any comments received in a timely manner are reviewed by OUCC staff and filed with the IURC to be included in the case's formal evidentiary record.



OPERATING EFFICIENTLY, HONING OUR EXPERTISE, AND COLLABORATING NATIONALLY

Our Business Office and administrative assistants are committed to operating the agency efficiently and furthering the value we bring for consumers each day.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES in fiscal year 2017-2018 included dissolving the agency's Resource Planning and Communication Division and incorporating its employees into the Natural Gas and Electric Divisions. This change created a more streamlined agency, which has increased efficiency by having one division responsible throughout the life cycles of major cases.

The agency will move to a new, CRM-based electronic case management and record storage system by the end of 2018. This will allow staff to manage cases more efficiently while enhancing security.

Operational cost-saving measures to drive efficiencies and reduce costs also included renegotiation of the agency's lease, office space renovations negotiated through the lease renewal, and staff efforts to reduce mass print jobs.

STAFF TRAINING is crucial to the agency because the energy and water/wastewater industries are changing rapidly. The OUCC recognizes the need to be at the forefront of emerging policy issues, new technology, and increasing federal mandates. Therefore, it is essential for the agency's staff to have current training and be prepared to engage their industry counterparts on issues that keep growing in complexity and changing in scope.

COLLABORATION at both the national and regional levels is also important as we represent consumers in a changing world. Through the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates (NASUCA), the OUCC regularly shares information and ideas that benefit the agency's technical analysts in light of new trends, emerging technologies, and legal changes to ratemaking

practices. OUCC experts participate actively in NASUCA and hold several significant leadership positions:

- Utility Consumer Counselor Bill Fine was elected to the NASUCA Executive Committee in October 2018.
- Robert Mork – our Deputy Consumer Counselor for Federal Affairs – chairs the NASUCA Electric Committee. He also serves on the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission's Energy and Environmental Market Advisory Committee. Within the last year, Mr. Mork completed a two-year term as president of the Consumer Advocates of the PJM States (CAPS). This organization's members represent more than 65 million consumers in 13 states and the District of Columbia. CAPS focuses on giving consumer advocates a voice in federal-level matters involving the PJM Interconnection.
- Margaret Stull chairs NASUCA's Accounting and Tax Committee. A Chief Technical Advisor in the OUCC's Water/Wastewater Division, Ms. Stull has played an instrumental role in reviving the committee's efforts after several dormant years.
- Edward Kaufman – the Assistant Director of the OUCC's Water/Wastewater Division – continues his service as chair of the NASUCA Water Committee. Mr. Kaufman is also on the Board of Directors for the Society of Utility and Regulatory Financial Analysts (SURFA). SURFA is a nationwide, not-for-profit organization whose experts include utility and financial professionals, public sector leaders, and researchers from colleges and universities.

Edward Kaufman, OUCC Water/Wastewater Division Assistant Director, serves as the chair of the NASUCA Water Committee. OUCC experts participate actively in NASUCA and hold several significant leadership positions.



OUR TEAM

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

William Fine – Utility Consumer Counselor
Barbara Smith – Executive Director,
Technical Operations
Abby Gray – Executive Director, Legal Operations
Krista Orton – Executive Office Director

ELECTRIC

Stacie Gruca – Director
Michael Eckert – Assistant Director
April Paronish – Assistant Director
Lauren Aguilar – Utility Analyst II
Anthony Alvarez – Utility Analyst II
Cynthia Armstrong – Senior Utility Analyst
Wes Blakley – Senior Utility Analyst
Peter Boerger, Ph.D. – Senior Utility Analyst
Theresa Davis – Administrative Assistant
Eric Hand – Utility Analyst II
John Haselden – Senior Utility Analyst
Kaleb Lantrip – Utility Analyst II
Neha Medhekar – Utility Analyst II

NATURAL GAS

Leja Courter – Director
Heather Poole – Assistant Director
Edward Rutter – Chief Technical Advisor
Farheen Ahmed – Utility Analyst II
James Brackin – Utility Analyst I
Leon Golden – Utility Analyst II
Isabelle Gordon – Utility Analyst I
Mark Grosskopf – Senior Utility Analyst
Brien Krieger – Utility Analyst II
Amy Larsen – Utility Analyst II
Bradley Lorton – Utility Analyst II
Jennifer Reed – Utility Analyst II
Kimberly Remy – Administrative Assistant

WATER/WASTEWATER

Scott Bell – Director
Edward Kaufman – Assistant Director
Margaret Stull – Chief Technical Advisor
Takia Bland – Administrative Assistant
Richard Corey – Utility Analyst II
Thomas Malan – Utility Analyst II
James Parks – Utility Analyst II
Carl Seals – Utility Analyst II
Jennifer Sisson – Utility Analyst II
Kristen Willoughby – Utility Analyst II

BUSINESS OFFICE

Darryl Fraylon – Part-Time Receptionist
Mary Lyons – Professional Development
and Technical Specialist
Kimberly Weaver – Office Operations Assistant
Scott Wright – Project Manager

LEGAL

Randall Helmen – Chief Deputy Consumer Counselor
Scott Franson – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Jason Haas – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Lorraine Hitz-Bradley – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Karol Krohn – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Daniel LeVay – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Tiffany Murray – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Jeffrey Reed – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Cheryl Williams – Paralegal

FEDERAL

Robert Mork – Deputy Consumer Counselor
Michael Gahimer – Senior Utility Analyst

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Anthony Swinger – Director
Alyson Sanders – External Affairs Specialist

The screenshot shows the OUCC website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a menu icon and the 'IN.gov' logo. Below that, a search bar and a dropdown menu for 'OUCC' are visible. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'About The OUCC', 'Featured Topics', and 'Consumer Tips & Key Cases'. The 'Featured Topics' section includes a 'We Invite Your Comments' call to action and a 'Line Protection Plans: Questions To Ask Before You Sign Up' article. The 'Consumer Tips & Key Cases' section has expandable categories for Electric, Natural Gas, Telecommunications, and Water/Sewer. A 'Social Links' section at the bottom left shows icons for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

The OUCC offers timely information on pending cases at www.IN.gov/OUCC.

Similarly, our website and newsletter offer consumer tips on energy efficiency, safety, understanding bills, and more.

Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor

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