

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the matter of )

USW Local 11-6, )

Complainant )

and )

Laclede Gas Company, )

Respondent )

GC-2006-0390

FILED

JAN 05 2007

Missouri Public  
Service Commission

AFFIDAVIT OF EVERET MINTON

STATE OF MISSOURI )

) ss

COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS )

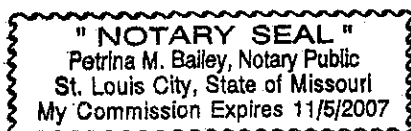
Everet Minton, of lawful age, on his oath states: that he has participated in the preparation of the following Direct Testimony in question and answer form, consisting of 3 pages of Direct Testimony and attached exhibits to be presented in the above case, that the answers in the following Direct Testimony were given by him; that he has knowledge of the matters set forth in such answers; and that such matters are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

Everet Minton  
Everet Minton

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 26th day of Sept, 2006.

Petrina M Bailey  
Notary Public

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_



USW Exhibit No. 16-NP  
Case No(s) GC-2006-0390  
Date 12/12/06 Rptr MV

**DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**OF**

**EVERET MINTON**

**SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF USW 11-6,**

**LACLEDE GAS COMPANY**

**CASE NO. GC-2006-0390**

1 Q. Please state your name and address.

2 A. My name is Everett Minton and my address is \*\*

3 \_\_\_\_\_\*\*

4 Q. What is your current place of employment and how long have you worked  
5 there?

6 A. I work at Laclede Gas in the Construction and Maintenance Department. I have  
7 worked there for nine and one-half years.

8 Q. Have you encountered gas leaks while performing your job duties?

9 A. Yes. Most recently, on September 14, 2006, I was performing a copper pipe  
10 replacement at \*\* .\*\* A true and accurate copy of a written  
11 account of this episode, signed by all four Laclede Gas employees who were  
12 involved, is attached and incorporated here as Exhibit 1. I arrived at this address  
13 at 8:20 a.m. with Shawn O'Neal, Don Vierling, and Jim Leach. Normally, when  
14 performing a copper pipe replacement, we turn off the outside gas first at the curb  
15 box. However, the curb box was underground so it needed to be dug up. I went

1 inside while the other employees were digging to perform what work I could  
2 before the outside gas was shut off.

3 While inside, I noticed that the pipe was sitting on a mortar joint in between  
4 stones in the basement wall. The pipe casing was clearly eaten away, but I could  
5 not see any exposed copper. I then turned off the inside gas at the lock cock.

6 Normally, I would have used my 18" aluminum wrench to loosen the union  
7 between the two pieces of pipe, but the union was only hand-tight, or able to be  
8 opened without a tool. The union is not supposed to be this loose.

9 I then loosened the union with my hand. Once it was loose, I put my wrench on  
10 the ninety (the 3/4" pipe angled at ninety degrees) and proceeded to undo the  
11 union. When the union was undone, the ninety broke off and gas began blowing  
12 into the house. The ninety was so corroded that it collapsed from the weight of  
13 the wrench.

14 **Q. What did you do next?**

15 **A.** I picked the cock up off the floor and tried to mate the pipes back together. I then  
16 told the customer to get Don from outside. Don came downstairs and told me to  
17 leave the building. I also evacuated the customers from the home.

18 At this point, the other employees were still digging up the curb box outside.  
19 Luckily, they dug up the pipe and were able to shut off the gas before any tragedy  
20 occurred.

21 **Q. What, if anything, did the customer tell you about any recent maintenance**  
22 **performed on the gas meter or piping?**

1 A. She said that an AMR device had been installed in her home a couple of weeks  
2 beforehand. She also said that since the installation, she had smelled gas in the  
3 basement. She explained that the installer represented himself as being a  
4 gasworker, but we told her that Cellnet subcontractors are performing the  
5 installation. She said that she would not have let the installer inside her home if  
6 she knew he was not a gasworker.

7 **Q. How dangerous was the rotted pipe?**

8 A. The pipe was rotted so severely that it fell from its own weight. In this condition,  
9 someone could have easily bumped it and it would have fallen, causing the same  
10 leak. At this point, the house would have likely exploded if the leak was not  
11 quickly contained.

12 **Q. How could this rotted pipe have been detected beforehand?**

13 A. Laclede Service employees perform checks on the gas piping that would have  
14 detected rotting and deterioration. However, because the AMR installer was not a  
15 gasworker, he was unable to detect the rotted pipe. But because the installation  
16 was performed just weeks before the leak occurred, this entire episode could have  
17 been avoided if a gasworker installed the AMR device.

18 **Q. Does this conclude your direct testimony?**

19 A. Yes.

NP

Arrived on job site \*\*

\*\*

at 8:20 A.M. on 9-14-06 and immediately went to work. While digging up curb box to get to shut off one man went inside to start to breakdown inside set as far as he could go until we shut the gas off. He turned off the lock cock and broke the union. That's as far as he could go at the time. He set his 24" aluminum wrench on the cock to hang there and the cock, casing pipe and copper fell on the floor blowing gas into the basement. Luckily we were able to get to the shut off in time, evacuated the homeowners and ~~air~~ out the home in time before disaster struck. Cellnet installed an AMR before all this took place an S.A.I.D. man would have found the leak. Woman says she had been smelling gas in the basement for a few weeks.

SHAWN O'NEAL  
~~Shawn O'Neal~~EVERETT MINTON  
~~Everett Minton~~DON VIERLING  
~~Don Vierling~~  
JIM LEACH

were on the job when happened

~~James Leach~~ NP