



# NEWS & INFORMATION

350 Maple Street • Des Moines, Iowa 50319 • 515.281.5979

John Norris, Chairman

Krista Tanner, Board member

Darrell Hanson, Board member

July 16, 2008

For Immediate Release

13-08

Contact: Rob Hillesland 515.281.3551

Email: [rob.hillesland@iub.state.ia.us](mailto:rob.hillesland@iub.state.ia.us)

Web site: [www.state.ia.us/iub](http://www.state.ia.us/iub)

## Aquila natural gas customers may provide verbal comments in August

In August, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) will hold several hearings to receive Aquila (n/k/a Black Hills Energy) customer comments on the utility's proposal to increase its natural gas service rates in Iowa. Customer comment hearings are typically the only verbal opportunity to provide comments directly to the Board and other parties in a rate case to help shed light on customer impacts.

The following comment hearings are scheduled:

- **Thursday, August 7, 2008, 6:30 p.m.** – *Iowa Communications Network (ICN) hearing*
  - DMACC Newton Campus, 600 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue West, Room 118, **Newton**.
  - Decorah High School, 100 East Claiborne Drive, ICN Room, **Decorah**.
  - Forest City High School, 206 West School Street, ICN Room, **Forest City**.
  - Spencer High School, 800 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, ICN Room, **Spencer**.
  - Webster City High School, 1001 Lynx Avenue, ICN Room, **Webster City**.
- **Tuesday, August 12, 2008, 6:30 p.m.** – *NICC Town Clock Center for Professional Development, 680 Main Street, **Dubuque**.*
- **Wednesday, August 13, 2008, 6:30 p.m.** – *Council Bluffs Public Library, 400 Willow Avenue, **Council Bluffs**.*

## Background Information

On June 2, 2008, Aquila filed a proposal for a permanent annual revenue increase of approximately \$13.56 million (7.6 percent), which if granted would raise monthly bills of residential customers an average of 10.3 percent. In addition to the general rate increase request, Aquila has requested a three-year pilot program for a Capital Additions Tracker, which would recover capital costs of infrastructure improvements.

As permitted by Iowa law, a temporary rate increase of about 5.3 percent (\$9.38 million annual revenue increase), not requiring pre-approval from the Board, went into effect on June 13, 2008. If the permanent rates granted are less than the temporary rates, customers will receive a refund plus interest for any over-collection.

(MORE)

At a public comment hearing, verbal questions and comments may be directed to representatives of Aquila, the IUB, and the Office of Consumer Advocate, which represents the general interests of customers in IUB proceedings. All comments made at the hearing will become part of the permanent record in this rate case. Under Iowa law, the Board has until at least April 2, 2009, to investigate and reach a conclusion on the permanent rate proposal in this rate case.

The IUB is also accepting written public comments in this rate case, identified as Docket No. RPU-08-3. The most effective written comments are concise and make specific points about why someone supports or objects to the rate request. More information, including Board orders in this case and an electronic comment form, is available at [www.state.ia.us/iub](http://www.state.ia.us/iub). Written comments may also be mailed to the Iowa Utilities Board, Executive Secretary, Docket No. RPU-08-3, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069.

According to its 2007 Annual Report information, Aquila serves more than 147,000 natural gas customers in Iowa.

###