

Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin: Celebrates 40 years of consumer advocacy in Wisconsin

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The Citizens Utility Board of Wisconsin will celebrate four decades of standing up to power on behalf of homeowners, renters and small businesses on April 7 in Milwaukee.

Lakefront Brewery, a CUB small business member, will host the event starting at 6:30 p.m.

CUB, the state's independent consumer voice, was created in 1979 to advocate for the interests of residential and small business customers in utility cases decided by the state Public Service Commission.

Wisconsin was the first state in the country to create a Citizens Utility Board to advocate for fairness and affordable prices for utility customers.

“Wisconsin is known for being forward thinking in so many ways, and CUB is part of that legacy,” said Tom Content, CUB’s executive director. “We were the first state to regulate monopoly utilities by creating a PSC back in 1907. And we were the first state to create a Citizens Utility Board to advocate for the ‘little guy.’ “

CUB’s advocacy has helped save customers almost \$3.4 billion since 2006, and CUB continues to advocate for fairness and lower rates. That includes \$84 million in 2018 alone. In 2017, CUB hired an in-house utility analyst, an expert who previously worked at the Public Service Commission. This enabled CUB to advocate for more

customers across the state in more cases.

“Even with the savings we helped realize, Wisconsin’s electricity rates are above the Midwest and national average,” he said. “It goes to show that a strong consumer voice is still needed today to help bring costs back in line, and for our leaders to keep the interests of hard-working customers in mind when they consider utility proposals that will add to already high profits.”

Through a Citizens Utility Board, customers who don’t have the means to advocate on their own gain a collective voice. That’s important because utilities and large businesses have the means to lobby for their own interests and can easily afford to have a seat at the table when decisions affecting their bottom lines are made.

CUB’s 40th anniversary is taking place at a time when the state’s largest utility company, WEC Energy Group, is expected to seek to increase rates for customers of its utilities We Energies of Milwaukee and Wisconsin Public Service of Green Bay.

CUB’s Milwaukee celebration on April 7 will feature a brewery tour focusing on Lakefront Brewery’s environmental sustainability, as well as information about CUB and its work, including the Utility Bill Clinics it hosts for customers. Outpost Natural Foods, a CUB small business member, will sponsor a dessert station at the event.

Tickets are \$25 each and include a free glass of beer and a variety of appetizer favorites. They can be purchased at www.cubwi.org.