

# Ameren Illinois team remains high energy, chairman says

By RICHARD MARK

To quote legendary St. Louisan and MLB Hall of Famer Yogi Berra, 2021 was like “Deja



vu all over again.” From the outside looking in, much of the year mirrored the last three quarters of 2020 while we adhered to COVID-19 pandemic protocols. Our administrative staff, most of whom continued to work from home, maintained high levels of productivity through adoption of remote technology. Our field workers practiced safe social distancing on the job and kept the natural gas flowing and lights on for our customers. In June, more than 300 Ameren linemen and support personnel traveled to Louisiana to assist with power restoration efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida.

Here are some highlights from 2021:

**We’re No. 1:** In December, J.D. Power released the results of its 2021 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study. I am thrilled to announce that Ameren Illinois ranked #1

in customer satisfaction with residential electric service in the Midwest among large utility providers. This is the first time that Ameren has received top honors in the annual ranking.

The J.D. Power Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Study measures satisfaction among residential customers of the 145 largest electric utilities across the United States, representing more than 101 million households. Customers evaluate the performance of their utility across six factors: Power Quality and Reliability; Price; Billing and Payment; Communications; Corporate Citizenship; and Customer Care.

In the face of unprecedented business and economic challenges and a global pandemic, our co-workers stepped up and delivered for our customers and communities. To have our efforts validated by our customers is the highest honor we can receive.

**Clean energy is good for our customers.** For several years, Ameren Illinois customers have been telling us how much they value clean energy and their desire to support Ameren Illinois-based solar farms. We’re excited to share that there is a provision in the new state comprehensive energy law that Gov. Pritzker signed in September that enables us to build two solar and/or battery facilities in our service territory. We will officially an-

nounce our plans in 2022. While I cannot go into the details just yet, one of the facilities will be in the Metro East and the second will be in our northern region.

We know that a steady transition to clean energy is good for the environment, our communities, and our customers. The new law essentially puts Illinois on a path to achieve 100% clean energy by 2050 and now we have a blueprint to use moving toward the state’s goal and meeting Ameren Illinois’ carbon reduction goals. In addition to solar, the new legislation contains workforce development, and social programs which will impact customer electric bills. We will be transparent in educating our business and residential customers about new charges that we will be required to pass on. And last, but certainly not least, the new legislation allows us to continue making upgrades to our electric system, adding smart technology, storm hardening our physical infrastructure, and preparing the grid for the expected increases in renewable energy generation.

**ICC approves electric vehicle charging plan.** In July, Ameren Illinois received approval from the Illinois Commerce Commission to develop a special electric rate for electric vehicle charging. The ICC’s decision will allow us to offer incentives in the form of bill credits and specialized time-based rates to make

charging an EV more affordable for our customers. The incentives encourage charging at times that will improve the efficiency of the electric distribution grid and put downward pressure on rates for the benefit of all customers. The implementation of favorable charging rates is a big step forward in our efforts to develop the infrastructure to accommodate the expected increases in demand for EVs. Customers can now enroll in the EV Rate Program and should visit [AmerenIllinois.com/EV](http://AmerenIllinois.com/EV) to learn more.

One of the most frequently cited reasons why people indicate reluctance to drive an EV is “range anxiety,” the concern that a charging station will not be available, and they will become stranded if their vehicle loses its charge. Ameren Illinois’ Electric Vehicle Charging Plan will help address this concern by providing rate incentives and supplemental line extension allowances that will improve accessibility to at-home and on-the-road charging infrastructure.

Our EV Charging Plan also includes line extension allowances for charging station installations that serve customers in low-income areas. This is important, because today there are fewer than 60 publicly available charging stations in Ameren Illinois’ 43,700-square-mile service territory. We expect that number to increase significantly

under our new charging program.

**Energy efficiency award.** Our successful re-tooling of a popular energy efficiency program to assist underserved customer populations earned us recognition as Region III Innovative Energy Project of the Year by the Association of Energy Engineers. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, Ameren Illinois delivered low- or no-cost energy-savings services to 8,500 income-qualified customers, enabling those customers to cut their energy bills and stay comfortable while sheltering-in-place.

For safety reasons, we pivoted away from conducting in-home energy assessments during the pandemic, providing customers with Safe and Virtual Energy Efficiency (SAVE) kits containing items such as energy saving LED bulbs, faucet aerators and advanced power strips. The SAVE initiative offered cash incentives to encourage customers to complete a virtually-assisted installation of energy saving measures, including HVAC equipment and insulation.

As we close the book on 2021, we are already planning several key announcements that will benefit our business and electric customers in the Metro East and across our service territory in 2022.

*Richard Mark is chairman and president of Ameren Illinois.*





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Looking to save money on your energy bill? The Power Smart Pricing program and the Peak Time Rewards® program are two energy-saving programs from Ameren Illinois.

<h3>POWER SMART PRICING</h3> <p>Get access to day-ahead hourly pricing so you can shift your energy usage to a time when costs are low to save money.</p>	<h3>PEAK TIME REWARDS</h3> <p>Earn bill credits by reducing energy usage during times of high energy demand.</p>
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