

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2021 | COURIERPRESS.COM

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Hearing set for gas rate increase

Public can comment on proposed hike

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USA TODAY NETWORK

EVANSVILLE — Area residents will soon have a chance to comment in person on a proposed increase in natural gas rates for CenterPoint Energy.

The utility, formerly Vectren, filed a petition for a review of its base rates by

the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission last October.

The company last asked for a rate increase of gas rates in 2006.

The same petition also seeks approval to continue the utility's energy efficiency programs through 2025 as well as a program providing gas bill reductions for income-eligible customers

during cold-weather months.

A hearing is scheduled at 6 p.m. Feb. 1 at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Downtown Evansville and is a chance for ratepayers to speak directly to the commission or submit written comments.

CenterPoint officials said in October the increase comes after the completion of a seven-year, \$240 million gas system improvement plan that began in 2013. Spokeswoman Natalie Hedde said more

than 300 miles of steel and cast-iron distribution mains were replaced with new plastic mains.

The utility's 3,200-mile pipeline network serves more than 113,000 customers in nine Southwestern Indiana counties.

The increase, if approved, would go into effect in summer 2021. It would apply only to gas and not to customer elec-

See GAS RATE, Page 7A

021-01-26 Hearing set for gas rate increase



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Thu, Nov 17, 2022