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1 message

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Algonquin to vote on seeking electric bids
By Elena Ferrarin Daily Herald
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The question these days seems to be, which municipalities aren't looking to negotiate lower rates for electricity.

Like most of their neighbors, Algonquin voters will decide if they want the village to negotiate lower electricity rates. The village board unanimously approved this week placing an electricity aggregation referendum question on the March election ballot, village management assistant Mike Kumbera said.

If the referendum question is approved by voters, the village will negotiate a bulk purchase of electricity that, if successful, could result in savings of up to 20 percent for residential and small commercial property owners, Kumbera said.

The village would switch electricity providers only if the bids are favorable. The electricity could be supplied by a different company, but ComEd would continue to handle billing and repairs.

Residents and small business owners would be able to opt out of the program if they so wish, Kumbera said.

McHenry, Crystal Lake, Carpentersville, East Dundee, West Dundee, Cary, Lake in the Hills, Huntley and Pingree Grove also are planning such referendums for March 20 ballot. Elgin also is considering doing so.

The McHenry County Board is scheduled to vote on the issue for its unincorporated areas on Dec. 20.

Residents of Fox River Grove and Harvard have already switched to new power suppliers after voter approved referendum questions in April, said Anna Bicanic Moeller, executive director of the McHenry County Council of Governments.

The agency is working with the county and 14 of its municipalities to solicit proposals from consultants who will assist in the informational campaign ahead of the election, Bicanic Moeller said. If voters approve the change, the consultant also will assist in soliciting bids for lower electricity rates.

"It's about using economies of scale; trying to lower residents' costs and keeping that money local instead of sending it off to ComEd," she

said.

So far, the Council of Governments has received proposals from five consultants, including a couple of electricity suppliers that, if selected, wouldn't be able to bid to become suppliers, she said.

McHenry County and the Council of Governments will select one of the consultants, but it will be up to each municipality to make the final choice, she said.
