

# OUTDOORS

## TRAIL, ICE CONDITIONS REPORT

**IVSC**  
The International Voyagers Snowmobile Club posted Thursday the following report on its website at <http://www.ridetheborder.com/trail-report.html>

**VNP**  
All snowmobile trails in Voyageurs National Park are open and staked. Snowmobile trails are in great condition with portages being groomed weekly. Most trails along lake surfaces are also being

groomed weekly, making for excellent riding conditions.  
The snowmobile speed limit within the park is 45 mph on frozen lake surfaces and 25 mph on all overland portages. Speed limit signs are posted at trailheads and overland portages.  
The Rainy Lake Ice Road is open around Dryweed Island and up to Dove Bay. The Kabetogama Lake Ice Road is open from the Kabetogama Lake boat launch to the Ash River boat launch.

To reduce hazards to snowmobile users, all ice blocks are to be immediately chopped up, submerged, or hauled to land. Placement of equipment or any type of structure must be more than 50 feet off the edge of all ice roads and 50 feet off the centerline of all snowmobile trails. Written authorization from the park is required for individuals to plow more than 300 feet on any lake surfaces within the park.  
All snowshoe trails are

open. Echo Bay, Black Bay, and Tilson Connector ski trails are all open, packed, and tracked. However, the back loop of the Pine Trail is closed due to flooding until the trail can be repaired. Signs mark where the trail is closed.  
The Rainy Lake Visitor Center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. During business hours, the visitor center offers maps, information, hot cocoa, snowshoe loans, and cross-country ski rentals.



The view from the IVSC groomer.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

# RATE INCREASE NOTICE

## Notice of Public Hearings for Minnesota Energy Resources For MERC Customers served by the Centra, Great Lakes, and Viking Pipelines

On September 30, 2013 Minnesota Energy Resources Corporation (“MERC”) asked for permission to increase its natural gas rates by approximately \$14.2 million, or about 5.52% overall. Depending upon customer class and usage, the actual percentage of any increase will vary. The requested increase would add about \$4.61 to a typical residential customer’s monthly bill in the MERC Centra, Great Lakes, and Viking Pipeline rate areas.

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (“MPUC”) will make its decision regarding the final rates in October 2014.

### Public Comment

Administrative Law Judge Eric L. Lipman has scheduled public hearings so that customers may present their views regarding MERC’s recently filed rate case. MERC customers and members of the public are invited to attend and to provide comments at the public hearings. You are invited to comment on the adequacy and quality of MERC’s service, the level of rates or other related matters. You do not need to be represented by an attorney in order to participate in these hearings.

### Public Hearings Schedule

**Rochester**  
**Wednesday, March 12 at 12:30 p.m.**  
Rochester City Hall – Room 104  
201 4th Street SE

**Rosemount**  
**Wednesday, March 12 at 7:00 p.m.**  
Dakota County Technical College – Room 2-104  
1300 145th Street East

**Cloquet**  
**Thursday, March 13 at 7:00 p.m.**  
Cloquet Chamber of Commerce  
225 Sunny Side Drive

### Written Comments from the Public

You may also send written comments to  
Administrative Law Judge Eric L. Lipman  
Office of Administrative Hearings  
P.O. Box 64620  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
E-mail: [ratecomments.oah@state.mn.us](mailto:ratecomments.oah@state.mn.us)

Written comments are most effective when they include:

- 1) the issue in MERC’s proposal you are addressing;
- 2) your specific recommendation; and
- 3) the reason for your recommendation.

Please include Docket Numbers OAH 8-2500-31126 and MPUC G-011/GR-13-617 in all communications. The deadline for written comments is 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 27, 2014.

### Accommodations

If you need any reasonable accommodation in order to enable you to fully participate in these public hearings (i.e., sign language or large print materials), please call the MPUC at 651-296-0406 (voice) or 1-800-657-3782 at least one week in advance of the meeting. Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.

### Important - Comments are Publicly Available

Comments will be made available to the public on the MPUC’s website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The MPUC does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

### Evidentiary Hearings

Formal evidentiary hearings on MERC’s proposal are scheduled to start on May 13, 2013 in the MPUC’s Large Hearing Room, 121 Seventh Place East, Suite 350, St. Paul, MN. The purpose of the evidentiary hearings is to allow MERC, the Minnesota Department of Commerce-Division of Energy Resources, the Minnesota Office of the Attorney General-Antitrust & Utilities Division and others to present sworn testimony and to cross-examine witnesses on the structure and reasonableness of the proposed rate increase.

Anyone who wishes to formally intervene as a party to these proceedings must file and serve a Petition for Intervention under Minnesota Rule 1400.6200.

**MERC requested the rate changes described in this notice. The MPUC may either grant or deny the requested changes, in whole or in part, and may grant a lesser or greater increase than that requested for any class or classes of service.**

### Effect of Rate Changes

Below are examples of the effect of the proposed increase on typical bills of MERC customers served by the Centra, Great Lakes, and Viking pipelines. Individual changes may be higher or lower depending upon actual natural gas usage.

### PROPOSED CHANGE IN AVERAGE MONTHLY BILLS

MERC Centra, Great Lakes, & Viking Company Service Area				
Customer Class	Average Monthly Usage (Therms)	Present Monthly Bill*	Interim Monthly Bill	Proposed Monthly Bill
General Service - Residential Sales	68	\$58	\$61	\$63
General Service - Small Commercial & Industrial Sales	74	\$67	\$71	\$74
General Service - Large Commercial & Industrial Sales	639	\$482	\$500	\$491
Small Volume Interruptible Sales	4,281	\$2,514	\$2,591	\$2,546
Large Volume Interruptible Sales	46,874	\$22,859	\$23,096	\$23,472
Small Volume Joint Sales	4,049	\$2,498	\$2,585	\$2,538
Small Volume Interruptible Transportation	10,648	\$1,329	\$1,499	\$1,425
Small Volume Joint Transportation	6,192	\$980	\$1,106	\$1,068
Large Volume Interruptible Transportation	79,176	\$3,070	\$3,464	\$4,138
Large Volume Joint Transportation	47,348	\$2,349	\$2,650	\$3,044
Super Large Volume Interruptible Transportation	344,795	\$3,301	\$3,348	\$3,391

\* The present rate levels identified in this application represent the rates authorized in Docket No. G-007,011/GR-10-977.

In addition to the proposed increases in the average monthly bill described in the table, MERC is proposing to increase the **monthly customer charge** and the **per therm distribution charge** for all of its customers.

### For more information

You may visit MERC’s offices during normal business hours to examine the current and proposed rate schedules. Our offices are located in  
Bemidji, 301 2nd Street NW  
Cloquet, 910 Cloquet Avenue  
Fairmont, 304 North Park Street  
Rochester, 3460 Technology Drive NW, and  
Rosemount, 2665 145th Street West  
Web: [www.minnesotaenergyresources.com/company/rate\\_case.aspx](http://www.minnesotaenergyresources.com/company/rate_case.aspx)

You may contact the Minnesota Department of Commerce at:  
85 7th Place East, Suite 500  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
Phone 651-539-1534  
Web: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp>. Select 13 in the year field, enter 617 in the number field, click on Search, and the list of documents will appear on the next page.

You may register a comment or complaint with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission at:

121 7th Place East, Suite 350  
St. Paul, MN 55101-2147  
Email: [PublicComments.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:PublicComments.puc@state.mn.us)  
Phone: 651-296-0406 or 1-800-657-3782

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