

Public Utility Commission of Texas

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Retail Electric Providers add benefits **Programs enhance basic customer protection rules**

At least 10 retail electric providers in the competitive Texas market now offer enhanced benefits that go above and beyond existing state customer protection laws and PUC rules.

“Deposit waivers for seniors and credits to reduce switching costs will encourage more Texans to find the lowest cost provider or one offering services or products you value,” said PUC Chairman Barry Smitherman. “I urge customers to take advantage of these special offers and shop.”

The additional benefits allow a broader customer base to take advantage of prices that are substantially lower compared to last year. Numerous providers also are alerting customers about LITE-UP Texas, the low-income discount, more often than required, through bill notices, newspaper ads, e-mail alerts and phone calls.

“I appreciate the efforts of these retail electric providers to ensure that the most vulnerable customers are protected during these hot summer months,” said state Sen. Troy Fraser, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce.

Retail electric providers offering enhanced plans include:

- **Reliant, TXU, First Choice Power, Dynowatt, Stream Energy, Gexa, Direct Energy** – Deposit waiver for seniors 62 or older (as low as age 60 in some cases). This benefit is especially important for customers who want to switch providers.
- **TXU, Stream Energy, Reliant** – Credits up to \$250 for customers who enroll in a new plan. This benefit rewards long-term customers concerned about termination fees.
- **Dynowatt, Direct Energy, Tara Energy, Reliant, First Choice Power, Stream Energy, Green Mountain, Gexa, Just Energy, TXU, StarTex Power** – Additional announcements about LITE-UP Texas, the low income discount program. Customers who are not automatically enrolled in the low-income discount program are eligible if their income does not exceed 125 percent of federal poverty guidelines (\$27,563 annually for a family of four). TXU provides its own low-income discount of 10 percent to eligible customers in addition to the LITE-UP Texas discount.

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Most of these benefits are being offered for a limited time through September.

The monthly low-income discount increases effective Aug. 1 to approximately \$46 based on usage of about 1,400 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month.

Low-income customers eligible for the LITE-UP Texas discount should apply immediately at <http://www.puc.state.tx.us/ocp/assist/liteup/index.cfm> or call 1-866-454-8387 toll-free. The 2009 discount is applied only through September. Applications need to be received by Aug. 10 to get the September discount.

Customers can get electricity pricing information and more at www.powertochoose.org or by calling 1-866-PWR-4-TEX (1-866-797-4839) toll-free.

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