

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the matter of)
)
USW Local 11-6,) GC-2006-0390
Complainant)
and)
)
Laclede Gas Company,)
Respondent)

FILED
JAN 05 2007
Missouri Public
Service Commission

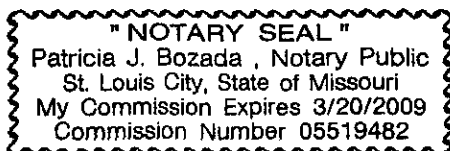
AFFIDAVIT OF DON VIERLING

STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS)

Don Vierling, 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.

Donald J. Vierling
Don Vierling

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of Sept, 2006.



Patricia J. Bozada
Notary Public

My commission expires _____

USW Exhibit No. 17-NP
Case No(s). GC-2006-0390
Date 12/12/06 Rptr MV

DIRECT TESTIMONY

OF

DON VIERLING

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 Don Vierling and my address is **

3 **MO 63016.

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 as a
7 copper truck foreman. I have worked there for twenty 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 account
11 of this episode, signed by all four Laclede Gas employees who were involved, is
12 attached and incorporated here as Exhibit 1. I arrived at this address at 8:20 a.m.
13 with Shawn O'Neal, Everett Minton, and Jim Leach. Normally, when performing
14 a copper pipe replacement, we turn off the outside gas first at the curb box.
15 However, the curb box was underground so we began digging it up. Everett

1 Minton went inside while we were digging to perform what work he could before
2 the outside gas was shut off. While inside, he turned off the inside gas at the lock
3 cock and loosened the union between two pieces of pipe. However, when he set
4 his 24" aluminum wrench on the cock, the cock, casing pipe, and copper fell on
5 the floor because the pipe was severely rotted. Gas began blowing into the
6 basement. As it poured out, Everett tried to contain the gas with his hands.

7 At this point, we were still digging up the curb box outside. The customer then
8 ran outside and called my name. I ordered everyone out of the house and we
9 continued digging to shut off the gas. Luckily, we dug up the pipe and were able
10 to shut off the gas before any tragedy occurred.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 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 homeowner and ~~air~~ ^{vented} 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
~~SA ON~~

EVERETT MINTON

Everett Minton

DON VIERLING
D. Vierling

JIM LEACH

~~James Leach~~ James Leach

were on the job when happened

NF