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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Local Public Hearing
January 17, 2017
Charleston, Missouri
Volume 6

In the Matter of Union)
Electric Company, d/b/a)
Ameren Missouri's Tariffs) File No. ER-2016-0179
to Increase its Revenues)
for Electric Service)

MORRIS L. WOODRUFF, Presiding
CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

Maida J. Coleman
Commissioner

Court Reporter:
Georgia B. Rollins, CSR/CCR
Missouri CCR #622
Illinois CSR #084-004742
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St. Louis, Missouri 63101

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A P P E A R A N C E S

For Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission:

Ms. Casi Aslin
Public Service Commission
200 Madison Street
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, Missouri 65204.

For Office of Public Counsel and the Public:

Mr. Timothy Optiz
Office of Public Counsel
P.O. Box 2230
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

For Union Electric, d/b/a Ameren Missouri:

Mr. Russell Mitten
312 East Capital Avenue
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

1 PROCEEDINGS

2 MR. WOODRUFF: Good evening, everyone. I would
3 like to welcome you to this hearing. My name is Morris
4 Woodruff. I'm the Chief Regulatory Law Judge for the
5 Public Service Commission, and I'll be the presiding
6 officer here tonight. We're going to start this evening
7 with a question and answer session. This is your
8 opportunity to ask questions of Ameren as well as
9 commission staff and the Office of Public Counsel about
10 the case. During this question and answer part, and
11 this is an informal process, you'll have the opportunity
12 to ask questions and get answers. Later on, I'll come
13 back and we'll start the formal portion of the hearing.
14 And during that process, we'll have people come up to
15 the podium here, and I'll swear you in to tell the
16 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and
17 then we'll take your testimony.

18 The important thing to remember is this first
19 question and answer session is not recorded. We have a
20 court reporter who will be recording the formal part of
21 the process. If you have something you want the
22 commissioners to hear, they won't hear the questions and
23 answers. On the other hand, when the commissioner gets
24 here and when I come back, we can't really answer
25 questions; we'll just be taking some testimony as

1 indicated. I'm not going to stay here for the questions
2 and answers, I'll be outside. But now I'm going to turn
3 it over to Debbie Qick, the representative of the
4 commission, and she's going to take it from here.

5 (WHEREUPON, AN INFORMAL QUESTION AND ANSWER
6 SESSION WAS HELD)

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Good evening, everyone. Can
8 everyone hear me okay? All right. Well, welcome to the
9 second part of our public hearing. This is the part
10 where we give you the opportunity to make a statement
11 for the benefit of the --

12 MR. OPITZ: Your Honor, I think they're having
13 some trouble hearing you.

14 MR. WOODRUFF: Is this better? All right. We
15 want to be heard, and we want to hear from you. This is
16 your opportunity to give a statement to the commission.
17 I'm -- can you hear out there? Can you hear me now?
18 All right. I see thumbs up out there. As indicated,
19 this is your opportunity to be heard by the commission.
20 You will actually come up here to the podium to give me
21 your statement. We have a counter here, and we ask
22 people to limit their comments to about five minutes,
23 just to keep things moving so one person doesn't
24 dominate the entire conversation.

25 I have with me from the commission Maida Coleman.

1 She's one of the five commissioners. The other
2 commissioners can't all be here tonight, but they will
3 be able to read the transcript and consider all of your
4 statements as they're making their decision about the
5 case. Ms. Coleman, do you have anything you want to
6 add?

7 MS. COLEMAN: I would like to thank you all for
8 being here tonight. We're looking forward to your
9 concerns that you want to express. And as the judge
10 noted, I am one of five commissioners. Please be
11 assured that although the others are not at this
12 particular meeting, we do attend all of the meetings
13 across the state. Your testimony that you provide
14 tonight will be a part of our official record. Our
15 commissioners who are not in attendance at any
16 particular meeting do always review the information.
17 And of course, we will have evidentiary hearings in the
18 future.

19 I'm always glad to have an opportunity to come
20 home. Sikeston is my home where I was born and raised.
21 I had the opportunity earlier to brag about the Bulldogs
22 always beating the Blue Jays. That's my opinion.
23 That's my opinion. Back in the good old days. But I'm
24 always glad to be home, glad to see you all, and thank
25 you very much for your interest in this important

1 subject.

2 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. Before we call the
3 first witness, I need to make a record of who is here
4 for the parties. The attorneys here, I'll ask you to
5 enter your appearance, beginning with the attorney for
6 Ameren.

7 MR. MITTEN: Russ Mitten. Brydon, Swearngen &
8 England. 312 East Capital Avenue, Jefferson City.
9 Appearing on behalf of the Union Electric Company, doing
10 business as Ameren Missouri.

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Attorney for the Staff
12 of Public Service.

13 MS. ASLIN: Casi Aslin. Counsel for the Staff of
14 Public Service Commission. 200 Madison Street, P.O.
15 Box 360, Jefferson City, 65204.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: And public counsel.

17 MR. OPITZ: Thank you, Judge. My name is Tim
18 Opitz. I'm from the Office of Public Counsel. My
19 address is P.O. Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri,
20 65102.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. I believe that's all
22 the parties who are here tonight. We're going to call
23 the names off the list here that you signed. If you
24 didn't get a chance to sign the list, after I go through
25 the list, I'll ask if there's anybody else at the end.

1 And if you want to come forward and give your testimony
2 at this time, when you come to the podium I'll swear you
3 in and give you a chance to make your statement. First
4 name is a list is Kevin Maynard. Mr. Maynard?

5 SPECTATOR: He left.

6 MR. WOODRUFF: He did. Okay. Mary Lou Mashburn.
7 Good evening.

8 MS. MASHBURN: Hi.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: If you could please raise your
10 right hand.

11 (Witness sworn)

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Can you tell us your
13 name, please.

14 MS. MASHBURN: Mary Lou Mashburn.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: How do you spell your last name?

16 MS. MASHBURN: M-A-S-H-B-U-R-N.

17 MR. WOODRUFF: What would you like to tell us?

18 MS. MASHBURN: I'm speaking from my heart today,
19 not from a whole lot of figures and stuff. But I'm the
20 co-owner of the Mississippi County Times here in
21 Charleston. I'm here in my capacity as a small business
22 owner and a residential owner. Mostly when I hear about
23 a rate increase, I just sort of sigh and say, oh, well.
24 Everything's going up. Now I know as a business person
25 that things go up, I totally get that. But when I saw

1 the rate increase of 7.77 percent, I felt moved to say
2 something.

3 In Missouri, a retired person receives an average
4 of \$1,348 monthly, and a disabled worker receives an
5 average of \$1,166 monthly. In 2017, those that receive
6 social security checks had an increase of 0.3 percent.
7 This gives the retired person about \$4.04 more each
8 month, and a disabled worker about \$3.50 more each
9 month. For 61 percent of elderly beneficiaries, social
10 security is the majority of their cash income. And for
11 33 percent of them, this is 90 percent or more of their
12 income. How are people going to afford this increase?

13 What Ameren is proposing is more than double of
14 what these people received in their increase of their
15 social security checks. I just think it's time for
16 Ameren to appreciate their customers in Missouri. We
17 all know you're the only electric company we have, and I
18 kind of think maybe they think they have us over a
19 barrel. And we all know that they refused to put up
20 Christmas decorations on the poles in East Prairie as
21 they did in the past. But finally they did because of
22 some social media pressure.

23 Anyway, I just think it's time for Ameren to stop
24 these outrageous increases. We all understand that
25 things have to go up a little, and maybe it's time for

1 Missouri to find a different electric company. That
2 probably sounds a little simple, but that's just how I
3 feel.

4 Impossible, you might say. But just remember,
5 the Missouri state animal is a mule. And I don't think
6 they are going to find it pleasant going up against a
7 bunch of Missouri mules.

8 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. Anyone have any
9 questions? Okay. Thank you.

10 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

11 MS. MASHBURN: Thank you.

12 MR. WOODRUFF: Next name on the list is Mike
13 McGraw.

14 MR. MCGRAW: Good evening, sir.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: Good evening.

16 (Cell phone rings)

17 MR. MCGRAW: Bad timing.

18 MS. COLEMAN: It's actually perfect timing, right
19 before you start testifying.

20 MR. WOODRUFF: Anyway, let me swear you in, sir.

21 (Witness sworn)

22 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you very much. Tell us your
23 name.

24 MR. MCGRAW: It is Robert M. McGraw. I go by
25 Mike. I'm the mayor of Caruthersville, Missouri.

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

3 MR. MCGRAW: Well, one of the things I'm going to
4 start on is dependability. In our town, we'd just be
5 sitting there and the electricity would go off for no
6 reason. And we'd tease each other; well, did you pay
7 the bill? But I mean, beautiful, nice, bright day, it
8 will just go off, and sometimes frequently. So anyway,
9 that's one thing I want to bring up.

10 But my big concern is the rate increase. And in
11 Caruthersville, we're the third poorest city in the
12 State of Missouri. And our sister city, Hayti, is
13 number one as the poorest town in Missouri. Many of the
14 people who live in Caruthersville or Hayti have total
15 electric houses. And for instance, Larry, who works for
16 the City of Caruthersville, his electric bill this month
17 was \$280. Now he was calling me to tell me how much he
18 makes an hour, because I can't remember; but I was
19 thinking it was not more than 12. So it's pretty
20 difficult for him to pay a high bill.

21 And so when they talk about a 9 percent increase
22 or a 7 percent increase, then that's just money out of
23 his pocket that he doesn't have to buy something else
24 that he needs. Then the other gentleman I talked to
25 today, his name is Joe, and his electric bill is 212.

1 And a young lady that I talked to, her bill is 206. It
2 sounds like a lot of money to me, and all these houses
3 are all electric, the people I've talked to. All the
4 government housing, as I was saying, it's all electric.
5 And so the poorest people have the biggest bills. And
6 to me, it just doesn't seem quite fair because they
7 don't have any choice in how the house is heated at all.

8 So anyway, as far as paying anything in Noranda,
9 sorry. This is called business; you lost. That's all I
10 can think of. Thank you.

11 MR. WOODRUFF: Any questions?

12 MS. COLEMAN: No. Thank you, Mr. McGraw.

13 MR. WOODRUFF: Mr. McGraw, I do have a question.
14 And you're off the timer here. When we're done here --
15 and I think last time we were actually in Caruthersville
16 for the case. At that time, Noranda was still going and
17 there was a lot of concern about what would happen if
18 Noranda closed. Can you give me a brief synopsis of
19 what in fact has happened in Caruthersville since
20 Noranda closed?

21 MR. MCGRAW: Well, our economy in Caruthersville
22 and Hayti -- especially in Caruthersville -- has really
23 collapsed, basically. And now we have the Wal-Mart
24 closing, and the 20th of this month is the last day
25 they're open. Of course there's not much in there

1 because they had this past week, they had a 9 percent
2 off sale. So anyway, of course this city depends on the
3 \$100,000 in sales tax that Wal-Mart generates. So
4 it's -- all these things are devastating to two towns
5 that are super poor. So anyway.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Let me ask a question, Mayor. So
7 you're making a correlation between Noranda. And do you
8 have an idea of the number of people that live in
9 Caruthersville or in the county that worked at Noranda
10 and -- because I think I'm picking up that you're
11 looking at a correlation here.

12 MR. MCGRAW: Well, not really. I can't say that.
13 But I will say that all these things are devastating
14 to -- and I have heard about a lot of people that travel
15 from Caruthersville or Hayti to Arkansas to work, and
16 also did work at Noranda. But anyway, like I said, our
17 little economies down there are really pretty
18 devastated.

19 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

20 MR. MCGRAW: Thank you.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir. Next name on the
22 list is Carolyn Johnson. Good evening. You are Carolyn
23 Johnson?

24 MS. JOHNSON: I am.

25 MR. WOODRUFF: You can just hold it if you want

1 to.

2 MS. JOHNSON: I would rather put it on the stand.

3 MS. COLEMAN: Tim, can you help her?

4 MS. JOHNSON: I was just trying to move it a
5 little bit.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: Raise your right hand. I'll swear
8 you in.

9 (Witness sworn)

10 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you. What would you like to
11 tell us?

12 MS. JOHNSON: Well, I would like to tell you
13 several things. First of all, I would like to start off
14 with saying I live in Dexter. Dexter, we all always
15 kind of halfway claimed Ms. Coleman in Dexter, too, even
16 though the Bulldogs always beat the Bear Cats and still
17 do. But it's good to see you here tonight. We
18 appreciate your service on the Public Service
19 Commission.

20 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you very much.

21 MS. JOHNSON: I want to talk to you about several
22 things tonight. First off, you've got endless rate
23 raise requests that are included by Ameren. I believe
24 it's \$4.89 a month, an extra charge that would be to
25 access their system. This is very wrong. That would be

1 about \$60 a year. Now we pay, in my bill, \$8 a month to
2 get a bill in an envelope and to make them read the
3 meter, although I had one of those satellite meters. So
4 to put that cost on as an access to the system, that's
5 not for power. That's not for other, you know, basic
6 needs to run the electricity or other things. That is
7 just to be in the system. That sure looks like an
8 underhanded way to raise our costs considerably.

9 Second, I think it's pretty interesting some of
10 the things that have come up here tonight about the rate
11 raise and wanting an almost 10 percent return. The
12 problem with Ameren is it's a monopoly. And when a
13 monopoly has a guaranteed rate on return, that's a
14 pretty nice business situation. You don't have the
15 risk, and the stockholders know that. I often get the
16 feeling that they're more in service of the stockholders
17 than the customers. But we don't have a choice. We are
18 at their beck and call. Other -- and several other
19 people have testified, but other places in the United
20 States can choose utilities. We do not have to be bound
21 into this system if we make enough noise about it and if
22 we insist that it not be a monopoly.

23 But you can't have both. You can't have a free
24 market system and have a monopoly. In a free market
25 system, you can make as much profit as people are

1 willing to grant you. But you don't have a -- here,
2 they have no competitors in what you can get away with
3 here. There's no competitors. We need a competitive
4 system here. To compare Ameren to the other utilities,
5 especially the utilities around in Missouri as Ms. Wood
6 did, is really a false comparison because they are all
7 much smaller than Ameren and much smaller service areas.

8 But one thing I want to raise to you is the fuel
9 adjustment cost clause. And it was mentioned that part
10 of the rate raise would be for the cost of fuel. I
11 spent my career training in geology. I spent my career
12 working for mostly environmental organizations -- some I
13 did on the federal government -- on coal mines, oil
14 wells, energy kinds of things. I saw them up close, I
15 worked in the west. I was centered in the west, but I
16 worked all over the country. I have been to all those
17 mines in Wyoming that supply Ameren with the coal.
18 Their business is Peabody. Those mines are not being
19 reclaimed. Those mines are underbonded. There has been
20 some work pushing around dirt, but since the federal law
21 passed in 1977, which is almost 40 years ago -- it will
22 have its 40 anniversary this year -- those standards
23 have not been met for reclamation. There has been no
24 final reclamation, even though the federal law as well
25 as the state law in Wyoming called for simultaneous

1 reclamation. In other words, as you mine, you reclaim.
2 That has never been done. Wyoming never carried it out
3 and the federal government didn't. It kept me employed
4 for many years, trying to get this changed, and we did
5 make some progress on some things. But that is the
6 state of it. I think you should know that, as your
7 staff and the Office of Public Counsel, because in your
8 investigations on what lies behind, I can only wonder
9 what happened to that money on the rate it was paid in
10 for coal, and has been paid in for coal for years to
11 Ameren in our bills, it hasn't gone for reclamation to
12 speak of, unless someone's really moving strange piles
13 of money around.

14 So what happened to it in the past and where is
15 it now? I leave that to you. We don't have the
16 numbers, but I would not trust any numbers that I have
17 obtained from Ameren because they get theirs from
18 Peabody, and as you know, Peabody is trying to come back
19 out of bankruptcy. And when they went into bankruptcy,
20 they got over 800 million minimum in reclamation
21 requirements in Wyoming alone. Then there's other
22 states, too, that are involved. So you need to know
23 that.

24 MR. WOODRUFF: If you don't mind, your time has
25 expired.

1 MS. JOHNSON: Well I've never seen where you had
2 that small a limit before. I'm sorry you do, because I
3 think you're missing some valuable information from
4 everybody.

5 The next thing I would like to do is to urge that
6 the PSC adopt a motion, or do whatever you have to do --
7 I don't know if you have to go to the legislature or
8 not -- but you need to prohibit a revolving door between
9 your staff and the regulated entities that you oversee.
10 I keep running into people at Ameren who used to work
11 for the PSC. That naturally makes me very nervous.

12 And one last thing I would like to say is, a
13 gentleman raised it in the audience, that nobody else
14 got these kinds of raises, that 30 percent, and they
15 testified about the social security payments and the
16 fixed amount. You know, I would like to know, how many
17 people would like to be guaranteed a 9.96 percent return
18 on your money through the year. Could you just raise
19 your hands? Pretty much everybody. How many of you get
20 it? Well, I don't see anybody. It's amazing. And
21 we're in it to make money, too.

22 You also -- there's a lot of litigation and
23 lobbying costs, and it was raised in -- I believe it was
24 Ms. Wood's statement, but I might have got you all a
25 little bit mixed up -- that Ameren is adding their

1 pollution equipment. Well that goes right into
2 litigation. Ameren has sued for years, directly and
3 through its membership in the Edison Electric Institute
4 and other trade groups to hold off, hold off, hold off
5 air pollution requirements; to hold off, hold off
6 renewable energy. My goodness, we've had that fight and
7 are still having it in the State of Missouri. That
8 litigation costs money. That is a business expense.
9 I'm sure they take it out, but it's the kind of expense
10 that gathers a lot as it rolls downhill, because it
11 costs the ratepayers even more to do that. And it costs
12 them in two ways; it's expensive, and we pay the price
13 in dirty water, very dirty air, because they've been
14 putting it off, and in the way they're dumping their
15 coal ash in the Missouri River. They fight on that,
16 too.

17 So we're not benefitting at all from this, or
18 that it should be now rewarded with some sort of rate
19 raise that they're going to finally put the equipment
20 on. It's only when they lose, or things get forced,
21 that we finally see them do that.

22 How many asthmatic children are there? It's
23 estimated to be 1 in 7 of the population. And asthma
24 costs money for families, and it costs in health issues.
25 Thank you.

1 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you, ma'am. Any questions?

2 MR. OPITZ: Your Honor. Ma'am, I see that you
3 have some written comments. Would you like to have
4 those submitted to the commission so they could --

5 MS. JOHNSON: I have some notes. I may have to
6 submit -- what I'd like to do is submit some of the
7 costs of the lobbying and where the dues are going to
8 that Ameren pays into. And also, their campaign
9 contributions. They're pretty high. They gather a lot
10 of money for people.

11 MR. WOODRUFF: If you want to give those to
12 Mr. Opitz, and do you want to offer them as an exhibit
13 or offer them on her behalf?

14 MR. OPITZ: I can do so, if she would like that.
15 Or as she said, she can submit those directly to our
16 office.

17 MS. JOHNSON: I would like to submit these. Yes.

18 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll go ahead and take them from
19 here.

20 MS. JOHNSON: I have to separate them.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: That's fine. Just come up before
22 the end of the hearing. We'll take care of everything.

23 MR. OPITZ: Thank you, Judge.

24 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. The next name on the
25 list is Troy Riggins. Good evening, sir.

1 MR. RIGGENS: Good evening.

2 MR. WOODRUFF: And you are Troy Riggins?

3 MR. RIGGENS: Yes, sir.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Can you spell your last name for
5 the court reporter.

6 MR. RIGGENS: R-I-G-G-E-N-S.

7 MR. WOODRUFF: I'll swear you in.

8 (Witness sworn)

9 MR. WOODRUFF: All right. What would you like to
10 tell us?

11 MR. RIGGENS: I'm curious how you all regulate
12 your smart meters that you put on these homes. Because
13 I got a home with a bill, and it's high. No one's
14 living in the home. We keep it as a family gathering
15 home. But each month, the bill be equal to about 160,
16 \$200 a month. When I call and report this, the operator
17 on the end saying we got smart bills, and there's a way
18 you are checking to see if it's on the inside or
19 outside. But you would say with a smart bill, it
20 regulates all this. If no one's in the home using it,
21 how is the bill being so high?

22 MR. WOODRUFF: I can't answer any questions about
23 that, and I also don't work for Ameren. But if you
24 noticed as you came in the door, there were a couple
25 gentlemen back there with the computers, right inside

1 the front of the door. They can talk to you about the
2 specifics about your account, and they might be able to
3 get you some answers about that.

4 MR. RIGGENS: No, sir. I'll be -- I wasn't able
5 to tap into your cost efficient -- at the time you said
6 when you go by the cost efficient appliances and
7 whatnot, how would I tap into that? Because my house,
8 from my floor to my ceiling, and I wasn't able to reap
9 any rewards from trying to be cost efficient.

10 MR. WOODRUFF: All I can tell you is if you talk
11 to the Ameren people, they can give you more specific
12 answers. As commissioners, we can't give you answers to
13 that because, well, we don't have access to your
14 account.

15 MS. COLEMAN: We don't work for Ameren.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: We don't work for Ameren. But you
17 can talk to the Ameren people out front there, and they
18 can give you more specific answers about your particular
19 home.

20 MR. RIGGENS: Okay. And furthermore, before, I
21 asked the gentlemen -- you asked the gentlemen what
22 percentage of those bills that work, it's about 3 -- 2
23 to 3 percent of the population that worked for Noranda.

24 MR. WOODRUFF: You worked for Noranda?

25 MR. RIGGENS: Yes. I was there 20 and a half

1 years. So it's devastating what happened with Noranda,
2 which is probably worser here because it's more
3 workforce here going there.

4 MS. COLEMAN: Did you say 20 and a half years?

5 MR. RIGGENS: 20 and a half years.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. RIGGENS: Since I retired. I got injured and
8 I retired.

9 MS. COLEMAN: And to follow up with what the
10 judge stated, there are a slew of Ameren employees here.
11 You probably can't turn around without running into one
12 of them. So just ask somebody, and I'm sure they can
13 get to you tonight with your concern.

14 MR. RIGGENS: Because before that I got a bill,
15 if you don't have this tax hike, for the rate increase
16 on top of all this already going on. Can you imagine
17 what the extra 10 percent going to do to that bill?

18 MR. WOODRUFF: In fact, I'll introduce this lady
19 over here. She's an Ameren employee and she can talk to
20 you after the hearing and she'll take to you to where
21 you need to go.

22 MR. RIGGENS: Okay. Thank you.

23 MR. WOODRUFF: I believe the other name is Amelia
24 Rigney.

25 MS. RIGNEY: It's actually Amelia Rigney.

1 RIGNEY.

2 MR. WOODRUFF: Come on up to the podium and say
3 that into the microphone.

4 MS. RIGNEY: It's actually Rigney. R-I-G-N-E-Y.

5 MS. COLEMAN: I'm sorry. I missed that. Spell
6 Amelia.

7 MS. RIGNEY: A-M-E-L-I-A.

8 MS. COLEMAN: And spell the last name again.

9 MS. RIGNEY: R-I-G-N-E-Y.

10 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

11 MS. RIGNEY: Okay. One of my --

12 MR. WOODRUFF: I'm going to swear you in.

13 (Witness sworn)

14 MS. RIGNEY: One of my concerns is that just as
15 the gentleman stated about Caruthersville and those
16 areas down there, Charleston is pretty much almost in
17 the same boat as Caruthersville and the rest of those
18 towns. You know, we have a struggling job market, all
19 the factories are gone. We were once a booming town,
20 but we're no longer that anymore. And I'm a school
21 teacher, and that type of percent hike, teachers don't
22 even get that, you know, type of pay raise. I would
23 love to get a 9 percent pay raise.

24 With the type of hike they're talking about,
25 almost a fourth of my income -- after everything has

1 been taken out for my retirement, federal taxes, all of
2 that, that's almost a fourth of my income, and I still
3 have two young children at home. That's going to be
4 devastating for a lot of people that, as they mentioned
5 earlier, that are on disability. So I just imagine what
6 it's going to do to the people on disability, as well as
7 people like me, because the majority of the people, the
8 median income around here I know is under 30,000, if not
9 probably lower than that.

10 So with that percent hike, I'm barely able to pay
11 my light bill now. So I can just imagine what that
12 percentage is going to do. And because I don't fall
13 under certain economic guidelines to get public
14 assistance, it's only going to leave me scrapping
15 pennies to try to make ends meet to be able to afford to
16 pay my light bill on a monthly basis if we have such a
17 high increase on this electric bill.

18 So that's one of my major concerns, because with
19 the income level around here and the majority of the
20 people that are not working that are on public
21 assistance, I don't how we're going to survive.
22 Everything else is going up but the income of each
23 individual. So those are some things that I think we
24 really need to come to some type of -- take into
25 concern, you know. We're a struggling economy, and it's

1 not one that's hiking up our pay to meet the level of
2 increase that we're hearing, whether it's food versus
3 electric and everything else. So those are my major
4 concerns.

5 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you very much. Anyone have
6 any questions?

7 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Ms. Rigney.

8 MS. RIGNEY: Thank you.

9 MR. WOODRUFF: That was the last name on my list.
10 Is there anyone else in the audience that would like to
11 come forward I see one hand over here. Come on up.
12 What is your name?

13 MR. RIDINGS: My name Rozz, R-O-Z-Z. My last
14 name is Ridings, R-I-D-I-N-G-S.

15 MR. WOODRUFF: If you could please raise your
16 right hand, I'll swear you in.

17 (Witness sworn)

18 MS. RIDINGS: I come here this evening to
19 represent my place of employment, which is the Southeast
20 Missouri Food Bank. We serve 16 counties in the
21 Southeast Missouri region and provide food storage and
22 distribution for the commodities programs, the Feeding
23 America program for families who are income-eligible,
24 and then for seniors, the seniors commodity program for
25 the seniors who are income eligible. And the people

1 that we serve often rely on food pantries because they
2 cannot get public assistance because they fall over the
3 income guidelines that would make it possible for them
4 to get Medicaid or food stamps. And oftentimes, that
5 might be 50 or \$100. And for Ameren to say that that
6 rate increase of \$100 a year is not that much of a
7 burden for our everyday families, it is. That is the
8 difference between assistance and non-assistance that
9 people are told on an everyday basis. \$8 a month might
10 not be anything for some people, but that may be
11 someone's gas money for the last three days of the week
12 to get to work and back.

13 That is essentially expounding on what people who
14 came before me that spoke have said. It's the same
15 thing; that you know, we do live a very economically
16 challenged area. And until there are more options for
17 people to have better incomes, then increasing rates on
18 an already taxed population is -- it's just something
19 that we have to advocate against for what we do. That's
20 pretty much all I have to say.

21 MR. WOODRUFF: Thank you very much. Do you have
22 any questions? Thank you. Keep up the good work with
23 the food pantries.

24 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you.

25 MR. WOODRUFF: Anyone else would like to testify?

1 Yes, sir. Could you tell us your name, please.

2 MR. GOODE: My name is Richard Goode, G-O-O-D-E.
3 I'm the city manager of Charleston.

4 MR. WOODRUFF: Let me swear you in first.

5 (Witness sworn)

6 MR. GOODE: As I said, I'm the city manager in
7 Charleston. And in that role, I find myself every now
8 and then having to propose to our city counsel that
9 water and sewer rates need to be increased for whatever
10 reason. So I appreciate the difficulty of this
11 decision; it's not a fun thing to do. And I appreciate
12 the commission's role in sort of moderating the
13 enthusiasm of Ameren, shall we say. You folks are
14 providing a very valuable service.

15 One of the things myself and my city counsel
16 members talk about when we consider rate increases for
17 water and sewer customers, is what is our responsibility
18 to those customers in terms of their service
19 expectations. Now we all know that customer service
20 expectations can sometimes go off the charts, and can
21 sometimes be quite moderate. But our concern is always,
22 are we fulfilling the responsibility that we have to the
23 customers and the responsibility that goes with this
24 rate increase. Because in the end, most customers
25 understand that operating costs increase, and that you

1 can only scrape so many dollars off the operating costs.
2 So you eventually hit a point where you can't save
3 yourself into financial viability anymore. The
4 customers get that. They understand that at their own
5 houses.

6 But the question becomes, what is the
7 responsibility that goes with securing a rate increase.
8 And fortunately, I have never had to say to a customer,
9 yes, I need you to pay more; but in return, I'm going to
10 do less. That doesn't sit very well with customers and
11 it doesn't sit very well with me. And the concern the
12 City of Charleston has -- and I appreciate Bob Dixon's
13 efforts to educate us about this, and I think he is very
14 sincere when he says as much; when he says that, no,
15 there's not going to be a Charleston service facility
16 for Ameren customers anymore, but the service is still
17 going to exist. It's just going to come from a
18 different place. I get that. I don't blame Ameren for
19 trying to minimize cost in that area. But the truth of
20 the matter is that when you change the service location
21 from five minutes away to an hour and a half to two
22 hours away, it impacts customers. I believe Bob Dixon
23 when he says if this isn't right we're going to fix it.
24 I believe him personally, because I think he's an
25 honorable man. I don't know that I believe Ameren

1 corporately if they were to say that to me because
2 Ameren is a faceless thing.

3 But I encourage the commission to consider
4 Ameren's responsibility to the customers if they're
5 granted a rate increase. What do customers need from
6 Ameren, and whether they have a right to expect from
7 Ameren in return for that rate increase. So I ask the
8 commission to consider this as you do your jobs and do
9 them well, keep that local customer in mind. I don't
10 care what the service ends up being in Cape Girardeau.
11 I live in Charleston, I work in Charleston. I'm
12 concerned about Charleston and Mississippi County, which
13 I think is kind of getting -- it's in danger of getting
14 the short end of the stick in this arrangement. Thank
15 you very much.

16 MR. WOODRUFF: Any questions?

17 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you very much.

18 MR. WOODRUFF: Okay. Anyone else wish to
19 testify? I don't see any other hands going up. So once
20 again thank you for coming this evening, and with that
21 we are adjourned.

22

23

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25

1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss.
3 CITY OF ST. LOUIS)

4
5 I, Georgia B. Rollins, a Certified Court Reporter (MO),
6 Certified Shorthand Reporter (IL), do hereby certify
7 that the witness whose testimony appears in the
8 foregoing deposition was duly sworn by me; that the
9 testimony of said witness was taken by me to the best of
10 my ability and thereafter reduced to typewriting under
11 my direction; that I am neither counsel for, related to,
12 nor employed by any of the parties to the action in
13 which this deposition was taken, and further that I am
14 not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel
15 employed by the parties thereto, nor financially or
16 otherwise interested in the outcome of the action.

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Georgia B. Rollins, CRR/CSR

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