

Metropolitan Edison, Penelec, Jersey Central Power & Light, West Penn Power, Potomac Edison, & Mon Power. Provides electric service to 6.2 million customers in OH, PA, NJ, WV, MD, & NY. Acq'd Allegheny Energy 2/11. Electric revenue breakdown: residential,

tion rate: 2.7%. Has 12,400 employees. Chairman: Donald T. Misheff. CEO and President: Steven E. Strah. Incorporated: Ohio. Address: 76 South Main Street, Akron, Ohio 44308-1890. Telephone: 800-736-3402. Internet: www.firstenergycorp.com.

249 203 171 Fixed Charge Cov. (% ANNUAL RATES Past Past Est'd '19-'21 of change (per sh) 10 Yrs. to '25-'27 Revenues -7.0% -10.5% 4.0% -5.0% 5.0% 1.5% 'Cash Flow' -5.5% -3.0% Earnings -3.5% -7.0% 4.5% 7.0% Dividends Book Value -10.5%

% Change Customers (vr-end)

NA

+.3

NA

NA

+.6

NA

NA

+.4

| Cal-<br>endar                        | QUARTERLY REVENUES (\$ mill.) Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30 Dec.31 |  |  |                                      | Full<br>Year                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2019<br>2020<br>2021<br>2022<br>2023 | 2883<br>2709<br>2726<br>2989<br>3150                      | 2516<br>2522<br>2622<br><b>2900</b><br><b>3050</b> | 2963<br>3022<br>3124<br><b>3400</b><br><b>3550</b> | 2673<br>2537<br>2660<br>2811<br>2950 | 11035<br>10790<br>11132<br>12100<br>12700          |
| Cal-<br>endar                        | EARNINGS PER SHARE A<br>Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30 Dec.31       |  |  |                                      | Full<br>Year                                       |
| 2019<br>2020<br>2021<br>2022<br>2023 | .66<br>.05<br>.62<br>.51                                  | .63<br>.57<br>.53<br><b>.52</b><br><b>.57</b>      | .75<br>.85<br>.76<br><b>.76</b>                    | d.20<br>.39<br>.77<br>.61<br>.62     | 1.84<br>1.85<br>2.69<br><b>2.40</b><br><b>2.60</b> |
| Cal-<br>endar                        | QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID B = Mar.31 Jun.30 Sep.30 Dec.31  |  |  |                                      | Full<br>Year                                       |
| 2018<br>2019<br>2020<br>2021<br>2022 | .36<br>.38<br>.39<br>.39<br>.39                           | .36<br>.38<br>.39<br>.39                           | .36<br>.38<br>.39<br>.39                           | .36<br>.38<br>.39<br>.39             | 1.44<br>1.52<br>1.56                               |

FirstEnergy is awaiting the completion of an asset sale. The company agreed to sell a 19.9% stake in its electric transmission subsidiary for \$2.375 billion. FirstEnergy raised \$1.0 billion from a sale of 25.6 million shares of common stock in December. The majority of the cash is being used to pay down debt. Other options include a pension contribution or funding capital spending. Strengthening the balance sheet is an area of management's focus because some of the company's credit ratings are below investment grade. The transmission sale is expected to close by the end of May.

Share profits will probably decline in 2022. Average shares outstanding will be higher due to the aforementioned stock sale. Due to a regulatory settlement, First-Energy will refund \$96 million of previously collected revenues and provide \$80 million in rate credits to its Ohio customers this year (followed by \$60 million in 2023, \$45 million in 2024, and \$25 million in 2025). In addition, some \$150 million of annual corporate costs that were previously capitalized are now being treated as ex-

penses. Our estimate of \$2.40 a share is

near the low end of FirstEnergy's guidance (on a GAAP basis) of \$2.37-\$2.57.

We look for a partial earnings recovery next year. The credits in Ohio will be lower. There ought to be a benefit from moderate load growth. Some of the company's capital investments are recoverable through various regulatory mechanisms. We trimmed our estimate by a nickel a share due to the possibility that pension expense will be greater than previously anticipated. We think a resumption of dividend growth is possible, too. First-Energy's targeted range for the payout ratio is 55%-65%

The dividend yield is slightly above the utility average. The possible resumption of dividend growth next year is another advantage. On the other hand, total return potential is negative for the next 18 months and unspectacular for the 2025-2027 period. Moreover, investors should be aware of various audits by state commissions stemming from improper contacts with state legislators in Ohio. This caused the board to replace FirstEnergy's chief executive officer in 2020.

Paul E. Debbas, CFA

(A) Dil. EPS. Excl. nonrec. loss: '13, \$2.07; '14, 17¢; '15, 63¢; '16, \$16.59; '17, \$6.61; '21, 42¢; gains (loss) from disc. ops.: '18, 66¢; '19, (17¢); '20, 14¢; '21, 8¢. '20, '21 EPS don't sum

due to chg. in shs. or roundg. Next egs. report due late July. (B) Div'ds pd. early Mar., June, Sept., & Dec. 3 div'ds in '13, 5 in '18. ■ Div'd on avg. com. eq., '21: 18.5%. Reg.: OH, Above reinv. avail. (C) Incl. intang. In '21: \$9.98/sh.

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability B+ 80 Price Growth Persistence **Earnings Predictability** 50

May 13, 2022

To subscribe call 1-800-VALUELINE