

EL PASO ELECTRIC CO /TX/
Form 8-K
July 09, 2010

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15 (d) OF THE
SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported):

July 7, 2010

El Paso Electric Company

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

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(State or other jurisdiction
of incorporation)

(Commission
File Number)

(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

Stanton Tower, 100 North Stanton, El Paso, Texas
(Address of principal executive offices)

(915) 543-5711

79901
(Zip Code)

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

N/A

(Former name or former address, if changed since last report)

Check the appropriate box below if the Form 8-K filing is intended to simultaneously satisfy the filing obligation of the registrant under any of the following provisions:

- Written communication pursuant to Rule 425 under the Securities Act (17 CFR 230.425)
- Soliciting material pursuant to Rule 14a-12 under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14a-12)
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 14d-2(b) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.14d-2(b))
- Pre-commencement communications pursuant to Rule 13e-4(c) under the Exchange Act (17 CFR 240.13e-4(c))

Item 8.01 Other Events.

Transmission Dispute with Tucson Electric Power Company (TEP). As previously disclosed, in January 2006, El Paso Electric Company (the Company) filed a complaint with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the Commission) to interpret the terms of a Power Exchange and Transmission Agreement (the Transmission Agreement) entered into with TEP in 1982. TEP filed a complaint with the Commission one day later raising virtually identical issues. TEP claimed that, under the Transmission Agreement, it was entitled to up to 400 MW of firm transmission rights on the Company s transmission system that would enable it to transmit power from a new generating station (the Luna Energy Facility (LEF) located near Deming, New Mexico) to Springerville or Greenlee in Arizona. The Company asserted that TEP s rights under the Transmission Agreement do not include transmission rights necessary to transmit such power as contemplated by TEP and that TEP must acquire any such rights in the open market from the Company at applicable tariff rates or from other transmission providers. On April 24, 2006, the Commission ruled in the Company s favor, finding that TEP does not have the transmission rights under the Transmission Agreement to transmit power from the LEF to Arizona. The ruling was based on written evidence presented and without an evidentiary hearing. TEP s request for a rehearing of the Commission s decision was granted in part and denied in part in an order issued October 4, 2006, and hearings on the disputed issues were held before an administrative law judge. In his initial decision dated September 6, 2007, the administrative law judge found that the Transmission Agreement allows TEP to transmit power from the LEF to Arizona but limits that transmission to 200 MW on any segment of the circuit and to non-firm service on the segment from Luna to Greenlee. The Company and TEP filed exceptions to the initial decision.

On November 13, 2008, the FERC issued an order on the initial decision finding that the transmission rights given to TEP in the Transmission Agreement are firm and are not restricted for transmission of power from Springerville as the receipt point to Greenlee as the delivery point. Therefore, pursuant to the order, TEP can use its transmission rights granted under the Transmission Agreement to transmit power from the LEF to either Springerville or Greenlee so long as it transmits no more than 200 MW over all segments at any one time. The FERC also ordered that the Company refund to TEP all sums with interest that TEP had paid it for transmission under the applicable transmission service agreements since February 2006 for service relating to the LEF. On December 3, 2008 the Company refunded \$9.7 million to TEP. The Company had established a reserve for the rate refund of approximately \$7.2 million as of September 30, 2008, resulting in a pre-tax charge to earnings of approximately \$2.5 million in 2008. The Company also paid TEP interest on the refunded balance of approximately \$0.9 million, which was also charged to earnings in 2008. The Company filed a request for rehearing of the FERC s decision on December 15, 2008, seeking reversal of the order on the merits and a return of any refunds made in the interim, as well as compensation for all service that the Company may provide to TEP from the LEF over the Company s transmission system on a going forward basis.

On July 7, 2010, the FERC denied the Company s request for rehearing. The Company has sixty days from the date of the FERC s order to appeal the decision to the federal court of appeals. The Company is evaluating an appeal of the FERC s decision and cannot predict the outcome of any such potential appeal. If the order is not reversed, the Company will lose the opportunity to receive compensation from TEP for the disputed transmission service in the future.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, the Registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned hereunto duly authorized.

El Paso Electric Company

By: /s/ MARY E. KIPP
Name: Mary E. Kipp
Title: Senior Vice President General Counsel and
Chief Compliance Officer

Dated: July 09, 2010