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Empire District Electric proposes closing Asbury coal plant in Missouri

August 06, 2019



[S&P Global Market Intelligence \(\\$\):](#)

Empire District Electric Co. continues to see no future for its coal-fired Asbury power plant in Missouri and could potentially shutter the facility as soon as the end of this year.

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Commission an integrated resource plan proposing retirement of the 198-MW plant by the end of this year and the addition of solar and storage resources starting in 2022. The plan also incorporates 600 MW of new wind generation that had previously been approved by regulators.

The company said the plant, located in Jasper County, Mo., is “not a cost-effective resource for customers going forward,” given capital investments needed to meet environmental regulations and tough market conditions that are not expected to improve. Further, there are less expensive options to meet future capacity and energy needs, namely solar, wind and storage technologies.

While the plan floats the idea of a 2019 retirement date, the company said it might take longer to close the plant, given notice requirements and shutdown procedures. For instance, Empire District has to give six months’ notice of a planned retirement to the Southwest Power Pool, safely and reliably run the plant with minimum staff levels and combust as much of the usable coal as possible.

Company officials will continue to assess the best time to retire Asbury in the coming months. “In the meantime, Empire is currently working with an independent engineering firm to assess the potential demolition costs as well as evaluate whether the plant can be sold and if

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Empire District in 2017 proposed to retire the plant, which has been operating since 1970, as part of a plan to develop 800 MW of wind by the end of 2020. At the time, the company said it wanted to retire the plant before making \$20 million in environmental compliance upgrades needed by April 2019. But after discussions with stakeholders, the company revised the plan to add 600 MW of wind instead of 800 MW and keep the Asbury plant operating pending the development of an integrated resource plan. The commission approved the updated proposal in July 2018.

More (\$): [Empire District suggests earlier retirement of Mo. coal plant](#)

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