

## **PUC accepts agreement on regs for Tri-State's resource plan process**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) recently approved a proposal that will allow more transparency and public participation in the electric resource planning process of Tri-State Generation and Transmission Company.

The PUC accepted an agreement filed jointly by Tri-State and Western Resource Advocates (WRA) in which Tri-State will increase the information it files with the PUC, and provide the Commission, the Office of Consumer Counsel (OCC) and the public the opportunity to provide meaningful input in Tri-State's resource planning process.

As a result of the agreement, the PUC voted to close the investigatory docket it opened earlier this year.

"This alternative approach looks promising," PUC chairman Ron Binz said. "We appreciate the hard work by Tri-State and WRA. I think the agreement addresses the goals we had in opening the investigation, and I look forward to allowing the process to proceed and reviewing in a year how successful it has been."

Tri-State, headquartered in Denver, is a non-profit generation and transmission company that supplies electric power to 44 electric distribution cooperatives in four states, including 18 cooperatives in Colorado. Under PUC rules, Tri-State submits a plan to the PUC every four years on how it will meet projected future demand of its members.

The agreement establishes a two-step planning process in which Tri-State will fully consider input from all interested parties in developing its plan. Members of the public also will have an opportunity to comment on the plan to Tri-State before it is filed with the PUC.

The second step is the filing of the plan with the Commission. After the filing, Tri-State will appear before the Commission to fully explain the new plan and the planning process used. The PUC will then solicit public comment, request additional information and issue an order evaluating the resource plan.

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“I think this is a worthwhile approach,” Commissioner Jim Tarpey said. “The expectation is that Tri-State and other parties will work together in meaningful ways, and that the company is receptive to constructive feedback.”

Under the agreement, Tri-State pledged to file with the PUC the first plan under this process by Nov. 30, 2010, a year earlier than previously required. Tri-State also will continue to file annual updates to its resource plan, and will appear before the Commission on an annual basis if requested.

In addition, it will provide an annual opportunity to members of the public, PUC staff and the OCC to meet with Tri-State between plans.