

Energy Choices and Tips to Avoid Fraud and Deception

Beware of deceptive and even fraudulent door to door sales practices, trying to convince you to save money on your electrical or gas bill. The village currently is under contract with our own electrical aggregation program reviewed by the village board to help you avoid a very complicated process to get the best possible price for electricity. Each resident received a letter with information about the program and pricing, also giving you the option to opt out if you were not interested in staying with the program. We work with a representative to help us find the best pricing and lock it in for the duration of a contract. At anytime Ameren's electricity prices go below our contract price, the village will send out a news release to notify our residents explaining how to opt out of our aggregation program and return back to Ameren to get the better pricing. Here are a few tips to protect you from making the mistake of being deceived by an aggressive energy company salesperson. Some of these companies ask you to sign a long-term contract, and getting out of one is likely to involve cancellation fees and a lot of hassle. As with all consumer choices, a little knowledge can go a long way.

First off if someone comes to your door purporting to represent one of these companies, ask to see a business card, personal ID and a registration permit from the village. Before inviting the rep into your home, call his or her office to confirm the individual's identity. If the company claims to be the company that the village has a contract with or your current energy supplier contact the village or your company to confirm that a sales rep is in your area. Even if an offer seems above-board, never provide a door-to-door rep or phone rep with:

- *A utility bill containing your account number,

- *Payment information such as credit card numbers, or

- *Personal information such as your Social Security number,

- *A legitimate alternative energy salesperson should be willing to leave materials so you can review them at your leisure and research your options. Be particularly suspicious of any high-pressure tactics such as special rates if you "sign today."

- *And, of course, if a rep makes threats or simply makes you uncomfortable shut the door and call the police.

Never hesitate to call the village office with questions.

217-469-7371

Office Hours: 7:00-3:30 (Closed 12:30-1:00)