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### **EMPIRE DISTRICT NAMED FINALIST FOR 2016 EDISON AWARD, ELECTRIC POWER INDUSTRY'S HIGHEST HONOR**

JOPLIN, MO – June 6, 2016 – In recognition of their distinguished leadership, innovation, and progress in advancing the electric power industry, The Empire District Electric Company was named as one of eight U.S. finalists for the Edison Electric Institute's (EEI's) 2016 Edison Award, the electric power industry's most prestigious honor.

The project selected for this honor is the Empire Pole Innovative Construction Platform (EPiC). This platform incorporates an entirely new pole and transmission structure design, as well as a construction and implementation process. Based on the success Empire has with the platform, if adopted by companies industry-wide, this new design could significantly reduce costs and increase efficiency across the country.

"In addition to reducing costs and increasing efficiency," explains John Donaldson, Director of System Performance, "This platform also reduces lengthy outages because structure bases can be installed under energized lines."

According to EEI President Tom Kuhn the electric utility industry is in the midst of a profound transformation. "This year's Edison Award finalists demonstrate that innovative and groundbreaking projects are underway across the electric power industry," he adds. "These companies are delivering the energy future that customers want by building smarter energy infrastructure, providing clean energy, and creating innovative energy solutions."

The 89th annual Edison Award will be presented later this month during the EEI Annual Convention in Chicago. A panel of former electric company chief executives will select the winning U.S. and international companies.

Other finalists for this year's U.S. Edison Award include American Electric Power, Arizona Public Service Company, Edison International, Green Mountain Power, Indianapolis Power & Light Company, Vermont Electric Power Company, and Xcel Energy.

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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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