



PRESS RELEASE

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EMPIRE ANNOUNCES PROPERTY DONATION TO DOWNTOWN JOPLIN ALLIANCE

JOPLIN, MO – December 27, 2016 – The Empire District Electric Company will present the deed to property located at 931 East 4th Street in Joplin to the Downtown Joplin Alliance (DJA) at 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 28, 2016. The donation presentation will take place at the 4th Street property.

Empire purchased the former Joplin Casket Company property in 1916. The facility housed the Company's line operations, engineering, meter shop, and stores departments until 2014.

According to Brad Beecher, president and CEO, "The 4th Street location served Empire well for nearly 100 years, but having grown from serving 2,400 customers in 1916 to 218,000 customers today, the property could no longer accommodate our operations."

Beecher adds, "We are impressed with the energy DJA brings to the revitalization of the downtown Joplin area and we are pleased to help them further their mission."

Lori Haun, DJA board president, stated, "We are thrilled to be the recipient of this substantial gift. Our long-term vision for the bulk of the space is the creation of a vibrant, four-season city market. A place where citizens can find the best of what this area has to offer; meats, cheeses, wine, beer, crafters, artisans and any number of other vendors, in a collection of permanent and rotating market stands."

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 provides fiber optic services. For more information regarding Empire, visit www.empiredistrict.com.

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