



EYE ON THE INDUSTRY

**Monthly Notes on Issues
Affecting Wisconsin Consumers**

Is the ink dry yet? On the heels of last year's negotiated '**billion-dollar give-back**' to angry customers, Illinois utilities **Ameren** and **Commonwealth Edison** have applied for new rate hikes. A political firestorm over 2007 rate increases moved the companies to negotiate rebate packages, lest lawmakers revive an expired **10-year rate freeze**; now, if approved, new rate requests would recoup for utilities about 60 percent of the give-backs. They told you so: Both utilities announced they'd be back for more rate hikes while rebate negotiations were in progress. **Wisconsin** regulators are to study, and presumably implement, rate "decoupling" under recommendations from the Governor's **Global Warming Task Force**. The ratemaking method would allow utilities to recover from customers partial payment for electricity *not* used as result of energy efficiency, theoretically removing a disincentive for companies to run effective conservation programs. **Cockeyed Optimists?** A genuine headline this spring in the Allentown (PA) *Morning Call*: "The Road to Electric Deregulation is Growing Bumpy."