



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WELCH CUSTOMERS INVITED TO CELEBRATE OKLAHOMA ARBOR DAY

JOPLIN, MO – March 20, 2015 – In recognition of Oklahoma Arbor Day, The Empire District Electric Company invites customers to receive a complimentary tree at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, March 26, at the Civic Auditorium, 610 S. Curtis in Welch, Oklahoma. Eastern Redbud seedlings, Oklahoma's state tree, will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Students from Welch Elementary School will take part in the Arbor Day celebration with Empire arborists conducting a tree planting demonstration and sharing information about the importance of planting the right tree in the right place.

For the sixth consecutive year, the Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Empire as a Tree Line USA Utility for demonstrating best practices in utility arboriculture. To receive this special designation, a utility must follow quality tree care standards and provide annual worker training. Tree Line USA utilities must also participate in tree planting, public education and tree-based energy conservation efforts.

For more information about Empire's vegetation management program and tree planting tips, visit us at www.empiredistrict.com/trees.

Based in Joplin, Missouri, The Empire District Electric Company (NYSE: EDE) is an investor-owned, regulated utility providing electric, natural gas (through its wholly owned subsidiary The Empire District Gas Company), and water service, with approximately 218,000 customers in Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. A subsidiary of the Company also provides fiber optic services.

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