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PSC WILL HOLD MISSOULA HEARING MAY 9 ON MPC RATE CASE

The Public Service Commission will hold a hearing in Missoula on Thursday, May 9, on Montana Power Company's request for increases in electric and natural gas rates. PSC member Bob Rowe will conduct the hearing, which will be held at 7 p.m. in the city council chambers in city hall, 435 Ryman.

When MPC filed its rate case with the PSC last September, the company requested an increase of \$34.9 million in annual electric revenues and \$12 million in annual gas revenues. Last month, four parties to the case, including the Montana Consumer Counsel and MPC, presented to the PSC for approval an agreement to settle several issues in the case. The terms of the proposed agreement include an "alternative rate plan" under which MPC's electric rates would increase by 4 percent in July 1996, by 2 percent in January 1997 and 2 percent again in January 1998.

Other subjects of Thursday's hearing will include:

- the allocation of MPC's increased electric rates among the company's customer classes;
- MPC's proposals to offer real-time pricing and time-of-use pricing;
- MPC's proposal to expand eligibility for the 10 percent low-income discount;
- miscellaneous company proposals to charge fees for late payment, insufficient funds checks and restoral of service after disconnection.

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