

Metropolitan Edison, Penelec, Jersey Central Power & Light, West Penn Power, Potomac Edison, & Mon Power. Provides electric service to 6.214 million customers in OH, PA, NJ, WV, MD, & NY. Acq'd Allegheny Energy 2/11. Electric revenue breakdown: residen-

depreciation rate: 2.7%. Has 12,335 employees. Chair: John W. Somerhalder II. President and CEO: Brian X. Tierney. Incorporated: Ohio. Address: 76 South Main Street, Akron, Ohio 44308-1890. Telephone: 800-736-3402. Internet: www.firstenergycorp.com

203 171 291 Fixed Charge Cov. (% ANNUAL RATES Past Past Est'd '20-'22 of change (per sh) 10 Yrs. to '26-'28 Revenues -6.5% -9.5% 4.0% 'Cash Flow" -6.5% -1.5% 2.5% 4.0% -3.0% Earnings 4.5% 7.0% Dividends Book Value

k Load Summer (Mw)

% Change Customers (vr-end)

52034 54027 141823 145250

NA

+.6

147481

NA

+.4

ΝĂ

+.4

Cal- endar	QUAR Mar.31		VENUES ( Sep.30	\$ mill.) Dec.31	Full Year
2020	2709	2522	3022	2537	10790
2021	2726	2622	3124	2660	11132
2022	2989	2818	3475	3177	12459
2023	3231	3006	3675	3363	13275
2024	3400	3175	3875	3550	14000
Cal-	EARNINGS PER SHARE A				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2020	.66	.57	.84	.32	2.39
2021	.69	.59	.82	.51	2.60
2022	.60	.53	.79	.50	2.41
2023	.60	.47	.90	.58	2.55
2024	.65	.50	.95	.60	2.70
Cal-	QUARTERLY DIVIDENDS PAID B =				Full
endar	Mar.31	Jun.30	Sep.30	Dec.31	Year
2019	.38	.38	.38	.38	1.52
2020	.39	.39	.39	.39	1.56
2021	.39	.39	.39	.39	1.56
2022	.39	.39	.39	.39	1.56
2023	30	30			

FirstEnergy's new chief executive should be able to build upon the many positives that have taken place at the **company of late.** On June 1st, Brian Tierney, who served as American Electric Power's executive vice president of strategy after a 12-year stretch as that company's CFO, replaced Interim President and CEO John Somerhalder, who will stay on as FirstEnergy's board chair. Subscribers may recall that in 2021 the company settled its bribery charges with federal prosecutors and Ohio regulators. A growth-oriented plan that leverages the flexibility and strengths of FirstEnergy's huge Mid-Atlantic and contiguous service area was erected. Equity injections of \$1 billion were received, followed by the mid-2022 sale of a minority interest in the company's long-range transmission assets for \$2.38 billion. Fitch lifted FirstEnergy's credit rating to investment grade, and other agencies may well follow suit now that an additional stake went under contract, to be sold for \$3.5 billion, with an early-2024 closing date. Notably, the company will retain nearly 70% of its overall transmission portfolio.

The company appears on target for solid annual bottom-line gains this year and next. Management recently affirmed its 2023 operating earnings projection of \$2.44-\$2.64 per share, following a decent close to the first half of the year, considering milder-than-typical weather in much of FirstEnergy's service area. Higher pension expense, stemming from last year's weak stock and bond markets, is a significant headwind for this year that will probably moderate in 2024.

FirstEnergy is likely to resume dividend growth later this year. The board increased the payout target to 60%-70% of profits, clearing the way for a fourthquarter increase in the disbursement. The substantial infrastructure investments the company is making in its vast service area, plus forthcoming rate relief, should drive 5%-7% annual earnings and dividend growth from last year's base through late decade. The mix of income, growth and valuation should appeal to patient utility investors as the balance sheet improves. Annual total return potential exceeds the peer median by 280 basis points. Anthony J. Glennon August 11, 2023

(A) Dil. EPS. Excl. nonrec. loss: '13, \$2.07; '14, \$2.05; '15, \$1.34; '16, \$17.12; '17, \$6.61; '18, \$1.26; '19, 89¢; '20, 54¢; '21, 33¢; '22, \$1.70; 14¢; '21, 8¢. Qtrly. EPS don't sum due to chg. | '22: \$9.88/sh. (D) In mill. (E) High ROE from in shs. Next egs. report due Nov. (B) Div'ds pd. | large writeoffs. Rate base: Depr. orig. cost. early Mar., June, Sept., & Dec. 3 div'ds in '13, Rates all'd on com. eq.: 9.6-11.7%; Reg.: OH,

Company's Financial Strength Stock's Price Stability B+ 85 Price Growth Persistence **Earnings Predictability** 100