

The Year In Review: 2020

Ameren said safety protocols paid off during COVID challenge

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In 2020, “business as usual” took on a completely different look and feel for our company as well as for our residential and business customers.

At the beginning of the year, our operations leaders and our emergency operations center staff conducted a tabletop exercise. It’s a drill we do every year to review storm restoration processes and practice for a large-scale, worst-case power outage scenario.

This year our preparations took on added significance. Our team had been closely monitoring news of a particularly potent respiratory virus – now known as COVID-19 – that had the potential to cause significant health and safety challenges if it spread to the United States. During the drill, the team added protocols to our preparedness plan to account for potential disruptions to our business operations if the virus were to impact the state of Illinois and our company. Little did we know the impact this pandemic would leave on our company, our community, and our country.

Hindsight being 20-20, I am humbled to say that early prepping was critical to keeping the lights on and the natural gas flowing for our customers. In mid-March, many of our employees quickly began working from home. We also implemented a number of protocols for facility entry, personal protective equipment, personal hygiene, safe

distancing, composition of work teams and alternate reporting locations.

Our ability to maintain continuity of operations was quickly put to the test in early April, when portions of our service territory were hit with a major storm that caused significant damage to our electric delivery infrastructure. Utilizing the safe operating procedures on which the drill was based, we mobilized response teams and outside contractors to safely get the power restored.

It’s a credit to our teams and those on the front line for their patience as we worked through the challenges. I am proud of how we all came together to restore service and overcome hurdles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Residential electric rates to decrease in 2021

In early December, we announced that our residential customers will see a reduction in their electricity bills. The reduction, which was approved by the Illinois Commerce Commission, calls for a \$48.7 million overall reduction in revenue. It is the third consecutive rate decrease for Ameren Illinois electric customers and the seventh overall rate decrease since 2011. Customers who receive their energy supply from Ameren Illinois will pay 2.4 percent less each month for energy next year than they did 10 years ago. Even better, the Ameren Illinois residential rate is 21 percent lower than the national average.

Since we began implementing our modernization action plan, 1.2 million smart meters have been installed, power poles and wires have been strengthened,

and more delivery infrastructure is being placed underground. These enhancements, along with new outage detection technology, have resulted in a 20 percent improvement in system reliability.

High ranking for customer satisfaction

I am happy to share that customer satisfaction has also improved significantly in the eight years that we have been implementing our smart grid plan. Independent research studies consistently rank Ameren Illinois among the best in the energy sector for reliability, communications, and customer service. In mid-December, we received the results of a leading customer satisfaction survey. It ranked Ameren Illinois No. 1 in customer satisfaction among all Midwest Large utilities in the fourth quarter, and No. 2 overall for the year.

And in recent years, the company’s efforts to support the development of renewable energy supply are being acknowledged by residential customers eager for the environmental and cost saving benefits of solar and wind power.

Downstate Clean Energy Affordability Act

Ameren Illinois has worked with legislators and stakeholders throughout Central and Southern Illinois to develop a plan – the Downstate Clean Energy Affordability Act – to maintain affordable performance-based ratemaking and increase the availability of lower-cost renewable energy for delivery to customers across central and southern Illinois.

The plan will place new solar and battery facilities along our existing electric

distribution infrastructure. By spreading the projects across a diverse downstate geographic footprint – and in proximity to our own power poles and power lines – we can keep electricity costs affordable, enhance reliability, and help the state close the gap in its renewable goals. It will also provide an economic development boost to downstate communities, several of which have been impacted by the recent or planned closure of coal production plants.

As I have briefed elected officials, business leaders, and energy stakeholders on the plan, I am sometimes asked whether the provisions included in the bill mean that Ameren Illinois is getting back into energy generation. It’s important to remember that, in deregulated Illinois, customers are able to choose their energy suppliers and this legislation would not change that. Customer choice will continue while energy supply and delivery will remain separate. The renewable energy that will be produced by Ameren Illinois facilities will be transmitted to the wholesale energy market and would put downward pressure on the price of wholesale energy that Retail Electric Suppliers and the Illinois Power Agency draw from for us to deliver to our customers.

The bottom line is that our customers want reliable, affordable energy. They want the power to come on when they flip the switch, and they want it restored in a timely manner if it happens to go out. The Downstate Clean Energy Affordability Act delivers these benefits, while offering customers new options for cleaner, greener energy.

CLEANER ENERGY FOR DOWNSTATE ILLINOIS

Ameren Illinois has a plan to deliver more renewable energy to our Downstate customers.



New solar and battery storage facilities



More electric vehicle charging options



Environmental and economic development benefits for Downstate customers



Tell your state legislator you support the Downstate Clean Energy Affordability Act.

Because Downstate Deserves the Benefits of Clean Energy

