

OUR Advisory for Net Billing licensees

The OUR wishes to remind licensees under the net billing programme that in order to be connected to the grid they are required to fulfill **all** the requirements and obligations contained in the Standard Offer Contract which governs this service.

Applicants must comply with ALL the requirements, inclusive of insurance, and must obtain the approval of the Government's Electrical Inspectorate (GEI) Division of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining.

The OUR hereby advises all parties that its role is to develop the framework for net billing. This was achieved through a process of consultation with all the stakeholders, after which the JPS was directed to accept applications that meet the criteria set out in the documentation.

The OUR also conducts due diligence on the applicant, and if found fit, a recommendation is made to the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining to issue a licence.

When a licence is issued to an applicant, it becomes the responsibility of that applicant to conclude the necessary contract with the JPS, and thereafter to install the appropriate infrastructure which must be approved by the GEI before connection to the grid.

Applicants who, having received a licence and fulfilled all the other requirements, experience any difficulty getting connected to the grid, may bring this matter to the attention of the OUR.

The full process is set out in documents posted on the home page of the OUR's website at www.our.org.jm.

STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING



An animated OUR Director General Ahmad Zia Mian (2nd from left) holds guests, the Executive Director of the Bureau of Standards Jamaica Yvonne Hall and Director of Science and Technology James Kerr, in stitches following a recent stakeholders' meeting. Beside the Director General is Deputy Director General Maurice Charvis and at far right is Deputy Director General Hopeton Heron.

OUR approves revised Back-Billing Policy & Procedures for JPS

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has approved a new back-billing policy and procedures for JPS, which will allow the electricity provider to recover amounts that were not billed to its customer's account under specific circumstances. The new policy, which is now in effect, replaces any similar previous Directive issued to JPS.

In November of last year, the OUR directed JPS to revise its back billing policy and procedures in accordance with recommendations contained in a Report entitled: "INVESTIGATION OF THE JAMAICA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY LTD. (JPS) BILLING AND METERING SYSTEM FOR ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION" which was submitted to the OUR in October 2011.

With respect to JPS' back billing policy and practices, the Independent Investigator and former OUR Director General J. Paul Morgan concluded that JPS' back-billing policies did not accord with "best practices". It further concluded, (as exemplified by how they were being applied) that they were vague in certain specified areas which lent itself to inconsistency and did not sufficiently protect the rights of customers. It was therefore determined that JPS' back-billing policies were in need of review and amendment.

Under the revised policy, there is now a reduction in the maximum period (from four to two) for which an account can be back-billed in several instances. Additionally, the revised policy includes the maximum period for which an account can be back-billed where there is alleged illegal extraction of electricity. This was not provided for in the former policy.

The company is now required to issue the Revised Back Billing Policy as a Code of Practice and make it publicly available in accordance with Condition 16 of the Amended and Restated All-Island Electric Licence, 2011.

The full document is available on the OUR website at www.our.org.jm.

OUR targets to lower consumers' power bills

Electricity consumers can expect lower power bills come next month following the completion of the OUR's annual tariff review exercise for the Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS).

The cost reduction comes as the OUR has maintained the system losses target at 17.5% for this period and reduced the heat rate target to 10,200 kJ/kW (kilojoules per kilowatt hour). The heat rate, which is down by 270kJ/kW, is a measure of the efficiency of the conversion of fuel to electricity.

The reduction of the heat rate target was achieved because of the addition of more efficient generation capacity to the grid. Consumers should therefore expect a potential decrease in excess of 1.4% of their total bill based on these targets implemented by the OUR.

The JPS Guaranteed Standards also came in for review during this tariff adjustment and among the changes made is an increase in the number of periods of liability for non-compliance. This means the company can now be held liable for a breach of the standards for up to six periods as against the previous four periods.

The full determination is available on the OUR's website at www.our.org.jm.

OUR establishes interim mobile termination rate

The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has established an interim mobile termination rate which is to become effective on July 15, 2012.

The Office in its Determination Notice of June 04, 2012 set an interim Mobile Termination Rate of five dollars (\$5.00) per minute to be implemented for all calls of both domestic and international origin.

This interim mobile termination rate will only remain in place pending the completion of the long run incremental cost (LRIC) model currently being undertaken by the regulator, which will be used to determine the Mobile Termination Rate in the long term.

The power to set the interim rate was conferred on the Office with the recent passage and signing into law of the Telecommunications (Amendment) Act 2012.

The full Determination Notice is available on the OUR's website at www.our.org.jm.

OUR supports energy conservation



The Office of Utilities Regulation (OUR) has given its support to the Energy Conservation Incentive Programme for Schools organised by the Petroleum Corporation of Jamaica (PCJ). Here Director of Consumer and Public Affairs at the OUR Michael Bryce presents the OUR's 15th anniversary cash award to the winner of the Poster Competition in the age group 6-10, Demar Brackenridge of the Harbour View Primary School.

OUR attends WFER V



The 5th World Forum on Energy Regulation took place in mid-May in Quebec City, Canada. Jamaica was represented at the forum by OUR's Director General Ahmad Zia Mian. Here Mr Mian (left) shares lens time with the incoming chair of the next World Forum to be held in Istanbul Turkey in 2015. The World Forum on Energy Regulation is the world's foremost conference in energy regulation. It was created as a cooperative effort by the world's main regional regulatory associations. It aims at providing a venue where energy regulators and other energy market stakeholders may discuss issues and experiences of common interest.