

1 STATE OF MISSOURI
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
3 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
4 Public Hearing
5 January 17, 2007
6 Hillsboro, Missouri
7 Volume 12
8 In the Matter of Union Electric Company)
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File)
9 Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric)Case No. ER-2007-0002
Service Provided to Customers in the)
10 Company's Missouri Service Area)
11 In the Matter of Union Electric Company)
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File)
12 Tariffs Increasing Rates for Electric)Case No. GR-2007-0003
Service Provided to Customers in the)
13 Company's Missouri Service Area)
14 MORRIS WOODRUFF, Presiding REGULATORY LAW JUDGE
JEFF DAVIS, Chairman
15 CONNIE MURRAY,
STEVE GAW
16 ROBERT M. CLAYTON, III
LINWARD "LIN" APPLING,
17 COMMISSIONERS
18 REPORTED BY:
19 JACQUELYN S. WILLIAMS, RPR, CCR, CSR (IL)
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JUDGE: Good evening, everybody. If the court
3 reporter in Hillsboro will put us on the record. Good
4 evening, Mr. Kelly.

5 MR. KELLY: Good evening, judge.

6 JUDGE: Let me introduce myself. My name is
7 Morris Woodruff. I'm the regulatory law judge who will
8 be presiding at this hearing and this is a local public
9 hearing in AmerenUE application for a rate increase for
10 both their natural gas and their electric rates. The
11 case numbers are ER-2007-002 and GR-2007-0003.

12 It's now 6 p.m. on January 17 of 2007 and we are ready
13 to begin the local public hearing. The Commission has five
14 members. Two of them are with us here in the hearing room
15 here in Jefferson City tonight. To my right is
16 Commissioner Murray and Commissioner Lin Appling and I'll
17 allow them to give any opening greetings and this is an
18 official hearing of the Public Service Commission and the
19 statements and testimony of the witnesses. Those people
20 there in Hillsboro will be recorded by the court reporter
21 and I'll swear you in to tell the truth, so please make
22 sure that your testimony is under oath.

23 As I indicated, this will be taken down by the court
24 reporter and she will make a transcript and the
25 commissioners who are not able to be with us this evening

1 will be able to review that transcript as part of the case.

2 We also have a guest with us tonight, Representative
3 Belinda Harris is here with us from Jefferson City and in a
4 moment I'll give her a chance to make an opening reading
5 and then she wants to do some testimony as well so we will
6 swear her in and then we will go back to Hillsboro to take
7 testimony from the people there.

8 If for any reason you're not able to testify tonight,
9 you can submit written comments and I believe Mr. Kelly has
10 probably explained that process to you there in Hillsboro.
11 The Commission will have an opportunity to read those
12 written comments just as they will to hear your testimony
13 tonight.

14 All right. The procedure I'll ask Mr. Kelly to go
15 down the list of names of the people that have signed up.
16 We'll go in that order. Once we've completed that list of
17 people who have signed up if the people have arrived late
18 or if anyone else decides during the process that they want
19 to have their say, we'll go through those people then. All
20 right. I believe we're ready to get started and we'll
21 begin with I'll give Commissioner Murray a chance to say
22 hello.

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good evening. I'd just like
24 to say thank you. We appreciate your being here and
25 taking the time to share your concerns with us and I

1 look forward to hearing what you have to say this
2 evening.

3 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling, if you would like to
4 say anything.

5 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No.

6 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. As indicated, we
7 begin tonight with Representative Harris and
8 Representative Harris, I spoke with you earlier. She
9 wanted to give sworn testimony. So you can just come
10 up and be sworn in and if you'd please raise your right
11 hand.

12 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

13 REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: First of all, I appreciate
14 them coming out on such a cold night and encourage them
15 to feel free to voice their opinion. My testimony for
16 the hearing tonight has to do with the Public Counsel
17 and they have opposed this rate request for AmerenUE
18 and not only opposed this but they feel that there
19 needs to be a reduction in rates.

20 I believe that we need to think seriously from the
21 Public Counsel and if we're going to request of reduction
22 of rates and that is the recommendation by the Public
23 Counsel, then my question is kind of, you know, why are we
24 doing an increase in rates.

25 I also have a comment on a service related problem. I

1 have experienced areas that have no service before to five
2 days and when someone did come out, they needed only a
3 simple repair that took a half hour or an hour to fix.
4 Ameren may do this already but I was wanting to suggest
5 scouting out areas and pinpointing the source of the
6 problem to identify easily fixed areas and that's the end
7 of my comments.

8 JUDGE: Thank you, representative. Commissioner
9 Murray, do you have any questions for Representative
10 Harris?

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I have no questions but
12 thank you.

13 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling?

14 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Good evening. Good to see
15 you again. This situation we've been on for the last
16 few years but it is good to see you. Do I understand
17 you correctly you agree with OPC in that you think that
18 we should not grant an increase to Ameren?

19 REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: Well, I feel like the
20 Public Service Counsel has taken an unbiased look at
21 this situation as they do all these rates across the
22 state of Missouri. They are there for consumers. I
23 think we need to take their considerations seriously
24 and if they say this, I feel that we should support
25 their decision.

1 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you very much, ma'am.

2 I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you very much.

3 REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: Thank you, commissioner.

4 JUDGE: I neglected to do something that I should
5 have done earlier and ask which attorneys are there in
6 Hillsboro. Mr. Kelly, are there any attorneys in
7 Hillsboro?

8 MR. KELLY: Yes, judge. Lewis Mills with the
9 Office of the Public Counsel.

10 JUDGE: All right. Mr. Mills, I'll take your
11 entry of appearance in a moment here but first I'll ask
12 you if you have any questions for Representative
13 Harris.

14 MR. MILLS: I don't have any questions but I want
15 to thank Representative Harris for coming out. It's
16 always great that when we have an issue involving
17 utilities in Hillsboro that we can count on her to be
18 there looking out for her constituents and I appreciate
19 that. Thank you.

20 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. Then you're
21 excused as a witness, Representative Harris.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS: Thank you.

23 JUDGE: Let me go back and do something I should
24 have done before and that is take entries of
25 appearance. I understand that Mr. Mills is there.

1 Enter your appearance, please.

2 MR. MILLS: Yes. Thank you. Lewis Mills, Office
3 of the Public Counsel. My mailing address is Post
4 Office Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

5 JUDGE: And is there an attorney in Hillsboro for
6 Ameren? I'm sorry the attorney for --

7 MR. KELLY: No, sir.

8 JUDGE: Attorney for AmerenUE in Jeff City. Let
9 her make her appearance.

10 MS. DURLEY: Yes. Thank you. My name is Colly
11 Durley. I'm with the law firm of Smith Lewis in
12 Columbia, Missouri and the mailing address is 111 South
13 Ninth Street and I'm here on behalf of Ameren.

14 JUDGE: Thank you, Ms. Durley. And are there any
15 other attorneys there in Hillsboro?

16 MR. KELLY: No, sir.

17 JUDGE: All right. And there are none that appear
18 here in Jefferson City I don't believe. All right.
19 Well, thank you all very much. Then Mr. Kelly, if you
20 will tell us the first witness.

21 MR. KELLY: Judge, our first witness here in
22 Hillsboro tonight is Sherry Zoll.

23 JUDGE: Good evening, Ms. Zoll.

24 MRS. ZOLL: Good evening.

25 JUDGE: If you would tell us your name and spell

1 your last name for us.

2 MRS. ZOLL: My name is Sherry. Last name is Zoll,
3 Z as in zebra, O-L-L.

4 JUDGE: Okay. And you better spell your first
5 name as well I guess.

6 MRS. ZOLL: S-H-E-R-R-Y.

7 JUDGE: Okay. All right. Ms. Zoll, let me swear
8 you in as a witness.

9 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

10 JUDGE: Thank you. And are you a customer of
11 AmerenUE?

12 MRS. ZOLL: Yes, I am.

13 JUDGE: Electric and gas or just electric?

14 MRS. ZOLL: Electric only.

15 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. What would you
16 like to tell us?

17 MRS. ZOLL: First I'd like to thank you and
18 Representative Harris for making this meeting possible
19 tonight and thank you for taking time out to hear our
20 stories and I also agree with -- I want to say that I
21 agree with the comments that were made by
22 Representative Harris.

23 It was very interesting this weekend before the last
24 storm hit that the TV news and the National Weather Service
25 was predicting not only an ice storm but also power outages

1 and isn't it nice that power outages have become so
2 prominent in our history here lately that it's part of now
3 a weather forecaster's dialogue. The National Weather
4 Service even warned people to be prepared and they stated
5 it was especially important for people living in rural
6 areas to be prepared for power outages. Even they seem to
7 understand the unique problems that rural citizens have
8 when there is a power outage and that's a discussion that
9 we had with the Commission in October.

10 I live in rural unincorporated Jefferson County in
11 Fletcher, Missouri and in July we were out of power for
12 three days in 100 plus temperatures and in December for
13 five days in below freezing temperatures. On December 1st
14 at 4:40 a.m. we lost power. The temperature was 20
15 degrees. On December 2nd about 1 a.m. our power came on
16 and stayed on for about 12 minutes and then went back out
17 again. It was seven degrees at that point.

18 I called Ameren that morning when I got up and they
19 said thank you for alerting us to your outage like they
20 didn't know we were out. They did tell me that nine
21 customers were out on my line and the problem was a device
22 was out and that's all they could tell me.

23 My husband and I, we got in the car and drove down our
24 road and our lines are pretty much along the road where you
25 can see if there's any problems just looking to see if we

1 could find what the problem was and the only thing we saw
2 was a cedar tree had a limb had some ice on it kind of
3 laying on the line. We went back and called Ameren and
4 reported the ice on the line and we told them that that's
5 all that we can see that could be the problem. We didn't
6 know if that was the problem but we had lines down. We had
7 no poles down, nothing. I find out the next day,
8 December 3rd that there were one or two houses on our road
9 that had power and there was like seven or eight of us at
10 the end there that had no power at all.

11 We called Ameren again and they had no information as
12 to whether or not someone had come out and checked on what
13 we had reported. We went to bed that night, Sunday night.
14 It was five degrees. On Monday, a neighbor called and said
15 the Ameren workmen are here. They just left my house. My
16 husband got in the car and went up the road and it turned
17 out that they were -- they weren't Ameren linemen. They
18 were tree trimmers and they were looking for what they said
19 was a reported down tree. Well, they're out there running
20 around looking for a downed tree that didn't exist. No one
21 had reported a down tree.

22 Another neighbor called and said do you have power and
23 I said no and she said well, when she had left work at
24 about 8 o'clock that morning she saw an Ameren truck
25 sitting there down there by where the tree was where the

1 limb had been laying on the line. It was off by this time
2 and just sitting there and she thought possibly they had
3 done something and that we had power by then, but they had
4 come out and nothing had been done.

5 On Tuesday, December 5th we got a call from a friend
6 about 3 o'clock saying that Ameren was there. They're at
7 the pole and they're working on it. Again, my husband gets
8 in the car. He goes down there. It took the workmen about
9 15 minutes to fix the problem. It was a blown fuse.

10 Now, we had been calling Ameren and telling them that
11 there was no problem. The tree trimmers said they couldn't
12 see any reason why we were out and all they needed to do
13 was just come out and finish the job. Well, it took them
14 five days to do that and it took them 15 minutes to take
15 care of the problem. So we were freezing for five days
16 over a blown fuse.

17 Now, most of our outages are not weather related.
18 Normally we don't know why our power is out. We're out if
19 it's a breezy day. Ameren calls that a wind storm. We're
20 out if it rains a little bit. We're out if the sun shines.
21 Recently we've been experiencing some fluctuation where the
22 power goes off very fast 15 or 30 times. We may lose
23 power. We may not and I have a friend who is retired from
24 Detroit Edison and I talked to him and was telling him
25 about our little light shows and he said that it sounded

1 like a fault with a breaker and he stated that should never
2 happen. When I mentioned to him that we had been told by
3 an Ameren employee that we had 50 miles of wire between our
4 home and the substation, he commented that in rural
5 Michigan they never have more than 10 miles of wire between
6 the substation and their customers.

7 Now, in 2006 we had a total at our house of 33
8 incidents of power outages and fluctuations. Our concern
9 is the inability of Ameren to keep our power on whether we
10 have storms or not and the slow response we have when
11 problems occur.

12 Now, in August my husband wrote a letter to you
13 regarding some of the problems that we were having with
14 Ameren and on October 1st we received a letter. Now, that
15 letter says you also got a copy. I have a copy of it here.
16 It came in an Ameren envelope but it's not on letterhead.
17 There's no address or telephone number and there's no other
18 contact information but it does say that it's in responses
19 to my husband's letter.

20 Basically confirms everything that my husband Bill had
21 said in his letter. It talks about Ameren switching us
22 from one feeder to another in 2005 to try and improve our
23 service reliability and it states in some cases notable
24 improvement was made and in others perhaps it wasn't as
25 apparent. Doesn't say what those notable improvements were

1 but when my problems almost triple in a year, I'd say those
2 improvements were not apparent. The letter says that many
3 of our outages were tree related and then goes on to say
4 our line had not been trimmed since February of 1998. It
5 also says and I quote expecting uninterrupted service is
6 not practical. Now, I can only assume that this reflects
7 Ameren's corporate attitude. It also says that they will
8 continue to monitor service and fix whatever they find is
9 below their standards. I ask the Commission to look into
10 exactly what Ameren's standards are because in my opinion
11 they need some improvement.

12 Now, I've read the Ameren's response to the
13 Commissions's request for a plan to improve service
14 reliability. President and CEO Thomas Voss has made some
15 suggestions. One was approval of funds for annual tree
16 removal and more aggressive tree trimming and vegetation
17 management and I had thought that the Commission had
18 already asked Ameren to do that. He also suggested
19 approval for funds for pole inspection and new line
20 inspection programs. I would think that that should be
21 part of normal day to day operations and by the way, what
22 about old lines inspection programs. Improved customer
23 communication was another one.

24 When my power is out and I first make my phone call to
25 Ameren, I understand that I'm not going to get very much

1 information at this point but at some point in an hour or
2 two, I would like to know where the problem is, what the
3 problem is other than a device outage which is usually all
4 that they can tell us. They don't know what the device is
5 that's out, how many on my line are out. That kind of
6 tells me where the problem may or may not be and if a
7 repair crew has been dispatched and if so, what time they
8 were dispatched to my problem and a good estimated time for
9 restoration. Also, if we're to be out for scheduled
10 maintenance, I would like to see Ameren make telephone
11 calls to all the customers on that line no less than 24
12 hours in advance telling us when the power will be out, why
13 the power will be out and when it will be restored so that
14 we can prepare for that outage. In rural communities this
15 is very important.

16 Another one of the suggestions was that the
17 distribution system be put underground for new
18 construction. Now, vice president Richard Mark had stated
19 on TV a couple of weeks ago that this method was cheaper.
20 Just this weekend TV news reported that Wildwood was out
21 and that their lines were underground and no explanation as
22 to why they were out. So I would think that may be needs
23 to be looked at. Rebuild the system for a more robust
24 design. Another thing Richard Mark suggested was using
25 heavier, stronger wire. My question is why hasn't this

1 been done through normal operations. Ameren says in
2 December they saw the worse ice storm in 30 years and I
3 don't know where these people have been but this is
4 Missouri. We have inclement weather and over the years
5 yes, some of our winters have been getting milder but ice
6 storms are normal in Missouri.

7 I mean, I can remember an ice storm back in I believe
8 it was the winter of '99, 2000. We got so much ice we
9 couldn't get out for five days and finally my husband took
10 a road tiller to break up the ice so that we could get out.
11 Not once in all of that did we lose power.

12 There was another ice storm in the early '90s that was
13 about as bad as that one and we lived in St. Louis at that
14 time. We never lost power then and that was never a
15 concern and I've got to wonder why has this become a worry
16 just in the past few years. They also said put outage info
17 on the internet. Well, that's nice for people who are
18 curious and I know you've heard this no electric, we don't
19 have internet even for those who have it and one of the
20 things he said too was generators for Ameren customers.

21 Now I'm sorry, but this is ridiculous. Very few
22 people will have generators big enough to supply all their
23 needs and I find it appalling that Ameren would even
24 suggest to try to include customer generators as part of
25 their system.

1 This is 2007. We've built a society that depends on
2 electric for power and that's the reason Ameren exists. A
3 few years ago that option wouldn't have even been
4 considered and it's not a viable option today. Now, I
5 appreciate all the efforts and sacrifices of all the
6 linemen who worked to restore our power. They're the real
7 heros in all of this but according to Ameren's figures, 458
8 Ameren linemen worked the July outage. Five hundred
9 twenty-eight worked the December outage. Now that doesn't
10 seem to be very many people for Missouri and Illinois. All
11 of the rest of them were contractors and mutual assistance
12 linemen and the ratio in December, the ratio of contractors
13 to mutual assistant linemen was a little more than three to
14 Ameren's one.

15 Now although help is certainly welcome during such a
16 crisis, how well does outside help know where the lines
17 are, where the roads are or where the problems might be.
18 They don't have the familiarity of Ameren's electrical
19 system as someone who works on it every day. Now during
20 the December outage, my husband spoke to an out-of-state
21 worker and his comment was that he had been here in July
22 and he said Ameren hasn't done anything since July and he
23 said he didn't know how much longer he and his crew could
24 continue to come here. They had their own work to do at
25 home and just seems like Ameren relies entirely too much on

1 outside help that may not last forever. What's Ameren
2 going to do once these other companies say we can't come.

3 Now the Post Dispatch had reported that Ameren
4 generates more complaints than any other Missouri
5 electrical utility that's regulated by UE. Ron Zelor, I
6 believe I'm pronouncing that right, Ameren's vice president
7 for Energy Distribution said he didn't know that. He said
8 it must be the frequent storms and trees. They're largely
9 to blame; that Ameren's a victim to storm damage. Now our
10 problems in Fletcher are constants not just during storms
11 and Mr. Voss of Ameren has told you that the tree trimming
12 policies were not an overriding factor. So does Ameren
13 know why they have power outages. Does Ameren have the
14 expertise to do the job and where is the expertise that was
15 Union Electric.

16 I have to ask has Ameren tried to maximize profits by
17 not adequately staffing its organization with trained
18 workers. They're supposed to know what they're doing and
19 training their people to do the job and from where I sit,
20 this isn't happening.

21 Back in the spring my husband and I were talking to a
22 lineman and we were discussing the slow responses that we
23 sometimes have to outages including when there are no
24 storms, when there just seems to be no reason why we're out
25 and I said don't they call you guys and he said oh they

1 call us but what they don't tell you is they call us and
2 tell us to stay home. He made the comment that under Union
3 Electric that they usually made a lot of improvements and a
4 lot of progress over the years but he said since they've
5 become Ameren they have adopted Ameren's way of doing
6 things and that they're just going backward and they've
7 lost everything that they have gained over the years. We
8 know that our services have deteriorated in the last few
9 years.

10 Ameren claims they need money but the Post Dispatch
11 reported that the third quarter earnings for Ameren rose
12 five percent in spite of the July storms and fines related
13 to the Taum Sauk reservoir disaster. State officials have
14 publicly stated that Ameren has overearned and needs to
15 decrease its rates and I agree with that.

16 Before these hearings ever began, before any
17 statements were ever made by the public or by any state
18 officials, the news media reported that Ameren had said
19 that if they don't get this rate increase things will get
20 worse. They've threatened to lay off linemen. They
21 threatened bankruptcy over in Illinois if they didn't get
22 their 55 percent increase over there. It seems to me that
23 Ameren has set a profit goal and has taken and will take in
24 the future whatever action is necessary to reach that
25 profit goal even if customer service is sacrificed and

1 that's not acceptable particularly from a monopoly whose
2 reason for existence is to serve the public. This isn't a
3 game. Ameren exists for the public, not the other way
4 around. They have a duty to their customers and that duty
5 is not being met. Now people have died including Ameren
6 linemen. Homes have caught fire due to down lines.
7 Electrified when the power was restored. People lost
8 everything. Why did that happen. Does Ameren have
9 sufficient personnel to do the job and if not why not.
10 What about Ameren's decisions to forego maintenance on
11 lines and equipment. The failure to repair Taum Sauk
12 before that disaster occurred. Why were such decisions
13 made.

14 These are all questions that I ask the Commission to
15 investigate before granting any increase. We don't need a
16 public utility that's so driven by profit that it puts
17 customers and workers at risk. Neither the customers nor
18 the linemen should have to endure such conditions. Per the
19 PSC the Commission must ensure the public has access to
20 safe, reliable and reasonably priced utility service.
21 Today we don't have that with Ameren. Rates are set to
22 give the utility company an opportunity, not a guarantee to
23 earn a reasonable return on its investments.

24 Now Ameren's decisions are between Ameren's
25 management, board of directors and stockholders. Ameren's

1 losses due to those decisions are also between Ameren's
2 management, board of directors and stockholders. I've been
3 told that Ameren is buying other electric companies in
4 Missouri. If that's true, it's not the public's
5 responsibility to finance any attempt for Ameren to become
6 an even larger monopoly nor is it our responsibility to pay
7 for their fines, disaster cleanups and such due to poor
8 management decisions. Again, this is all between
9 management, the board of directors and their stockholders.
10 Don't ask the public to bear the cost of burdens relating
11 from decisions that we had no control over.

12 I agree with Public Counsel Lewis Mills and I thank
13 you for being here tonight. When he asked the Public
14 Service Commission to require Ameren to make improvements
15 before getting action on rate increases. Governor Blunt
16 has also asked that there be no rate increase. I agree
17 with all of that but I would add to reward poor performance
18 would be a mistake.

19 I would also like to add to that that I ask that
20 Ameren be given no more than one year to show improved
21 service to Missouri's communities both urban and rural. I
22 ask that Ameren not be allowed to play off linemen or
23 support personnel or take any action to further degrade the
24 service. Ameren has allowed its electrical system to get
25 into such a fragile condition both in Illinois and Missouri

1 that every minor condition is a disaster. I ask that no
2 rate increase be given until Ameren brings the system up to
3 at least the standard we had with Union Electric. I don't
4 know what this management team is supposed to be doing for
5 Ameren, but it's obvious that customer service is way at
6 the bottom of the list. In July the Post Dispatch reported
7 that Ameren's vice president for energy Mr. Zelor who the
8 Post said has worked for Ameren for 25 years stated this is
9 a learning organization. I offer one last suggestion to
10 Ameren's management. There's a book called Exceeding
11 Customer Expectations by Kirk and I will spell the last
12 name. K-A-Z-A-N-J-I-A-N. It's a book about making money
13 for big corporations while fulfilling the needs of the
14 customer.

15 There's one last thing and my neighbors and I have
16 been getting people coming to our door unannounced saying
17 they're Ameren employees. They wear no uniforms. They're
18 in unmarked vehicles and nothing to identify themselves as
19 Ameren employees and we don't really know who these people
20 are. We have some suggestions which I won't get into right
21 now just so you know that it was a problem. I thank you
22 for your time.

23 JUDGE: Thank you, Ms. Zoll. If you'll wait there
24 for a moment I'll ask the commissioners if they have
25 any questions for you. Commissioner Murray, do you

1 have any questions?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you. Ms. Zoll, I just
3 have a question. Were you here recently to testify on
4 another Ameren UE public hearing?

5 MRS. ZOLL: Yes. I testified in October to all
6 the problems that we were having in the rural areas and
7 the problems that rural people have because we have --

8 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: When was that? What date
9 was that?

10 MRS. ZOLL: I believe it was October 18th.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. I thought I had heard
12 you before and I wanted to know the five days that you
13 were without power this last time, did I understand you
14 to say that you and your family stayed at home?

15 MRS. ZOLL: Yes, we did. That's one thing that
16 the Commission really needs to understand. Jefferson
17 County does not have hotels on every corner. Now I did
18 make a phone call to one hotel that had power and they
19 were full and they said they had called all over the
20 county and all the hotels were full.

21 Now, leaving your home isn't always an option
22 particularly in such cold weather. We have to worry about
23 pipes freezing. Now, what we did was we have a fireplace
24 so we kept the fireplace going. We slept in front of the
25 fireplace. Basically just lived in one room hoping that we

1 could keep enough heat in that house to keep our pipes from
2 freezing. So that's a real worry in these frigid
3 conditions. Like I said, one night it was five degrees
4 when we went to bed. I don't think it ever got over 30 at
5 our house during that time.

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Were you able to keep your
7 pipes from freezing?

8 MRS. ZOLL: Yeah. We were lucky. We held our
9 breath when the power came on and went around and
10 checked everything so nothing froze.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You mentioned one time
12 several years ago when you experienced an ice storm and
13 you said your husband had to use a road tiller to get
14 out of the driveway. Where was that?

15 MRS. ZOLL: Where we live now in Fletcher.

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. And what year was
17 that?

18 MRS. ZOLL: I believe it was the 1999-2000 winter.
19 I don't remember if it was like late '99 or early 2000.
20 I think that was the winter.

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And there were no power
22 outages in that location at that time.

23 MRS. ZOLL: Didn't even have a flicker.

24 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. I'm going to let
25 the other commissioners ask their questions. Thank

1 you.

2 MRS. ZOLL: Thank you.

3 JUDGE: All right. Thank you, commissioner.

4 Since we last asked the commissioner questions, other
5 commissioners have joined us. Mr. Steve Gaw to see if
6 he has any questions.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Hello, ma'am. How are you?

8 MRS. ZOLL: Fine.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: I want to follow-up a little
10 bit on some of the things that you talked about. In
11 particular, I want to know first of all you mentioned
12 something about workers with Ameren being threatened
13 with layoffs and I wondered if you have any details on
14 that that you could go into beyond what you've already
15 stated?

16 MRS. ZOLL: No, I really don't. It was on
17 television. It was on one of the TV programs, news
18 media in St. Louis and what they had said and this
19 was -- it was either right before or right after the
20 December ice storm is the best that I can remember and
21 all they said was that Ameren had asked for a rate hike
22 and that if they didn't get it, they had said they
23 would be laying off linemen and things would get worse.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Next I want to ask you
25 about the outages that you experience outside of these

1 storms. You may have already talked about this in
2 October so if you have, we can go back to that record
3 but I'm curious about the average number of outages
4 that you experience during a years period of time and I
5 also need to know what you consider an outage when
6 you're giving me that number.

7 MRS. ZOLL: Oh, okay. I think when we talked
8 before we were up to like 22 or 23 outages and that was
9 in October. Well, outages and fluctuations. We have
10 some that are fluctuations where the power goes off and
11 then on, off and then on. Sometimes like I said it's
12 like a light show. It looks like strobe lights. It
13 will be off and on real fast for 20 or 30 times.
14 Sometimes that results in an outage. Sometimes it does
15 not.

16 Sometimes we have several of these fluctuations before
17 the power usually will finally go out say that evening or
18 later on that day and I do count fluctuations because it's
19 hard on appliances. It's hard on our furnaces and air
20 conditioners and so forth and we do get an awful lot of
21 that but we went from in 2003 and 2004 I believe we had
22 nine such incidents those two years. In 2005 and you have
23 the detail on these. I had sent you the detail on these.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

25 MRS. ZOLL: We went up in 2005 to something like

1 12 or 15 and then in 2006 33.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And again just to make
3 sure I'm following you, the outages include the thing
4 that you call the fluctuation, correct?

5 MRS. ZOLL: Right.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: But if there was blinking that
7 happened in one period of time where the lights
8 flickered on and off several times you only counted
9 that as one I assume.

10 MRS. ZOLL: Correct. Now, if there have been
11 times where we've had that fluctuation, some time
12 passes. We have another one. Some minutes or hours
13 pass. We have another one and then later we lose
14 power.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: How many of those would there
16 have been that you counted? Did you count each one of
17 those?

18 MRS. ZOLL: I would count each fluctuation since
19 there was time period in between and then the power
20 outage is an outage. Only two of our outages -- at
21 least one third of our incidents in 2006 were total
22 power outages. Only two of those were because of the
23 storms and that was July and December.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And when you say outage
25 in the context that you just mentioned, what would be

1 the minimum outage that you would have had, minimum
2 minutes?

3 MRS. ZOLL: I don't have the detail in front of
4 me. It could be anywhere from a couple of minutes to
5 several hours to a couple of days.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. I know you provided this
7 before. What I need to know from someone, perhaps
8 staff is whether that is part of this record. Was that
9 provided for the case today this evening?

10 MRS. ZOLL: Not this evening. It was provided for
11 the July or -- you got two copies actually. One was
12 sent to you in August and then in October for that
13 hearing. The detail of that information was given to I
14 believe Mr. Beck and so that was actually it was just a
15 second copy.

16 Now, there were additional outages after that. We
17 went from like 22 to 33. I can forward those to you if you
18 would like.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Would you do that?

20 MRS. ZOLL: Certainly. I'm looking. I think I
21 may have a copy that I can give someone this evening
22 for the 2000.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: I won't put that burden on you
24 if staff had it but if you have the updated numbers
25 that would be great to have this evening and I want to

1 make sure that staff files the other copy in this file
2 as well and I saw nodding heads in the back that they
3 would.

4 MRS. ZOLL: Okay. I do have a copy right here I
5 can give to them tonight.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. With the updated
7 figures?

8 MRS. ZOLL: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. All right. I'm going to
10 ask the court reporter to mark that document that
11 Ms. Zoll has as Exhibit 1 and ma'am, thank you very
12 much. That's all the questions I have. There may be
13 other questions from other commissioners. Thank you.

14 (Exhibit 1 was marked for
15 identification)

16 MRS. ZOLL: Thank you.

17 JUDGE: All right. I want to deal with that
18 exhibit before we go onto further questions. I haven't
19 seen the document yet. I assume public counsel would
20 have no objection to its admission.

21 MR. MILLS: That's correct.

22 JUDGE: All right. Thank you, Mr. Mills.
23 Ms. Durley, do you have any objection to that document
24 coming into evidence?

25 MS. DURLEY: No, we don't have any objection. I

1 guess we would reserve the right to an objection after
2 we look at it to see if there's something that would
3 not be appropriate to be made an exhibit. At this
4 time, no.

5 JUDGE: Commissioner Robert Clayton, do you have
6 any questions?

7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No questions, judge. Thank
8 you, ma'am.

9 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling?

10 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I don't have any questions.
11 I just want to say thank you for your well thought out
12 and well delivered comments here tonight and we do hear
13 you and we will take your comments seriously. Thank
14 you very much.

15 MRS. ZOLL: Thank you for your time.

16 JUDGE: Mr. Mills, do you have any questions from
17 public counsel?

18 MR. MILLS: I don't have any questions. Thank
19 you.

20 JUDGE: Thank you. Ms. Durley, do you have any
21 questions for Ameren?

22 MS. DURLEY: I have no questions. Thank you.

23 JUDGE: Mrs. Zoll, you can step down and
24 Mr. Kelly, if you can call the next witness.

25 MR. KELLY: Judge, Terry Bast.

1 JUDGE: Good evening, sir. Could you spell your
2 name for us?

3 MR. BAST: B-A-S-T.

4 JUDGE: And Terry T-E-R-R-Y?

5 MR. BAST: Yes.

6 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. Will you please
7 raise your right hand and I'll swear you in.

8 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

9 JUDGE: And are you a customer of Ameren?

10 MR. BAST: Not at this time.

11 JUDGE: All right. Have you been in the past?

12 MR. BAST: Yes, I have.

13 JUDGE: Electric or gas or both?

14 MR. BAST: Both.

15 JUDGE: Okay. What would you like to tell us,
16 Mr. Bast?

17 MR. BAST: Well, I got quite a few things here as
18 a matter of fact. I had experienced when I had a house
19 in the city where lightening had struck my house and
20 the meter, I had 100 amp service in there and the meter
21 was spinning around so fast it wasn't even funny. I
22 was getting like 300 or over \$300 a month bills from
23 Ameren.

24 I called them. I told them what the problem was. I
25 told them I was a journeyman electrician. I told them that

1 I knew that there was no way that 100 amp service just
2 operating lights would generate that kind of a bill. They
3 told me there was nothing wrong with the meter. I finally
4 got them to come out and change the meter. When the gal
5 got there from Ameren she had stated that there's nothing
6 wrong with it. She got halfway down my gangway and then
7 she decided to go back to the truck and change the meter
8 out. Okay. I asked them to credit me something on my bill
9 because there's no way I could have used 300 or better a
10 month in electric. They said they weren't going to do that
11 but they would allow me to make payments.

12 For a little over seven and a half years I worked for
13 the city of St. Louis as an electrical inspector. During
14 that time, one of the people from Ameren had called my
15 office and asked me to back them on getting rid of ring
16 type meters and meter sockets. I told them it's not in the
17 code. We don't enforce it. We're not going to. I talked
18 to the chief about it. He said the same thing.

19 I've called in numerous times when I was doing
20 inspections to let Ameren know that there was limbs laying
21 on the lines and everything. They said well, we'll decide
22 whether or not we do anything with that. I've called them
23 about bare wires coming down with the three individual
24 drops in the conductors. They said we'll decide whether it
25 needs anything to be done. I've gone back there when I was

1 working for them. Nothing was changed.

2 Since then I've worked for different contractors,
3 electrical contractors up in the city and down here. When
4 we've had outages and I go to put the services back up on
5 the walls, some of the services you notice that they
6 weren't even tightened down enough. The reason why we know
7 that is because there wasn't even any indentations in the
8 wire and the wire pulled right out of the connectors.

9 We've had outages at my dad's house and, you know, it
10 seems like every time we talk to them we just get the run
11 around with them. I checked out a house in south county,
12 in St. Louis County. They were having problems with
13 circuit breakers tripping and that. I went out there.
14 Checked it out for them. I told them I said you need to
15 call Ameren because you got a loose connection somewhere in
16 their system because from the meter on you're good. So
17 they called Ameren. Ameren came out and said this was a
18 temporary splice. I've never known a utility to do a
19 temporary splice on a service for a residence.

20 Back when UE was in business we haven't had near the
21 outages. They haven't been down as long. When I was
22 working as an electrical inspector for the city, I've
23 talked to numerous people working for Ameren. They said
24 they've cut their maintenance down considerably. The
25 figure I heard was like 75 percent. I've noticed that

1 there's been a lot of problem with the trees being trimmed
2 myself. That's why I asked them. They said they cut down
3 on their people doing the work. They've had their own type
4 of training for meter readers to do the services and that.
5 They're doubling up on the amount of work that the linemen
6 would have to do. People that's taken their classes they
7 said they've taken classes through Ameren to become a
8 linemen. Back when I was growing up to be a linemen was a
9 very prestigious thing because you really had to know your
10 stuff. Nowadays I've had numerous new linemen come up to
11 me and asked me to do simple wiring. I don't consider that
12 really good. I mean, they're supposed to know their stuff.
13 They're supposed to know the hazards and everything from my
14 understanding.

15 I don't believe the problems we are experiencing right
16 now has happened overnight. What I think happened is ever
17 since Ameren took over UE they've cut their maintenance.
18 They're not giving the proper training that they should be
19 giving and as a result, it's taken a few years, you know,
20 maybe about seven years for things to start catching up
21 because they're not taking the care that they should be.
22 As a result of that they're putting people out to where I
23 personally have a friend up in north St. Louis and she had
24 to go out and buy a generator. She's got cancer. She
25 can't be in the cold. She's got to have a generator

1 because she's afraid of the weather knocking out the power.
2 She can't do without it. She's on blood thinners. There
3 is many other elderly people and handicap people as far as
4 from a physical capability, you know, with medical to where
5 they can't tolerate the extreme heats. They can't tolerate
6 the extreme cold. Some of them are on life support.

7 You call Ameren and you tell them look, we have got
8 someone on life support. Well, I don't know when we are
9 going to get someone out there. I don't know when we can.
10 I don't know what the deal is. Then they tell you take
11 them to a hospital. Sometimes it's not that easy. Some
12 people may not make it to a hospital unless you get an
13 ambulance there to pick them up.

14 To me that's not only putting your reputation in a bad
15 predicament, but it's also putting a lot of people's lives
16 in jeopardy. A lot of people in the city of St. Louis and
17 in rural areas, they can't afford to leave their property
18 because if they do, you know, they have livestock or
19 whatever that they have to take care of. Houses could be
20 broken into. They could be robbed blind. Who's going to
21 take responsibility for that. I mean, money will replace
22 it but what do you do until you get it replaced. What do
23 you do about how -- do they feel about these people that
24 started operating generators and got carbon monoxide
25 poisoning off of it.

1 It's not just a mere factor of either you have power
2 or you don't. There's a lot of people's lives at stake and
3 the linemen I give them credit. I give them a lot of
4 credit because they're out there in whatever temperatures,
5 whatever inclement weather and they're doing what they're
6 told to do. They're doing their job. I'm saying the
7 administrative part of the owners of Ameren and the CEOs
8 and all that, they're not taking it seriously. They're
9 concerned about the almighty dollar.

10 Well, you know, if you're a contractor -- if you're an
11 electrical contractor and you wire a building and you
12 didn't do something right, as long as you're in business
13 you're liable and responsible. If there's an electrical
14 fire and they can relate that back to you, then that
15 wiremen can go to the federal pen for involuntary
16 manslaughter. With an electrical inspector, any inspector,
17 if they make a false ruling knowingly and put someone's
18 life in jeopardy, that follows them to their grave.

19 A utility company is out here supposedly to collect
20 money to do a public service to make sure the people are
21 safe and if they're not doing that, then we don't need that
22 utility company. We need one that will. We need one that
23 is going to back like UE did what they stood for. If they
24 don't want to do it, I say we need a different utility
25 company. We don't need a bigger one. We don't need a

1 monopoly. We need one that's going to back their word.
2 One that's going to do what they're supposed to. There's
3 many other costs aside of this. I mean, you have people's
4 computers that will be working on them. If the wind blows
5 the wrong way the power goes out for a few minutes. The
6 other night I was on the computer. It dumped a half hours
7 worth of work that I did on the computer. Had to go back
8 over it and reprint it all out. You know, punch it all in.
9 Now, to me it's just time. For companies and that that's a
10 lot of cost because they have to try and retrieve that.
11 They have to try and -- they have to pay somebody to put
12 that in the computer. Everybody is paying the cost for
13 multimillionaires. It started with stadiums from what I
14 see and if it's not put to an end I don't know where it's
15 going to stop but with the stadiums it's a sport.
16 Utilities is not a sport. It's very pertinent and it's a
17 very important thing and a very serious thing.

18 When I was an electrical inspector for the city I took
19 my job seriously like it should be and if you don't do your
20 job, you shouldn't have the job. That's the way I see it.
21 If you can't get a straight answer from UE or Ameren I
22 should say. When I was growing up we had a lot worse
23 weather. We had worse winds. What was it about 20 years
24 ago I was down in -- about 23 years ago I moved down to
25 Dallas for a little bit. Didn't have the problems down

1 there. Came back up here and a few hours after I got back
2 which would be about 20 years ago we had layers of ice on
3 the ground. We didn't have the outages that we're
4 experiencing now.

5 Ameren I don't believe is in our best interest. I
6 think they're in the best interest of their bank account
7 and I feel that whatever happens they need to get on track
8 or step aside and we need to get another utility company in
9 here. From my outlook on what they're doing, they're
10 expecting everybody -- they want more money. They want to
11 do less for us and they want everybody to go on backup
12 generators. A lot of people can't even afford a little
13 generator much less a backup generator. It's a lot of
14 costs. There's a lot of people out there on Social
15 Security. They can't afford that.

16 Like the gentleman earlier was saying, he worked for
17 Ameren and he worked for UE. From what I've seen
18 personally there is a difference between night and day
19 between the two companies and that's all I really have to
20 say.

21 JUDGE: Thank you, Mr. Bast. Commissioner Murray,
22 do you have any questions?

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I have no questions. Thank
24 you.

25 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just a few. Mr. Bast, thank
2 you for coming. When you were referring earlier to the
3 city, that you worked for the city, can you say which
4 city for the record, please?

5 MR. BAST: The city of St. Louis. I was an
6 electrical inspector for them.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: That's what I assumed but I
8 wanted to make sure that was clear.

9 MR. BAST: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: And then I think you mentioned
11 the trees on the lines. Is that something that you see
12 generally today? And I just mean generally at the
13 current time and can you give me an idea of whether
14 that varies from one area to another within Ameren's
15 region that you're familiar with.

16 MR. BAST: I've seen some. I'm not saying it's
17 all over but it's spotty and I've seen it. I travel
18 anywhere through Jefferson County, St. Louis, all over
19 St. Louis County and the city of St. Louis and I've
20 seen it all over.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. I think that's all the
22 questions I have. Thank you very much.

23 MR. BAST: Okay.

24 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you for appearing,
25 sir. No questions.

1 JUDGE: Public counsel, any questions for the
2 witness?

3 MR. MILLS: No, I don't have any questions. Thank
4 you.

5 JUDGE: For Ameren?

6 MS. DURLEY: No questions.

7 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. Mr. Bast, you may
8 step down. Thank you for coming. Call our next
9 witness.

10 MR. KELLY: The next witness, judge, will be
11 Melvin Bast.

12 JUDGE: Good evening, sir. Could you spell your
13 name for us?

14 MR. MELVIN BAST: My name is Melvin Bast. First
15 name M-E-L-V-I-N. Last name B-A-S-T.

16 JUDGE: Thank you, sir. And are you related to
17 Terry Bast, the previous witness?

18 MR. MELVIN BAST: Yes, I am.

19 JUDGE: All right. And can you raise your right
20 hand and I will swear you in as a witness.

21 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

22 JUDGE: Thank you very much. What would you like
23 to tell us?

24 MR. MELVIN BAST: Well for one, I've been a
25 trailer court manager for ten years and during those

1 ten years the first half of it we had no problems with
2 the electric. The second half we had lots of problems,
3 poor connections that had corroded. We've had sparks
4 flying from the service lines in trees. They said
5 don't worry. It will burn off.

6 I don't know about you, but when there's sap in the
7 tree you can get zapped at the bottom and when there's kids
8 running around in the area I think it's a definite hazard.
9 If there's rain there the same thing can happen, moisture.

10 I also had a case where one of the service lines had
11 pulled loose from the post. The insulator had pulled
12 loose. I called them. They told me that they would look
13 at it in a couple of weeks. Within a half an hour, a
14 school bus was to be unloading children there and generally
15 anywhere from 20 to 30 kids. Not liking their answer I
16 went down to the fire department. The fire marshall came
17 up. Took one look at it. Picked up his radio and called
18 for service. Within five minutes a service truck was there
19 because if the bus would have pulled through, a dump truck,
20 a tractor and trailer, it would have knocked the lines
21 down. Aren't we happy that we fixed it before the 30 kids
22 was out there running around. Could this have been
23 dangerous. You damn right it could have.

24 There's many cases where they absolutely have no
25 concern for upkeep or maintenance. I know when I moved

1 down to Desoto we had outages. I drove all over town this
2 past year. I couldn't find a limb on a line anywhere. The
3 service lines are a good 20, 30 feet above the tree tops
4 coming up. Hasn't Ameren ever heard of a jumper wire to
5 jump the service while they're working on it? Any first
6 year apprentice ought to know better than this. I'm not an
7 electrician. I know better. With the dam down there, all
8 I can say is thank God it wasn't on a weekend in the
9 summertime when we had many, many campers down there. I
10 know they love swimming down there but isn't that a little
11 ridiculous. I don't know about you all, all that water
12 would have caused many deaths and why, nonmaintenance.

13 If an individual did it, I have to repeat somebody
14 would have went up for involuntary manslaughter. How many
15 deaths is it going to take until Ameren gets off their
16 tailbone and does something. I know I had a visitor in the
17 last one which was on oxygen. You may not say it's life
18 support but try living without breathing. We had to fight
19 with them for 24 hours to get them to come out. It took
20 them approximately five minutes to fix it. Why.

21 The men and women working for Ameren out on the lines
22 go out there and they knock themselves out when it happens.
23 When you call in they say well, what are we supposed to do
24 about it now. Now is too late. You maintain your lines.
25 You maintain your transformers. If you don't maintain your

1 car, it's going to blow up on you. It's going to happen
2 with Ameren. If I have to have a generator to reduce
3 electricity when it goes out, why in the God's world do I
4 need Ameren. I'll put in a permanent one first. I have
5 lost over \$2,000 worth of food because of Ameren's outages
6 this past year. I haven't paid that much in my electric
7 bill and they need a raise. For what? Costing me extra
8 money? When my electric goes out my well goes out. My
9 septic tank goes out. If you want to be technical about it
10 the house is inhabitable. Are they going to pay for
11 somebody to secure my property. Are they going to pay for
12 somebody maybe having to go to the hospital because of the
13 lack of it. Are they going to pay for the care of my pets.
14 Dream on. They ain't going to pay for nothing and I got to
15 say let's not pay them nothing until they can get stuff
16 going. Cut the rates because they're not doing what they
17 say they're going to do. Cut the rates and until they can
18 prove at least two years without any outages, don't even
19 think about a raise. They don't deserve it. That's what I
20 have to say.

21 JUDGE: Thank you, sir. Commissioner Murray, do
22 you have any questions?

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Bast. I
24 don't have any questions. Your frustration comes
25 through loud and clear. Thank you.

1 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Mr. Bast, I just want to thank
3 you also and you did point out something which I think
4 was pointed out in previous hearings about problems in
5 rural areas that exist in some cases when you're on a
6 well and you need electricity in order to have water.
7 So I appreciate the fact that you brought that up to
8 our attention again. I want to ask one question in
9 regards to this just to be clear. The initial contact
10 that you had regarding the line that you were concerned
11 about and the possibility of impacting the school bus,
12 did you say that you contacted Ameren initially on
13 that?

14 MR. MELVIN BAST: I contacted them initially. I
15 didn't like their answer. They said they would be out
16 in several weeks. I went down to the fire house.
17 Contacted him. When the fire department pulled up he
18 got right on the radio and they were out there in five
19 minutes.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Initially when you made
21 the call to Ameren, do you know where you called? Do
22 you know what office you called?

23 MR. MELVIN BAST: It was downtown St. Louis.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And do you remember
25 about when that was?

1 MR. MELVIN BAST: It was back before '99.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Very much before '99 or
3 are you thinking that it was within a year or so of
4 that date?

5 MR. MELVIN BAST: I would say it would be about
6 two years before then.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. I'm just looking for an
8 estimate though. Thank you very much again Mr. Bast.

9 JUDGE: Commissioner Clayton?

10 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't have any questions.
11 Thank you, sir.

12 JUDGE: Commissioner. Appling? Any questions from
13 public counsel?

14 MR. MILLS: No thank you.

15 JUDGE: For Ameren?

16 MS. DURLEY: No questions.

17 JUDGE: All right. Thank you. You can step down,
18 Mr. Bast. Our next witness?

19 MR. KELLY: Vernon Blechle.

20 JUDGE: Good evening, sir. Could you spell your
21 name for us, please?

22 MR. BLECHLE: Vernon is V-E-R-N-O-N and Blechle is
23 B-L-E-C-H-L-E.

24 JUDGE: All right. Thank you, Mr. Blechle. And
25 if you would raise your right hand I'll swear you in as

1 a witness.

2 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

3 JUDGE: Thank you. And are you a customer of
4 Ameren?

5 MR. BLECHLE: Yes, I am. I'm also a retiree from
6 Ameren.

7 JUDGE: Okay. What would you like to tell us?

8 MR. BLECHLE: Well, I worked for Ameren for almost
9 36 years and in that time I spent most of it as a
10 linemen and a trouble men and also did temporary
11 dispatching in Jefferson County itself and I've had a
12 lot of restored service problems since I've retired
13 especially in the last couple of years.

14 They were bringing in a new system before I retired
15 about 12 years ago that they were putting in these
16 automated meters and they could tell when our electric went
17 off and we didn't even have to call in. They were telling
18 us all these things and everything was on a computer and we
19 were centralizing everything in St. Louis. It would all go
20 in the system and it would tell us who was out, how many
21 people were out, what device was out, if a feeder was out
22 or whatever.

23 Well, they started installing it a while before I
24 retired. It wasn't working then and I don't know what
25 they've done to it but it isn't working now and in my mind

1 it's working even less. Number one because it has went up
2 to St. Louis. All the decisions are made up in St. Louis.
3 Now, it's common knowledge in regional area in Jefferson
4 County that if we're out that's a problem but if St. Louis
5 is out and we're out, we are really in a problem.

6 Number one, they think the world ends at the Meramec
7 River. They bring all the resources up there. The people
8 that are doing the dispatching, they know nothing about
9 Jefferson County and most of the people up there have never
10 worked the job. They don't know shoot trouble. They're
11 doing it off a computer. It's like telling somebody how to
12 work on a car over the phone and they're working on it and
13 they don't know anything about it and you're a mechanic and
14 you're telling them how to do it.

15 They're not familiar with the areas. They don't have
16 the pride in the areas. I worked in this county when we
17 had a lot of big outages going on. They cut it off at the
18 county line. We dispatched from our area. We took all our
19 calls. We knew the area. We were in the area all the time
20 and everybody that worked on the outage knew about it. Now
21 because they don't have enough people, it's all dispatched
22 out of the city. They say give it to different departments
23 but they're all in the city.

24 Okay. So what do they do, they got a lot of crossing
25 back and forth. They might be a trouble area guy in the

1 area. There might be crews in the area. There's
2 estimators in the area looking at the work but they don't
3 know who's in the area. Somebody calls in and wants to put
4 a line back in, they've got to call and check with all
5 three of them to find out about it.

6 They divide things up by streets instead of following
7 them like feeders like we used to do. We used to go by
8 feeder. Take a section line out of the substation and run
9 it all the way out. Now they bring people in that don't
10 know the area from others especially in these major storms
11 and they cut them off by the streets. The larger outage
12 that we had in the Desoto area I guess it's been three
13 years ago now. They divided Boyd Street and then they
14 divided to another street and if a line came through, a
15 feeder came through there but didn't stop in there and went
16 to another area and was down in the area that it crossed
17 in, the people that were working outages would work up to
18 that street and they would stop because that's as far as
19 they could go. They didn't have troubleshooters or
20 whatever that were familiar with it that could follow it
21 all the way back to the substation.

22 My wife got upset at me. After three days of that
23 outage, I went out and started and I knew the line. I knew
24 it from memory and I drove it out. The only reason the
25 whole area and Boyd Street was out was because there was a

1 line down in the section that came through that it wasn't
2 feeding to our area and all he had to do was open up one or
3 two jumpers and they could have put the whole feeder back
4 in.

5 In this last outage, this winter outage after we were
6 out like -- I live in town. I live in the north end of
7 town and I've lived there for 35, 40 years. I'm not out in
8 the rural area but I've been experiencing these outages. I
9 was six days out in the summer when we had the wind storm
10 and I realize what went on there. I had a private property
11 pole that was down and I realize they let that go last. I
12 can understand that, but the winter or in the summer of '06
13 I was out and that's when I was telling that I went out and
14 traced the feeder and found out it really wasn't that much
15 out; that they could have cleared it up. In 15 minutes
16 they could have cleared it up and put the whole feeder back
17 in.

18 Okay. Then this winter I was out four days, three and
19 a half days actually. I live right there in town. Okay.
20 There was a bunch of people out and I understand that. I
21 only found one UE worker in Desoto area in many of that
22 time and finally after the third day -- my electric came on
23 three different days and stayed on either five minutes, 20
24 minutes or five minutes again and on the third time that it
25 came in and went out in five minutes I jumped in my car and

1 I drove. I knew where the splits were and I went up there
2 and I talked to the guy and it ended he was the one that
3 put it in once before and it was overload.

4 The people who are dispatching them in St. Louis do
5 not understand our overload problem in Jefferson County.
6 We've got a lot of electric heat. When the power goes out
7 and it's out over four hours, you've got a problem with not
8 only picking up the heat pumps, you're picking up the
9 double load of the backup service on it. So they've got
10 double load so it trips the fuses. It blows a fuse. I
11 knew that when I worked. We worked with that all the time.
12 They don't know that in the city. They put it in. They
13 shoved it in. They left. We've been out for three and a
14 half days. Everything come back on. Boom. Melts the
15 fuse. Come back on. They didn't get back for 24 hours.
16 They call out there and says your electric is on. No, my
17 electric is not on. I don't have anymore numbers than
18 anybody else has got in this building, okay.

19 So what happens? Goes back in the system.
20 Twenty-four hours later he comes back out there. Puts the
21 same fuse back in. Last 20 minutes. Left the area. So
22 what happens. Back in the system I go again. Twenty-four
23 hours later here he comes again. I'm in my car and I'm
24 heading up there. I'm only two blocks away from that fuse
25 and he said yeah, they got a subdivision down there he said

1 had a bunch of electric heat. It's picking it up. It's
2 melting the fuses. There wasn't a tree on the line.

3 They have come through there since that storm and have
4 trimmed most of it out. I still got one tree I want to go
5 look at. They're just not -- they don't understand what's
6 going on. They put in that new metering that's supposed to
7 tell them what's going on, it's not working. It's not
8 telling them that they had a device outage. The last three
9 outages I've had in my area, I've had to find a trouble man
10 or have a friend of mine if they'd see one I'd stop him and
11 tell him. We were down to individual outages. Instead of
12 the computer putting it together and say we have a whole
13 group in my area, it just says it's individual outages.
14 Whoever called in is an individual outage. It doesn't go
15 back and say it's a device like it's supposed to.

16 They've been messing with the system for 12 years at
17 least because I know it was in when I was working 12 years
18 ago. I don't know what's going on with the system but
19 whatever it is and there's no way to get back to the people
20 whenever you do have. Like I said, I worked there almost
21 36 years and I don't have any idea who to call and
22 straighten it out. I don't know who to talk to.

23 When they send these people out and I know from
24 personal experience they have these storms come in, a
25 trouble man or a crew can do the work but they bring in a

1 bunch of people and send out a bunch of people that all
2 they do is walk around and write down in notebooks about
3 it. Why in the world don't they bring people in that can
4 do the work and send them out there with them or bring them
5 in and let them drive with the guys that are driving all
6 the time and working all the time and are tired and stuff.
7 It would give them enough relief that they could do more
8 work or be able to help them do the work. It just seems
9 like they haven't learned from anything -- well, maybe
10 they're not hearing it. They're not hearing it from us.

11 One of the reasons and I mentioned a little earlier
12 when we was talking, I retired. In fact, it will be ten
13 years ago the end of this month. One of the reasons I got
14 out of this because I got frustrated with the new system.
15 The job was -- I was a trouble man. The job was easier
16 than it had ever been and the reason it was easier is
17 because they were telling me what to do. I'd work years by
18 myself and worked out of map book and put everything back
19 in. Decided everything myself and when it come down to now
20 they'd sit there and say go over there and look at this and
21 I'd say why. Tell me what's wrong. It says go over here
22 and check this out and I'd say well now I know why that's
23 out. That was out last year.

24 I was proud of my work. I was interested in it and I
25 had the experience but the guy up operating the computer I

1 don't know what he was looking at but he didn't understand
2 what I was talking about and he wouldn't let me do what I
3 thought ought to be done. I realize there's different ways
4 to do everything but my feeling was that he did not
5 understand because he had never seen what I did. Never
6 done what I did. Never been a linemen. All's he did was
7 knew how to operate things off a computer and we have no
8 way of getting this information back to them. Like I say,
9 that automated thing. The last time I told them my line
10 was down so I can tell them something what was wrong but
11 from my understanding all the outages in Desoto that I know
12 of except a couple of them were all overloads or a limb
13 tripped the line and the lady said it blew the fuse which
14 is normal but that they had a few people in the area rather
15 than sending all the people up north, they could have had
16 all of Desoto back in probably half a day. Really that's
17 all I've got to say.

18 JUDGE: Thank you. Commissioner Murray, any
19 questions?

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions.

21 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Sir, I want to thank you for
23 coming. Your experience in regard to dealing with
24 things in the field is just I think invaluable in
25 helping us to understand how things could change and

1 whether or not there needs to be some rechanging done.
2 I'd like to know a little bit about what you can tell
3 me and I will not spend a lot of time on this even
4 though I'd like, but I'd like to know what you can tell
5 me that you're observing today in regards to personnel
6 and really the number of people that are out there
7 working as linemen in comparison from what you saw
8 before when you were working and whether or not that is
9 a factor in this set of issues that you been outlined.

10 MR. BLECHLE: If I heard your question correctly,
11 you're talking about the personnel change. A lot of it
12 has to do that the people that are taking I guess the
13 supervisory or the management job are not the people
14 that is coming up through the lines. They're people
15 they bring in because in my opinion the way they're
16 treating some of the people that are in these
17 positions, nobody that is really qualified wants to
18 take it and I think that's the same way and I'm saying
19 all the dispatchers but I'm saying the dispatcher that
20 I was with or a fair amount of them whenever I was
21 working had no experience in what the work was. They
22 bring them in from anywhere because they can't get
23 anybody that can operate the computer and has a little
24 bit of knowledge of it because they can't get in people
25 in my mind who are really qualified to take the job.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: At what point in time in your
2 career was that different than what you're describing?

3 MR. BLECHLE: Would have to be at least 15 years
4 ago. It's been a gradual evolution. It was just kind
5 of an attitude. It's a small thing but okay. I worked
6 in Jefferson County and I worked in Desoto. I worked
7 in Festus. They closed the Festus headquarters. They
8 closed the Desoto headquarters. What they do they said
9 they're moving to the middle of Jefferson County and
10 that's up at House Springs and if you've ever drove up
11 to House Springs, in my mind that is not the middle of
12 Jefferson County. I'm saying the decisions are being
13 made up there and we have no input.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Where are the dispatchers that
15 linemen are talking to?

16 MR. BLECHLE: Downtown St. Louis, 18th Street.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Has that always been the case?

18 MR. BLECHLE: No.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Where did they used to be?

20 MR. BLECHLE: Individual counties. Well,
21 originally they were all individual counties. They
22 were like in Festus. We had a dispatch office in
23 Festus. They moved it to House Springs when they
24 closed Festus and then we went to -- they took -- well
25 of course everything was paperwork then. Some of it

1 was on computer but a lot of it was paperwork. Then
2 they transferred it all to St. Louis, our dispatch into
3 St. Louis. We did work with the dispatchers in St.
4 Louis for years at night when we only had one or two
5 trouble men on weekends but then we went to where they
6 went to St. Louis and then for a couple of years
7 whenever they had a major storm we still had the
8 capabilities down here. We would break off to ourself
9 whenever they couldn't handle it but then they
10 eliminated that.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Sounds like you're describing a
12 change and I'm trying to understand the change. A
13 change in regard to who was actually directing what was
14 done in the field and the repair work during outages.
15 Is that right or not? In other words, did the linemen
16 used to have, did they formerly have more authority in
17 the fields to repair the work that they thought needed
18 to be done and that's changed at some point in time or
19 over the period of time?

20 MR. BLECHLE: To get the permission for it was
21 locally and it was easier to do. I had a home
22 telephone number. I had a number I could call with
23 somebody in the county. After that it went to St.
24 Louis and assume now it's all on computer. I don't
25 know if they even talk to them anymore.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: And you're saying that that
2 contributed to the efficiency of getting the work done
3 in the field. Am I understanding that?

4 MR. BLECHLE: Yeah, especially during major
5 storms. If the meters that the program is set up would
6 have worked like they said it was going to, it
7 shouldn't have made any difference but since it's not
8 working it's just magnified it in my mind.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And so the way that
10 you're seeing responses today and what's happened over
11 time since they've gone to this system, you believe it
12 is much less efficient in handling the outages out in
13 the field during a major outage?

14 MR. BLECHLE: Yes.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Is there difference in
16 the number of Ameren linemen today than they were when
17 you were working?

18 MR. BLECHLE: Yes. A few. I don't know how great
19 in Jefferson County it is but we're a growing county
20 but it has changed some.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Has it gone down?

22 MR. BLECHLE: Well, okay.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Or if you know?

24 MR. BLECHLE: I worked as a trouble man. We had
25 12 trouble men. We went from 12 trouble men from

1 covering -- they added a midnight shift. They didn't
2 add people. They added extra men on evenings. They
3 didn't add people. We're covering the weekends. We're
4 working 24-7 and we're covering it and we still got the
5 same amount. In fact, we may have one less than we had
6 20 years ago.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Now tell me what that
8 means. I'm trying to understand what that means in
9 regards to the workload and to what happens out in the
10 field.

11 MR. BLECHLE: Okay. Normally we used to have
12 about nine trouble men working during the day and two
13 evenings and one guy off, one or two guys off. It
14 rotated. Now you got five guys probably working days
15 most time and two guys evenings and one or two
16 midnights and then the others got to rest because
17 they're covering that Saturday and Sunday too now
18 because it used to be on the weekends we only had one
19 guy on evenings and one guy on days and then now
20 they've got more than that. I'm not real sure right
21 now but they've increased the amount of coverage
22 without increasing the amount of people that's doing
23 it.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: I see. And is that better or
25 worse in your opinion?

1 MR. BLECHLE: Well, it's worse because we're
2 covering that many and they can't -- if they do have a
3 storm they ain't got as many to call in. If they had
4 more people to cover the areas during the days and
5 stuff.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Can you give me any idea
7 about the infrastructure status that you're familiar
8 with and whether or not it is in good shape, in poor
9 shape or otherwise?

10 MR. BLECHLE: Basically from what I understand --

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: I'm looking for what you know
12 based upon your observations because you've got
13 hands-on experience here on this.

14 MR. BLECHLE: Tree trimming goes up and down. We
15 start having outages it seems like they trim better
16 especially in our area and that really helps.
17 Maintenance in the lines they're doing pretty good on
18 that. The small stuff they really -- I don't even know
19 what happens to that anymore. We used to carry a lot
20 of small work around with us and we would do it when we
21 can and they've eliminated all that I think. It's all
22 on computer.

23 Part of the problem is that as a Jefferson County
24 trouble men we did a lot of other type of work that they
25 don't do in St. Louis. They got separate departments for.

1 Well, down here and the people when they changed over, I
2 think the people up there did not understand all that we
3 did down here and some of that got lost. Now probably
4 they've got to be picking it up because the maintenance has
5 went downhill. Just to address I've heard them talking
6 about them blinking lights and the computers and stuff and
7 as a defense they are not going to be able to eliminate
8 that.

9 When a tree hits a line it's going to blink your
10 lights and if a fuse blows it's going to -- it works its
11 way back to the reclosures. It goes back to the
12 substation. Something has got to open up before that fuse
13 blows and trimming or something like that, they need to
14 find out what's causing it but they're not going to be able
15 to eliminate that in my opinion.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. But you think that
17 sometimes tree trimming and some other things might
18 reduce the number of those kinds of events.

19 MR. BLECHLE: The blinking light, yes. In the
20 major storms I don't think there's any way you can trim
21 enough trees to get away from an ice storm. I've
22 worked up in Alton. I've worked up in Iowa. I've
23 worked all over in ice storms and if you've got a 50
24 foot tree that's 35 foot away from the line and it goes
25 over, it's going to take that line out. I don't think

1 they can -- but the close vicinity, yes.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: So you can possibly reduce the
3 amount of damage during a major event but you can't
4 eliminate it.

5 MR. BLECHLE: Oh, no. No way and going
6 underground is not any better. Number one you can't
7 look for a problem when it's underground. It's way
8 more work intensive to find an underground problem.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is it true that sometimes
10 underground outages are due to feeders that are above
11 ground?

12 MR. BLECHLE: Oh, yeah. Everything is fed --
13 everything starts out overhead.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: I think that's all I have right
15 now. Thank you very much for coming tonight. I
16 appreciate it very much.

17 JUDGE: Commissioner Clayton?

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Sir, I just had a couple of
19 questions tonight and frankly my head was kind of
20 spinning when you were speaking because you covered a
21 lot of ground in your testimony, but I wanted to
22 clarify how many times you lost power at your address
23 in 2006.

24 MR. BLECHLE: Twice.

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And could you tell me what

1 time period those were?

2 MR. BLECHLE: The first one was in summer of '06
3 and I think I was out six days.

4 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: That would be the major
5 wind storm that came through the area?

6 MR. BLECHLE: Yes. Wait a minute.

7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Would have been July of
8 2006?

9 MR. BLECHLE: Now wait a minute. I might be
10 mistaken. That was in the summer of 2003 when we had
11 the major storm I was out six days. During the summer
12 of '06 I think I was out four days.

13 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And that would have been
14 the storm in July?

15 MR. BLECHLE: Yes.

16 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did you lose power for a
17 significant amount of time earlier in the year?

18 MR. BLECHLE: Not that I remember.

19 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And then how about the ice
20 storm of November 30 or December 1st?

21 MR. BLECHLE: I was out three and a half days.

22 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: How about in January of
23 2007, did you lose power?

24 MR. BLECHLE: No, I did not.

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

1 MR. BLECHLE: The main problem seems to be that
2 when I go out there's nothing major wrong. There's
3 nothing wrong with any of the lines in my area. It's
4 just not being put back in.

5 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. How about 2004-2005,
6 did you lose power for any length of time during those
7 years?

8 MR. BLECHLE: No.

9 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did not. Thank you very
10 much for your time.

11 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling?

12 COMMISSIONER APPLING: This is Commissioner
13 Appling and I'm probably going to ask you a kind of off
14 the wall question here but I'm curious because you had
15 a lot of professional information that you passed on to
16 us. Say for example tomorrow morning the CEO of Ameren
17 called you and said I'm going to have breakfast with
18 you tomorrow morning, what would you tell him?

19 MR. BLECHLE: I'd tell him everything that I told
20 you basically and that he needed to listen to the
21 people under him and not under him, the lower case
22 people, the workers of what they think is wrong. I
23 think that's what they should have done years ago and
24 didn't do.

25 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you very much for

1 coming out. I thank you for your information. It's
2 very informative. Thanks again.

3 MR. BLECHLE: Okay. Thank you for listening.

4 JUDGE: Thank you, commissioner. Public counsel
5 have any questions for this witness?

6 MR. MILLS: I do just briefly and I think you
7 covered this but I just wanted to be clear. Is it your
8 testimony that you think in terms of what you've seen
9 in Jefferson County that the attention to maintenance
10 of the distribution system, the feeder system is not
11 today is not what it was use years ago?

12 MR. BLECHLE: Not quite, no. They've eliminated
13 some stuff and at the time I was doing it that they
14 said was cost effective. Now how many of them panned
15 out I don't know and most of what I was referring to
16 was inspections we did in substations that they
17 stretched them out further. I can't think of any
18 others other than like I said, on again off again with
19 the tree trimming. It seems at times lacks and other
20 times they did fine.

21 MR. MILLS: And specifically with the substation
22 kind of things that you were just talking about, what
23 has changed there?

24 MR. BLECHLE: How often they do the inspections.
25 How often they do maintenance maybe on breakers and

1 such as that.

2 MR. MILLS: And does that have an impact on
3 reliability and the length of outages and frequency of
4 outages?

5 MR. BLECHLE: I don't know. That's beyond my
6 expertise. I switched them but I did not actually do
7 the maintenance but I did do the inspection work on it.

8 MR. MILLS: That's all the questions I have.
9 Thank you.

10 JUDGE: Thank you. Any questions from Ameren?
11 All right. You can step down, Mr. Blechle.

12 MR. BLECHLE: Thank you.

13 JUDGE: Thank you. Call the next witness,
14 Mr. Kelly.

15 MR. KELLY: Steven Crawford, please.

16 JUDGE: Good evening, Mr. Crawford. Could you
17 spell your last name for us?

18 MR. CRAWFORD: C-R-A-W-F-O-R-D.

19 JUDGE: Thank you, sir. Can you please raise your
20 right hand. I will swear you in.

21 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

22 JUDGE: Are you a customer of Ameren?

23 MR. CRAWFORD: Yes, I am.

24 JUDGE: Electric or gas or both?

25 MR. CRAWFORD: Electric.

1 JUDGE: All right. What would you like to tell
2 us?

3 MR. CRAWFORD: Well, I'm here representing the
4 Jefferson County Health Department and basically I have
5 a written statement that I'm going to read and I will
6 elaborate on some of the things that some of the folks
7 have mentioned here. I would like to thank the linemen
8 and other staff at AmerenUE for their efforts and hard
9 work during the power outages of July, December and
10 most recently this week. They do not get enough credit
11 for their effort and also often they put their lives on
12 the line to restore power. However, Jefferson County
13 Health Department would like to suggest some changes
14 regarding Ameren's response to the outages. The Health
15 Department works the county emergency operations center
16 and emergency departments in emergency response
17 capacity during these outages. We have been working to
18 build an integrated response capability in the county.

19 In recent outages we have run into some issues
20 regarding what areas of the county are affected. We've
21 been able to get limited information from Ameren in the
22 past to aid our responses throughout the county, but we
23 would like to see Ameren commit a representative to that
24 response in direct communication and accessibility with the
25 EOC center and its department in order to better dispatch

1 the county, city and Health Department resources.

2 Examples of where this would have been helpful include
3 outages where the Health Department has had to send staff
4 out to areas to determine what food service facilities have
5 been affected by these power outages. These outages often
6 affect private wells, public wells causing loss of pressure
7 and increase in potential for contamination of water supply
8 including freezing of pipes and fittings that also can
9 increase potential contamination of water supplies.
10 Knowing what specific areas are affected will enable our
11 office to put out water advisories and also help us
12 determine what area to offer bacterial services after the
13 outage has been addressed.

14 Also in this past summer's outage having access to
15 information regarding what nursing homes and other special
16 need individuals were affected would have helped the Health
17 Department and various emergency response departments
18 allocate resources to ensure the needs of these people were
19 met in a timely and efficient manner. Also knowing
20 Ameren's response plan to the special needs individuals
21 would have helped determine allocation of resources.

22 We weren't certain if Ameren had a plan for
23 prioritizing repairs to these individuals or if any effort
24 had been made to contact them. If Ameren can provide a
25 list of individuals to the Health Department or any of our

1 other agencies that we partner with through the EOC, our
2 office can contact these individuals to triage their needs
3 and try to see that these needs are met. Often these
4 special needs individuals are on oxygen or other supportive
5 therapies that they need in order to survive and so we
6 would like to make sure that we're able to provide for
7 those needs during these larger power outages.

8 Also road crews had difficulty clearing roads because
9 they had no information regarding the possibility of down
10 lines and power. Assisting us with locating affected areas
11 can help the EOC, the Health Department and other agencies
12 set up heating and cooling centers in the county, feeding
13 centers, shelters, water distribution centers or
14 distribution points to determine what private and public
15 wells may have been affected so that these can be sampled
16 and treated as may be necessary. Other needs may be
17 addressed also as they are observed.

18 The Health Department would like Ameren to consider
19 establishing effective direct working relationships with
20 all county agencies particularly the EOC in an official
21 capacity and would like to help make this happen by hosting
22 meetings with Ameren, elected officials, the public and
23 other agencies within the county in an effort to make our
24 response efforts proactive, effective and less reactive.
25 I'm sure that other counties in the St. Louis metro area

1 would like similar arrangements and we're not asking
2 someone to actually be present in our EOC center but
3 perhaps a direct line where the various EOCs in the area
4 can contact a person for specific data.

5 During the December outage we were provided with zip
6 code data showing what percentage of people within a given
7 zip code were without power but we weren't given specific
8 data on where within that zip code the power outages were
9 if that was available. That makes it difficult for us to
10 allocate our resources in the county to allocate its
11 resources in response to the needs of those areas.

12 Also during the July outage the Health Department has
13 I believe it's nine field staff that responded to the
14 heat-related issues regarding spoilage of food in
15 restaurants and such. We oversaw or actually had people
16 destroy food voluntarily that had been outside of the
17 temperature danger zone for potentiality hazardous foods
18 that totaled probably millions of dollars and this is not
19 the first time that that has happened in Jefferson County.
20 We've had that happen in a couple of other outages at lease
21 since I've been with the county since 2001. Usually these
22 outages occur along the eastern portion of the county and
23 the southern portion of the county and that's pretty well
24 all I have to say.

25 JUDGE: Thank you, Mr. Crawford. Commissioner

1 Murray, do you have any questions?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you for the
3 suggestions and I wondered if you have sat down with
4 anyone from Ameren to discuss these specific
5 suggestions.

6 MR. CRAWFORD: No, we have not.

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.

8 MR. CRAWFORD: I do know that during the December
9 outage we did have unofficial contact with somebody
10 through Ameren as I understand it to get some of the
11 data that we needed, but we did not have an official
12 contact and I think from my professional perspective in
13 our emergency response activities to have that official
14 contact would be very helpful regarding many of the
15 issues that we could face in the future, not just power
16 outages including hazardous materials releases and
17 things of that nature where we may need to get in
18 contact with them regarding power-related activities so
19 that we can deal with any chemical-related issues or
20 bioterrorist issues that could affect not only people
21 in the area but also the utilities and their employees.

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And do you work through FEMA
23 at all?

24 MR. CRAWFORD: No. I work through the Jefferson
25 County Health Department. I'm an environmentalist.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: There's no coordination with
2 FEMA.

3 MR. CRAWFORD: There is coordination with FEMA but
4 we don't typically get information as I understand it
5 through FEMA specifically for Ameren UE.

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. Thank you.

7 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw, do you have questions?

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very much for coming.
9 In regards to the question that Commissioner Murray
10 asked about whether you have sat down with Ameren, did
11 you have any conversations with any of Ameren's people
12 regarding this issue?

13 MR. CRAWFORD: No, I have not. I know that our
14 bioterrorism planner who is responsible for a lot of the
15 emergency response activities at the health department
16 level has worked a lot to integrate our emergency
17 response capabilities has not had official meetings
18 with Ameren. We did have after the July outage
19 emergency responder meeting at the health department
20 and no one from AmerenUE was there.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Were they invited, do you know?

22 MR. CRAWFORD: That I can't say. I do not know.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: You said you have some
24 unofficial contact with Ameren in your testimony. Can
25 you describe what you mean by that?

1 MR. CRAWFORD: Well, I don't know where that
2 contact came from but from my understanding it was
3 somebody that worked within the EOC, one of the
4 agencies knew someone with Ameren and was able to get
5 in contact with them to get some of the data that we
6 needed.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And for the record, what
8 is the EOC?

9 MR. CRAWFORD: Emergency Operation Center.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is that a place or is that an
11 entity?

12 MR. CRAWFORD: That is located at the courthouse I
13 believe at Jefferson County. It's under the authority
14 of the county commission.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Do you know whether the
16 EOC had official contact numbers with Ameren to allow
17 them to get through to coordinate on things such as
18 you're describing?

19 MR. CRAWFORD: That I can't specifically say. I
20 know that when we have our what I would characterize as
21 smaller scale power outages where just the health
22 department is doing a response, we have difficulty
23 often getting in touch with Ameren directly.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. But you said something
25 earlier about your EOC partners not having any official

1 contact information and I'm trying to make sure that
2 I'm following you whether or not that includes the EOC
3 itself in Jeff County.

4 MR. CRAWFORD: I believe that does include the
5 EOC. The official contact, what I mean by that is some
6 contact point or somebody with AmerenUE that we can
7 contact through the EOC to coordinate our activities
8 with what AmerenUE is doing.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. And currently that does
10 not exist is what you're telling me.

11 MR. CRAWFORD: To my knowledge it does not exist.

12 COMMISSIONER GAW: I thank you very much for your
13 testimony, sir. Thank you.

14 MR. CRAWFORD: Thank you.

15 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling, do you have any
16 questions?

17 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No.

18 JUDGE: Thank you sir. Public counsel, do you
19 have any questions for this witness?

20 MR. MILLS: No questions. Thank you.

21 JUDGE: Ameren UE. All right. Thank you,
22 Mr. Crawford. You can step down.

23 MR. CRAWFORD: Thank you.

24 JUDGE: Our next witness.

25 MR. KELLY: Judge, the next witness would be Laura

1 Schmidt.

2 JUDGE: Can you tell us your full name and spell
3 it for us?

4 MS. SCHMIDT: Yeah. It's Laura Schmidt,
5 S-C-H-I-M-D-T.

6 JUDGE: Can you spell your first name for us?

7 MS. SCHMIDT: I'm sorry. L-A-U-R-A.

8 JUDGE: Okay. Please raise your right hand and
9 I'll swear you in as a witness.

10 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

11 JUDGE: Are you an Ameren customer?

12 MS. SCHMIDT: Yes, Your Honor. I am an
13 electricity customer only.

14 JUDGE: Thank you. What would you like to tell
15 us?

16 MS. SCHMIDT: I would like to make a point that I
17 think that Ameren's service is considerably less than
18 could be normally expected if they were held to the
19 same standards as a normal private for profit business.
20 And one of the situations I would like to point out is
21 when my husband and I bought our house in Jefferson
22 County we inherited a dusk to dawn light and those
23 things never go out unless you call the electric
24 company and have them completely disengaged and we
25 called them last September on I believe it was the 20th

1 and said we'd like our dawn to dusk light removed and
2 they said okay. That's fine. We'll do that and you
3 won't be billed for it after September 20th.

4 Well, weeks went by. We still had the light on all
5 the time and when our bill came in October we were still
6 being billed for it. So I wrote a little note on the bill
7 saying no we don't owe this because we called and talked to
8 so and so at your company and wanted to have the light
9 disconnected. Well, not only did they rebill us for it the
10 next month but they charged us a late charge for what we
11 hadn't paid for the previous month. So I had to call back
12 and this totals three phone calls by then that we've made
13 to try to get one dusk to dawn light taken down. Well,
14 they finally did.

15 Everybody we talked to was very nice and pleasant.
16 I'm not criticizing the people who work their phones at all
17 but in the meantime, sir, that light was on for probably
18 six weeks that it didn't need to be and there was a lot of
19 clerical snafu that could have been avoided if the job had
20 just simply been done right the first time. That's only
21 one simple example, sir, but it's the kind of frustration
22 that people experience with Ameren.

23 I would also like to address what the other lady said
24 earlier. What she's talking about is fluctuations. What I
25 tend to call these as blink outs where the electricity will

1 just go out very briefly and then come back on and it seems
2 like a minor problem but it's very frustrating because then
3 you have to go around the house, redo all the other clocks.
4 If your dishwasher is in mid cycle you're kind of out of
5 luck. The gentleman was talking about the computer. I can
6 completely relate to that situation. I'm a graduate
7 student and if I'm in the middle of a paper and the
8 electricity blinks out, I'm going to pretty frustrated.

9 These seem like situations that could be avoided if
10 things were done properly. We just have way too many
11 customers where I live on the lines that we have. There's
12 been an awful lot of development recently. I know that's
13 not Ameren's decision to do that but they need to be
14 involved when a developer comes in and says we want to slap
15 up 40 houses in a subdivision here, they need to be
16 inserting their input to say this is not going to hold up
17 on the lines and your people are going to have trouble.

18 I also want to talk about the Taum Sauk situation.
19 That seems to me to be a very clear example of complete and
20 utter negligence on the part of Ameren which resulted in
21 the destruction of a state park that my parents have been
22 taking me to since I was this big and we are just really,
23 really fortunate that the gentleman who manages that park
24 and his family did not lose their lives and this looks like
25 a really clear case of the company is trying to stick us,

1 the customers for the cost of repairing that park and
2 rebuilding that dam and I would like to suggest, Your
3 Honor, that what they do instead is go to Mr. Rainwater the
4 CEO and take some of his big fat salary and use it to pay
5 for that instead and that's the end of my comments, Your
6 Honor.

7 JUDGE: Thank you, ma'am. Commissioner Murray, do
8 you have any questions?

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions. Thank you.

10 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Schmidt, I just want to say
12 thank you for coming and sharing that with us and I
13 appreciate you coming. Thank you.

14 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you, sir.

15 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling?

16 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No questions, ma'am but
17 thank you for coming out tonight.

18 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you, sir.

19 JUDGE: Public counsel have any questions for this
20 witness?

21 MR. MILLS: I do not. Thank you.

22 JUDGE: Thank you. Ameren UE. Ms. Schmidt, you
23 can step down.

24 MS. SCHMIDT: Thank you, sir.

25 JUDGE: Mr. Kelly, can you call our next witness?

1 MR. KELLY: Judge, it will be Franklin and Phyllis
2 Messex.

3 JUDGE: Can you tell us your name and spell your
4 last name for us?

5 MS. MESSEX: Yes. My name is Phyllis Messex,
6 M-E-S-S-E-X.

7 JUDGE: Okay. And if you can raise your right
8 hand.

9 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

10 JUDGE: What would you like to tell us?

11 MS. MESSEX: I just want to reenforce all the
12 other testimony that's come tonight. I am a UE
13 electric customer and we have lived in this area, a
14 rural area between Hillsboro and Festus for 20 plus
15 years and in the last four years we have suffered
16 through more outages than the entire other time that
17 we've lived in this area. We lived in one house 18
18 years and we had more in the last four years than we
19 did the entire 18 years.

20 We had two days in the summer with the high winds of
21 '06 where we were out and then we were out five and a half
22 days with the end of November of '06. I am speaking not
23 only for my husband and myself but family, friends
24 neighbors, coworkers as well. I don't know if you can see
25 how many people is here tonight but there are only a

1 handful, 20 to 25 people and that certainly isn't
2 indicative of how many people live in this area and have
3 had problems.

4 We would ask that the Commission vote no to this
5 increase. I feel that people are tired of CEOs taking huge
6 salaries and companies taking huge profits while consumers
7 are asked to pay more and more. We are concerned also that
8 we may be asked to pay for mistakes that these large
9 companies have made and we would ask UE or Ameren to
10 improve their services and their responsibilities to their
11 existing customers before they ask for another raise.
12 Thank you.

13 JUDGE: Thank you, ma'am. Commissioner Murray, do
14 you have any questions?

15 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, I don't but thank you
16 very much.

17 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you very much for
19 coming, ma'am.

20 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling? Public counsel have
21 any questions?

22 MR. MILLS: No thank you.

23 JUDGE: Ameren UE. All right. Then Ms. Messex,
24 you can step down.

25 MS. MESSEX: Thank you.

1 JUDGE: And our next witness.

2 MR. KELLY: Karen Bartholome.

3 MS. BARTHOLOME: Good evening. My name is Karen
4 Bartholome. I'll spell that. K-A-R-E-N. Bartholome,
5 B-A-R-T-H-O-L-O-M-E.

6 JUDGE: Okay. If you would raise your right hand.

7 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

8 JUDGE: And what would you like to tell us?

9 MS. BARTHOLOME: I would like to discuss the rate
10 increase. I am against it. I am against it at this
11 time. I feel that they do not deserve an increase. We
12 would be rewarding them for poor performance. I
13 believe we should set a time line, six to nine months,
14 a year, maybe a year or two, whatever that may be but I
15 feel we should give them some goals to obtain, some
16 improvements for them to take care of. Address it at
17 that time and then decide if they deserve an increase.
18 We could also split it. Based on if we do nine months,
19 give them a portion of it and say we'll review it again
20 in another year but I just feel that at this time they
21 do not deserve it.

22 I also would like to suggest that we have a set amount
23 of workers per area based on the population and that those
24 individuals would not leave that area until everyone is up
25 and running when we're in a power outage. Once everyone is

1 up and running, then they can move on to another area to
2 help others but I just feel that the smaller areas are
3 being discriminated against. We don't decide how many
4 people fall underneath our zip codes and I feel we're just
5 as important as anyone else. So I feel that we should be
6 taken care of as quick as anyone else.

7 I happen to live in an area where I rely on electric
8 completely. I'm on a well. I find that I'm not
9 comfortable running a generator. It's an awkward situation
10 for me. I ended up in the outage in November having to
11 live in one room with a kerosene heater and to be honest
12 with you, I wasn't even comfortable with that. I just felt
13 that it was dangerous. I happen to have animals. I have
14 horses, dogs, cats and I have exotic birds. My exotic
15 birds need to be kept at a certain room temperature, so I
16 ended up living with them in this small room during that
17 time period.

18 Unfortunately, I missed work because if I would have
19 left they would have died. And again, the water situation.
20 I have to get water to the horses, etc. So I really rely
21 on it. I need it. It's not a want. It's something I have
22 to have. I'm at a point now where I'm extremely
23 uncomfortable every time I hear that a storm is coming and
24 I just feel that I shouldn't be having to deal with that.
25 I just think it's ridiculous. I pay my bills on time and

1 the other issue is when I'm calling to inquire the status
2 of a situation, you can't get ahold of anyone and I feel
3 that that shouldn't be happening. To be honest with you,
4 we're being reactive and we should be proactive. I feel
5 that there should be more maintenance overall. I believe
6 the tree maintenance is definitely necessary and then
7 whatever else goes with it but there's plenty to do for
8 people. They need to hire more people. They need to have
9 them in set areas and they need to have just better
10 management overall. I truly believe that. The only other
11 thing I might add is I'm not sure if they have incentive
12 programs for their employees but that's something they can
13 consider also because I think the morale is horrible. I
14 think everybody is tired and it's really hard to work for a
15 company if you can't be proud of it and that's it. Thank
16 you.

17 JUDGE: Commissioner Murray, do you have any
18 questions?

19 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions but thank you
20 for your testimony.

21 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just a few. Thank you for
23 coming first of all. I want to get an idea from you
24 about the problems you had getting through on your
25 telephone calls. If you can describe that with more

1 specifics.

2 MS. BARTHOLOME: You basically just got a
3 recording saying that they were unable to give you any
4 time on when you would be up. You never got a live
5 person. It was just a recording. It was continuous
6 and you just get to the point where you just give up.
7 You just realize that you're just going to have to
8 wait. It was exhausting.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Does this happen to you on more
10 than one outage occasion when you were trying to get
11 through? Can you tell me did it happen in November,
12 December and also in July and does it happen at other
13 times?

14 MS. BARTHOLOME: It happened and I believe it was
15 2003 when a tornado came through my area. I live in
16 Fletcher, Missouri and then it also happened during
17 both of the storms, the July storm and then this last
18 November storm. Same situation. I also incur numerous
19 outages. I'll come home from work two, three times a
20 week and I'll have to reset my clocks. I have no idea
21 how long. I work long hours. I'm up at three in the
22 morning. I get home at seven. I mean, I need to have
23 electricity but at the same time it's just constant. I
24 come home and I'm having to reset all the clocks and
25 then I call them and they say you just need to keep

1 reporting it. Well, I keep reporting it but it just
2 doesn't improve.

3 I feel my issue is a tree issue, is a lot to do with
4 tree issues because I will be at home and the wind will
5 kick up and there it goes. It will start flickering and
6 I'll call them and say hey, my lights are flickering. I'm
7 going to be going out. Sometimes it doesn't and sometimes
8 it does but I call them every time. No feedback.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: No feedback?

10 MS. BARTHOLOME: No, sir.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you see evidence when you're
12 driving along the lines of trees that are around the
13 lines, over the lines, in the lines?

14 MS. BARTHOLOME: Yes. It's very sloppy looking
15 it. It's choppy. There's nothing clean about the
16 lines. I find that even after the last storm the lines
17 just looked horrible especially along Highway H.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: And you're talking about the
19 trees that are around the lines when you say they're
20 not clean looking?

21 MS. BARTHOLOME: Yes, sir and another issue I've
22 noticed is there's numerous lines that are extremely
23 low. I mean, they're just hanging extremely low. If I
24 was on my tractor I think there would be an issue.
25 It's not on my property but I see it as I'm driving

1 home.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Sure. I really appreciate your
3 coming, ma'am, and thank you very much for the
4 information.

5 MS. BARTHOLOME: Well, I appreciate your time.

6 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling. All right. Any
7 questions from the Office of Public Counsel?

8 MR. MILLS: No, thank you.

9 JUDGE: All right. From Ameren. Alright then.
10 Ms. Bartholome, thanks for coming.

11 MS. BARTHOLOME: Thank you.

12 JUDGE: And you may step down.

13 MR. KELLY: Next witness, judge, is Lance
14 Mayfield.

15 JUDGE: Hello, Mr. Mayfield.

16 MR. MAYFIELD: Hello.

17 JUDGE: Could you spell your last name for us?

18 MR. MAYFIELD: Mayfield like where Mr. Cleaver was
19 from. Mayfield, Kentucky is like M-A-Y-F-I-E-L-D.

20 JUDGE: All right. Thank you very much. Please
21 raise your right hand.

22 (Wherein the witness was sworn in)

23 JUDGE: Thank you very much. Are you an Ameren
24 customer?

25 MR. MAYFIELD: I am an electric customer with

1 three businesses and three homes.

2 JUDGE: What would you like to tell us?

3 MR. MAYFIELD: First of off I'd like to thank you
4 for the opportunity to speak here today. I drove two
5 hours to get here one way. I live in Viburnum,
6 Missouri and if you can kind of get an idea where that
7 is, that's halfway between Farmington and Rolla and if
8 these folks thought they live in the woods, we really
9 live in the woods. My comments today I hope in no way
10 would reflect on any of the performances by any of the
11 Ameren employees. In fact, they've been stellar in
12 their efforts and my comments are directed to the
13 management and I think what is the lack of their
14 efforts.

15 It's been reported in the press that Ameren has
16 invested \$2.6 billion in their infrastructure and in my
17 area we were traded from a co-op ten years ago to Ameren
18 against the wishes of many of the customers in that area
19 and the question I would have for Ameren is of that
20 \$2.6 billion, how much of that has been upgrades and
21 repairs in the former Black River Electric Territory.

22 Most companies would enjoy a mandated 12 percent
23 return in their business where the business is a monopoly
24 like Ameren is in the state of Missouri. In case No. EO or
25 zero, I'm not sure, 2007-0155 one of Ameren's response to

1 the change of supplier to many of the customers in our area
2 in section four said it was very difficult to maintain the
3 rural areas as far as the trees and growth. My question
4 would be if it's that difficult, why would they want our
5 area in the first place. Why did they ask for the trade
6 ten years ago. I think we can relieve the metropolitan
7 area in this county a lot of grief if Ameren would be
8 willing to trade back our territory which is comprised of
9 about 3,000 customers.

10 Speaking of 3,000 customers, I know in these kinds of
11 hearings there's a very, very small minority of people that
12 are willing to come and speak. First off, there's a lot of
13 time, a lot of expense to do this. Many people do not want
14 to get up in front of someone and speak and I think there
15 is a tremendous amount of frustration with the service
16 that's being provided or the lack of service that's being
17 provided. So I think we represent a tiny, tiny minority of
18 people even though there's a great majority of people that
19 have and sense our same frustrations.

20 I want to echo Vernon's comments earlier. I don't
21 know Vernon. In fact, I don't know anybody in this room. I
22 spoke to a couple of people at Public Service Commission
23 and Office of Public Counsel on the phone in the past but
24 rather than rehashing some of what others have already
25 said, some of the statements that I heard Vernon make as a

1 former employee comes to me on a regular basis in employees
2 that are current with Ameren or their vendors. The last
3 lady that spoke talked about the employees' morale and
4 where they are and I have heard that a number of times.

5 I have a business where I have about 1,000 customers
6 and many of those customers are Ameren employees or they
7 are vendor, employees of vendors of Ameren and this thing
8 is a mess to put it quite simply. I spoke at the Public
9 Service Commission hearings in 1996 in case EO-95-400
10 stating I was concerned about the service of a large
11 company like Ameren to service our small rural area as
12 compared to a co-op and I think if those comments would be
13 looked at you would find that didn't really have a crystal
14 ball but it's been pretty evident that Ameren is too large
15 of a company to service a rural area.

16 In 1996 there was an ice storm where our area was
17 without power for near a week and that was just a
18 couple of months after Ameren took over the Black River
19 territory. There's a gentleman in our community who
20 worked for Black River at the time as a linemen. Out
21 of the goodness of his heart because everybody was out
22 without electric, he went to the Ameren people and told
23 them that he would like to assist them. Show them
24 where the normal trouble problems were and help with
25 his maps. The people that were working on the ground

1 contacted the management of Ameren and his request to
2 help was denied. We were only out of electric about a
3 week.

4 During the 2006 ice storm in December, my daughter was
5 at a friend of hers, a house and she called me about all
6 kinds of flashes and lines down on the ground across the
7 street from her friend's house. That was about 8:30 in the
8 evening and I called and reported that to Ameren as our
9 electric was out at that time. About 11 p.m. I was quite
10 surprised when someone from Ameren called me. They asked
11 me if I was out of electric which I kind of thought was
12 ironic. There wasn't any electric anywhere that I knew of
13 in our area and I told them I was and I told them where the
14 exact address was where the power lines were down that my
15 daughter actually witnessed crashing to the ground and
16 causing a light show.

17 The next thing I overheard after I -- they were
18 pleasant and told me they were going to look into it.
19 Thirty-four minutes later I heard on our police scanner at
20 my home, the quad county dispatch in Viburnum, Missouri
21 contacted the local police officer who was on duty said the
22 Ameren guys had contacted them and said that they would be
23 back about nine or 9:30 in the morning. That's the next
24 morning.

25 My question is are the employees allowed to work

1 overtime and is the reason that Ameren would not allow the
2 people to continue their work that night is because they
3 were going to be on some kind of premium pay. This is some
4 of the comments that I think possibly was echoed a little
5 earlier and some of the things I hear about still today
6 about it seems that there's no local control. It's all
7 being controlled somewhere else and the people on the
8 ground that know what's going on have no ability to make
9 any decisions even though they may understand the real
10 problem.

11 About three or four years ago I was working on behalf
12 of your community to get a cell tower erected in Viburnum,
13 Missouri. Since Ameren promotes economic development, I
14 called to see if they would provide a pole and about
15 300 feet of line in order to get this service up and going
16 assuming it would help everybody including Ameren
17 especially during the power outages where there would be a
18 power backed up to the cell tower and they could have
19 communication with the people other than people who had
20 Ameren radios.

21 After several attempts to contact people at Ameren, I
22 was finally sent to someone by the name of Jean Mason who I
23 believe is in Cape Girardeau. I introduced myself and told
24 her what the call was about in great detail and she asked
25 again where I was from and I told her again and she wanted

1 to know my zip code. Kind of getting back to what Vernon
2 said earlier, when I told her my zip code she said Ameren
3 didn't service my area. I said well, you know, that's who
4 I pay my bills to and you're kind of right. You don't
5 service my area. We really didn't do real well after that.

6 It took a while to really convince her that Ameren
7 really does service my area even though the Doe Run
8 Company, one of Ameren's largest customers is located in my
9 community. So I think this is just kind of a good
10 representation that there is really lack of communication.
11 The systems that I know that they have in place that Vernon
12 was talking about probably was with great intent but
13 sometimes things just don't work right and sometimes people
14 have to get involved and I think the problem we see is not
15 enough people are involved. Likely Ameren doesn't have
16 enough people on the ground to service the customers and
17 they did refuse to offer any economic assistance for that
18 cell phone power by the way and we do have it up and it
19 does work and it's about the only thing that works when the
20 electric is out.

21 During last summer's storm in July, of course our
22 power went out and we have a former Ameren employee that
23 lives in my community much like Vernon and without his
24 assistance, we would have never had our power turned back
25 on. It only took about 24, 30 hours of the power being out

1 but the fix was really simple. It's called a switch. We
2 didn't have any trees down on lines. We didn't have any
3 lines burn up. We didn't have poles over. It was a switch
4 much like a breaker at your home when something gets
5 overheated or there's too much surge somewhere, a switch
6 kicks off.

7 Well, it took the former employee calling his buddies
8 to alert them to how easy it would be to put back about
9 1,000 people in power by just simply flicking the switch.
10 Again, I go back to that's lack of communication, lack of
11 understanding of systems and likely a lack of enough people
12 on the ground to make it all work.

13 I again echo some of what Vernon said. Again, I don't
14 know Vernon. It's only the first time tonight in my life.
15 It appears that our area 100 miles from St. Louis is being
16 dispatched from St. Louis as to what's wrong in our
17 community and like one of the other ladies mentioned, you
18 can call and you get recordings. You can tell them you're
19 out and if you do talk to a person they punch in your zip
20 code and sometimes they can tell you you are out even when
21 you're in the dark. Sometimes they can't because of
22 relying on the computer.

23 A former linemen was able to convince local linemen in
24 the Potosi district last summer that they didn't need to go
25 to St. Louis because they actually had power outages in all

1 of the Potosi district. What I'm referring to is the
2 management was in the process and the linemen were in route
3 to St. Louis because of such widespread outage even though
4 the enter Potosi district was out. Again, I indicate that
5 that seemed to be a lack of knowledge by management about
6 where their people should be.

7 I'm asking that the Public Service Commission not
8 allow the rate increase by Ameren. I believe that there's
9 a tremendous burden put on rural Missourians for lack of
10 service much less to pay a higher price for the lack of
11 service. I also request that the former Black River
12 territory be returned back to a co-op where the customers
13 actually have local controls with the board of director.

14 In July of 2006 I purchased a generator that cost
15 \$1,500. I really wasn't opposed to doing that just because
16 as I stated, I have businesses and one of the businesses
17 that I have is an insurance agency and you can imagine when
18 the wind blows a lot and the trees are down, power is off.
19 It creates a lot of claims for my business and what I do.
20 So in order for me to serve my customers, I went to the
21 extra expense so I could power up my home so that I could
22 turn my home into my office so that when my customers call
23 me, I can serve them and Ameren is prohibiting me by not
24 having stable and reliable power to be able to service my
25 customers.

1 I'm not a very large business. It's me and two other
2 employees and we work 24-7 seven days a week to service my
3 customers. All of my customers have my home number. They
4 have my cell phone number and they can get my mom's home
5 number if they need that to call her so she can come get
6 me. What I mean is I am dedicated to service, to my
7 customers and I'd like to see Ameren dedicated as well.

8 I noticed in the handout that I received this evening
9 it had stated that Ameren UE is proposing to develop at
10 least 100 megawatts of wind power and launch a voluntary
11 program allowing customers to support additional
12 development of wind power and other forms of reliable
13 energy.

14 My community has an economic development organization
15 called VEDAC. It stands for Viburnum Economic Development
16 Area Corporation. It's a 501(c)3. For the last two or
17 three years, we've been talking to Ameren about the
18 possibility of building a coal-fired utility generator in
19 our community. One of the biggest assets we feel like we
20 have there is a power bridge running four directions north,
21 east and west. The other assets we have is rail, an
22 abundant supply of water and property in order to build
23 something like that on and we're in a rural area where
24 whatever omissions might be there would be minimized based
25 on our location. It's kind of hard for me to swallow that

1 they were really serious about looking at alternative power
2 sources when they won't hardly talk to us about it. They
3 did show up at a meeting once on a Saturday morning and we
4 made a presentation. Took a break for restroom and there
5 was going to be a question and answer session and they
6 wouldn't stay for the question and answers.

7 The city of Viburnum is a tiny city but it services
8 825 people in the city limits. The system operates water
9 system and many other systems that depend on power and as
10 the former mayor of that city, I can attest that the city
11 went to great expense over the last ten years to try to
12 beef up whatever we could beef up in order to maintain some
13 integrity in some of the systems that we have such as
14 water, sewer and emergency services.

15 Robert Hicks is our city superintendent of all things.
16 He picks up the dogs and takes care of the water and fixes
17 the streets and whatever else is necessary so he's a one
18 man band and in our December power outage he had quite a
19 frustrating time. I don't want to get into all the details
20 but there was some transformers out that wouldn't allow us
21 to properly pump water to our systems as I said where we
22 have the residents and we also have a nursing home and we
23 have a company called Disabled Citizens Alliance with about
24 70 employees that services hundreds if not thousands of
25 people who are disabled living in their homes.

1 One of the things that happened whenever I was on the
2 city counsel in Viburnum when the change took over from
3 Black River co-op to AmerenUE was the fact that in that
4 changeover, somehow the attorneys with Ameren failed to
5 include language in a ballot for our utility tax. I keep
6 emphasizing how small Viburnum is and how small of an
7 operation we are, but I can tell you that through their
8 lack of understanding what we were doing and their
9 omissions, we no longer get a utility tax on our city
10 because they left that off the ballot. That's \$28,000 a
11 year, ten years. That's \$280,000. We could buy a pretty
12 nice generator to power up our systems in Viburnum for that
13 \$208,000 when our power goes out. I blame Ameren 100
14 percent for the lack of that utility tax being on that
15 ballot and us not having that revenue to work like we had
16 in years past with Black River.

17 I don't know if this is a fact or not but I've been
18 told by the people that work in my area that we have the
19 longest feeder line that Ameren owns, operates and
20 maintains and the closest service man to my knowledge about
21 25 miles away. Something about that just didn't seem
22 right. I made a complaint recently online with Ameren
23 about the power outages. I thought online might be the
24 most quickest and efficient way to do that for myself and
25 Ameren. They responded quickly. They came the next day.

1 I made the complaint maybe 11 p.m. at night. What disturbs
2 me a little bit is they didn't come and ask me what
3 specifically the problem was. They just came to my house
4 when I was at work and my wife was at work and my daughter
5 from college was at home from school and all she knew is we
6 had lights and she didn't know what was going on.

7 A few days later I got a survey call and I can only
8 imagine it must have been a vendor that Ameren hired to do
9 the survey. She asked the kinds of questions that when I
10 provided her the accurate answers she couldn't take the
11 next step because the survey seemed to be directed at
12 something specific, something specific I don't know what
13 but she was finally frustrated and gave up. I don't really
14 know what to make of that except it kind of points out to
15 me again lack of organization, lack of control, lack of
16 management, lack of understanding the real problem and the
17 real problem and the real problem is the real liability of
18 our service, not that it was out that day.

19 Someone asked a while ago if he could sit down and
20 have a cup of coffee with the CEO of Ameren what would you
21 tell him and I'd tell him he needs to get in the linemen's
22 trucks and he needs to go with him. He needs to get on the
23 ground and he needs to understand the real issues out here
24 and the linemen and the people on the front line can
25 probably tell him more than anybody in this room can tell

1 him except maybe Vernon. Can probably give him much more
2 information than any Public Service Commission. The
3 problem is dedication here. It doesn't appear that Ameren
4 has the desire and is not dedicated to serving the
5 customers that they have that is a monopoly that they're
6 asking more money from. I entertain your questions.

7 JUDGE: Thank you. Commissioner Murray, do you
8 have any questions?

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I have none. Thank you.

10 JUDGE: Commissioner Gaw?

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: I want to say first of all
12 Mr. Mayfield, thank you for driving the two hours to
13 come to this. That's pretty impressive that you would
14 take the time to do that. I'm sorry that you had to
15 drive two hours to get to one of these hearings because
16 I wish we had a little more convenience to you. We've
17 had more public hearings on this I think scheduled than
18 we have had in the past on cases but evidently we are
19 still not reaching out far enough and I appreciate you
20 bringing the view points that you have here tonight.

21 I guess just a couple of questions. First of all, I
22 think you said earlier that you thought that your views
23 were shared by a number of people that were there in your
24 home area. Would you say that's accurate?

25 MR. MAYFIELD: I would say that's more than

1 accurate. I think based on my 30 years of public and
2 community service it's not unlike most other
3 communities where there's an issue or a problem, a very
4 small number of people actually come to the table and
5 bring their views and issues. I think just the voting
6 population tells that enough.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. The 3,000 people that
8 live in that particular service territory down there or
9 maybe there's more. I don't have a map here in front
10 of me to see where that territory is and how large of a
11 geographic area it is. It got traded for the Black
12 River with the Black River Co-op. Can you give me just
13 a general idea of how that looks on the map and how it
14 comes about around the city that you live in?

15 MR. MAYFIELD: The city of Viburnum is in the most
16 northwestern edge of Iron County. The most northern
17 western edge of Iron County is also the southern border
18 of Crawford County of which where Crawford Electric a
19 co-op I might add, it's where that stops. I would also
20 add that during all of our power outages in the past
21 two years that I know for a fact, the people across the
22 county line did not suffer power outages like we did.
23 They have the same trees. They have the same storms
24 and the same ice. That line kind of goes eastward to
25 cut through the Washington County area through the

1 middle of Washington County over to parts of St.
2 Francois County south including the rest of Iron
3 County, some of Reynolds County, I don't think of Dent
4 County, somewhat back a circle to Viburnum and that is
5 roughly 3,000 customers.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. That's helpful to me. I
7 didn't quite -- I captured what you were saying about
8 the ballot issue on the utility tax and how that came
9 about and I don't want you to take a lot of time with
10 that. I'm just trying to get a better grasp of what
11 you're saying there.

12 MR. MAYFIELD: During the proposed trade, there
13 was lots of people who were against the trade and those
14 people ultimately in the city of Viburnum I don't know
15 how it came about, but we were required to vote within
16 the city in order to make that trade or not make that
17 trade.

18 Initially I was very opposed to the trade. Ameren
19 convinced me over a period of time they could service our
20 area and service it better. So I hopped on board
21 reluctantly. We had an election in the city of Viburnum
22 only to my knowledge. Part of this election was of course
23 the ballot process whether you wanted Ameren for your
24 electric provider or not. What should have been on that
25 ballot was the language including the utility tax that

1 Black River did charge that would be passed on and over to
2 Ameren UE. For some reason that was left off. Don't know
3 why. So then when it was discovered that we were going to
4 be losing that \$28,000 of utility tax, Ameren's suggestion
5 was we'll put that on the ballot. We'll have to revote on
6 that. You can only imagine what that vote was like.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: So they separated out the
8 utility tax issue as a separate election?

9 MR. MAYFIELD: That's correct and it lost.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yeah. I think that's all the
11 questions I have, Mr. Mayfield, but again, thank you
12 for all the information and for taking all the time to
13 come over and be safe on the way back.

14 JUDGE: Commissioner Appling, do you have any
15 questions?

16 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No.

17 JUDGE: Thank you. Public counsel have any
18 questions?

19 MR. MILLS: I don't have any questions right now.
20 Thank you.

21 JUDGE: Thank you and for Ameren? All right.
22 Thank you. You may step down.

23 MR. MAYFIELD: Thank you.

24 JUDGE: Mr. Kelly, how many more witnesses do we
25 have?

1 MR. KELLY: Judge, I have no one else on the list
2 at this time.

3 JUDGE: Okay. Is there anyone else in the
4 auditorium that would like to testify that hasn't had a
5 chance yet? Is there anyone up there, Mr. Kelly?

6 MR. KELLY: I see no one judge.

7 JUDGE: All right. Well, thank you all very much
8 then. With that the local public hearing is adjourned.

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