

## True Life Stories

GR-2005-0284  
Public Hearing Ex 2  
12:00 p.m.  
9-19-05

### Impaction Can Be Deadly:

Many elderly people suffer from impactions. This means that they can not eliminate their bowels by themselves and they need help with the use of suppositories, enemas, or manual removal. Without mentioning the name of the facility or the resident I will describe the conditions of this particular elder. Upon starting my shift I made rounds, when I came upon this male elder I was shocked. His stomach was bloated to three times the normal size and there was stool coming from his nose and mouth. Immediately I notified the nurses who tried everything they could to bring him relief. This man held my hand and asked me not to leave him. We all felt helpless to bring him comfort. We called the doctor and sent him to the hospital emergency room where later we learned he had died from a "Bowel Obstruction". This man's bowels did not become obstructed by a tumor or twist by themselves. This man's death was PREVENTABLE with good nursing care. Looking back in his chart it revealed that he had had no stool for several days, in fact he had a history of impactions. This man should have been routinely checked every other day for an impaction. Because of poor nursing care this man died choking on his own feces!

This man or the state paid an average of \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month for his care. Why was he neglected?

I will attempt to explain the conditions that caused this neglect through this book. I hope if you are a family member you will learn the things you need to know before you place your loved one in their care. I hope you take the time to ask the questions and investigate the home thoroughly. Only through this process will things change and life for the elderly improve.

Everyday in America there is someone dying from Bowel Obstruction.

EDITORIAL

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 2000

Postscript.com/editorial

Post  
Script



State - Always a day  
late & a dollar short.

Too many good employees are  
leaving nursing homes - Please  
let's stop the madness.

SHERIDAN

St. Louis Post-Dispatch © 11-04-02 STLtoday.com



'Substantial compliance'

Mo Legislature & Nursing Lobby — work  
as a team — getting rich off the backs  
of poor elderly & handicapped residents  
in Nursing Homes. 'Condition never changes'

This might be a Cartoon Drawing  
but it is so true to life.

Nursing Home is a Billion ~~of~~ Dollars  
Enterprise. When they look at old  
people all they see are \$ signs  
not someone who needs

T. L. C.  
{ send  
Love &  
care }



# MISSOURI



Leg amputated due to gangrene, stage IV bedsore on hips and foot. Not turned for 6 hours one day.



New bedsore.  
Div on Aging: "Received adequate care!"



Bandage not changed for 6 days!  
Div. on Aging: "No fine, no violation."



PUBLIC HEARING  
STATE OF MISSOURI  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In The Matter of:

LACLEDE GAS COMPANY'S     )  
TARIFF TO REVISE NATURAL    ) Case No. GR-2005-0284  
GAS RATE SCHEDULES         )

Hearing held at University of Missouri-St. Louis  
Volume 5

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

**ORIGINAL**

September 19, 2005

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*Missouri  
Public Service Commission*

CONCANNON & JAEGER  
General Court Reporters  
705 Olive Street, Suite 604  
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1 APPEARANCES:

2 Laclede Gas Company was represented by attorney  
3 Michael Pendergast, 720 Olive Street, Suite 1520, St.  
4 Louis, Missouri 63101.

5 The Office of Public Counsel was represented by  
6 Senior Public Counsel Mr. Mike Dandino, P.O. Box 2230,  
7 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

8 The Staff was represented by Deputy General  
9 Counsel, Mr. Meyer, P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City,  
10 Missouri 63102.

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1 JUDGE DIPPELL: The Missouri Public  
2 Service Commission has set this time for local hearing  
3 in Case No. GR-2005-0284, in which the Laclede Gas  
4 Company seeks to implement a general rate increase. My  
5 name is Nancy Dippell and I'm the Regulatory Law Judge  
6 for the Commission. It's my job to sort of run these  
7 hearings and I'll be calling the witnesses up and  
8 making sure the proceedings -- trying to make sure the  
9 proceedings run smoothly. Do I need to speak louder?

10 Okay. I'll try to speak louder. If you  
11 have difficulty hearing me, please, please let me know.

12 Just a few housekeeping matters. First of  
13 all, we do want to thank the University of Missouri,  
14 St. Louis, for providing this facility to us.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Chancellor  
16 stopped by to say he is pleased to be able to provide  
17 the University's facilities.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: We appreciate the  
19 hospitality and we appreciate them letting us be here.  
20 If there is any problems with parking. With parking,  
21 if you were to get a ticket while you're hear today,  
22 you can contact Ms. Karen Pierre. She is at -- if you  
23 have something to write with, she's at 516-5823. And  
24 I'll have Mr. Kelly put this piece of paper with her  
25 contact information on it back at the back table if you

1 need to jot that down on your way out.

2 I also wanted to say that the opinions  
3 expressed here today are simply those of the witnesses  
4 and the parties, and not those of the University of  
5 Missouri, St. Louis.

6 The Commission is made up of five  
7 Commissioners. I have three of them here today and  
8 I'll introduce those. The Chairman, Jeff Davis, to my  
9 immediate left. Commissioner Clayton on his left. I  
10 have Commissioner Gaw on my right, and I'm also  
11 expecting Commissioner Murray. She is going to be a  
12 little delayed in getting here, so she will probably be  
13 here later. We also have Commissioner Appling. He'll  
14 be here at this hearing, but he will be reading the  
15 transcripts that we have our court reporter taking down  
16 your testimony today, so that all of the Commissioners  
17 can be able to review that testimony.

18 As you've probably already been told, the  
19 Missouri Public Service Commission regulates the rates  
20 charged by investor-owned utility companies in Missouri  
21 to insure that those rates are just and reasonable. We  
22 also regulate the quality of service and safety of  
23 operations in investor-owned utilities.

24 I'm going to begin calling people who  
25 signed up on the witness list. If you haven't yet



1 signed up and you would like to testify, there's  
2 another sheet at the back of the room or when  
3 everybody's finished testifying, I'll ask if there's  
4 anybody else and you can let me know at that time.  
5 Testimony is taken under oath.

6 Ma'am, did you have a question?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You know what, I  
8 didn't know we had to sign a witness sheet. I would  
9 like to go first. I have to go back to my job.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay. Let me see if there  
11 would be a problem with that. Normally, I go by the  
12 order that all these people -- let me see if anybody  
13 has a problem with that. All right?

14 Okay. In addition to this hearing,  
15 there's going to be another public hearing this evening  
16 at Harris-Stowe University, and that hearing will begin  
17 at six. Okay. I think we're about ready to begin with  
18 testimony. I do have a woman here in the front who  
19 indicated --

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I worked it out.  
21 I'm going after Dr. Knight. After Dr. Knight, she can  
22 take my place, and I'll go after her because Dr. Knight  
23 has to get back to work.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So if I could be

1 number four --

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. We'll just  
3 begin then with the witness list.

4 While Mr. Schulte's coming, I do want to  
5 recognize that Representative Margaret Donnelly is here  
6 today. Representative Donnelly -- there she is in the  
7 back. And Representative Tim Meadows is also here. Do  
8 we have any other elected officials? All right. Thank  
9 you all for being here.

10 MR. JOE SCHULTE,  
11 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
12 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
13 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
14 follows:

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you please state your  
16 name and address and whether you're an Ameren UE  
17 customer? Oh, I'm sorry, a Laclede customer?

18 MR. SCHULTE: My name is Joe Schulte and I  
19 live at 4007 Hartford, and I am a Laclede Gas customer.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead with  
21 your comments.

22 MR. SCHULTE: Well, I've, I've got a few  
23 comments.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could I get you to speak  
25 into the microphone a little bit more?

1 MR. SCHULTE: I've got a few comments.  
2 Can you hear me now?

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Yes.

4 MR. SCHULTE: I've got kind of a sinus  
5 infection, but I thought it was important that I be  
6 here for these hearings.

7 I was in the last set of hearings, and I  
8 asked why beings Laclede Gas was getting rid of all  
9 their meter readers, as the older gentleman talked  
10 about before, they're going to eliminate and they're  
11 going to use CellNet. But there's going to be a profit  
12 off of that part for Laclede. We want to know what the  
13 cost savings is. They should not be allowed to get  
14 money from this rate increase if they're going to save  
15 money by eliminating jobs. Nobody has ever given me  
16 that information. What the cost savings is of  
17 eliminating 90 plus jobs and having an outside  
18 contractor read the meters through the air waves?

19 There's a safety issue there, too, because  
20 about three -- about two or three years ago, Laclede  
21 had their meter readers, they give them a device to  
22 carry with them to pick up these things. So if it was  
23 so important to spend this money two to two and a half  
24 years ago, why is it not important now?

25 And I also -- what is the actual

1 settlement, proposed settlement? The paper's saying  
2 10.5, and now it's 8.5. What is it? Is it 10.5 or is  
3 it 8.5 million?

4 The other thing is the 6.1 million dollars  
5 on the rollover. And my understanding, when that  
6 legislation was passed up in Jefferson City, that was a  
7 year-by-year basis. According to my understanding of  
8 this proposed settlement that they're going to roll 6.1  
9 million dollars over into a permanent rate increase,  
10 and then next year, Laclede can start again. That  
11 wasn't the intent of that legislation in Jeff City when  
12 that was passed if that's what is happening. And there  
13 will be reps here to talk about that, explain that.  
14 But I have a deep concern about it, you know.

15 It was a warm winter last year and we  
16 still never have got it out of Laclede. The last  
17 hearing, they said between 25 and 35 million dollars.  
18 What was it? I can't believe that they don't know what  
19 their profit was last year, and it was a warm winter  
20 last year. Heaven forbid if we have a colder than hell  
21 winter -- how much money is Laclede going to make in  
22 extra profit if we have a cold winter? So that's my  
23 comment.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you very much, Mr.  
25 Schulte. And I do need to explain that when a witness

1     testifies, the members of the Commission has questions  
2     for them, and I will ask you to remain at the  
3     microphone until after I've asked for Commission  
4     questions. Commissioner Gaw?

5                   COMMISSIONER GAW: I don't believe I have  
6     any questions right now. I guess -- let me use this  
7     mic. Mr. Schulte, the particular questions that you  
8     had, let me make sure that I have them down. So would  
9     you go through real quickly again and hit them so I  
10    have an opportunity to ask those questions about the  
11    profits from last winter?

12                  MR. SCHULTE: I want to know what their  
13    profits were last year. They're giving conflicting  
14    statements. Nobody could come up and say -- from  
15    Laclede, and say what their profits were. The other  
16    question I had is, is the cost savings by eliminating  
17    90 plus jobs. What is Laclede going to save by getting  
18    rid of the meter reader and using an outside vendor  
19    called CellNet to read these meters?

20                  COMMISSIONER GAW: Mr. Schulte, are you  
21    under the impression that anything this rate case has  
22    any impact in regard to their decision not to use meter  
23    readers? Do you know?

24                  MR. SCHULTE: Can you say that again?

25                  COMMISSIONER GAW: Yeah. I said two -- I

1 used two negatives. Do you believe this rate case  
2 impacts the use of meter readers?

3 MR. SCHULTE: Well, yeah. There's got to  
4 be some kind of savings in this rate case if, if you  
5 have -- I don't know if it's 8.5 or 10.5. Nobody's  
6 ever told it to me. The papers are giving two  
7 different conflicting statement. The impact is in two  
8 years, when they institute CellNet and they get rid of  
9 90 plus meter readers, then there's going to be a  
10 savings. I can't believe Laclede would do this without  
11 getting a savings. So they're going to be making money  
12 on this rate case based on the salaries of everybody  
13 that is here at this time. In two years, that salary  
14 is no longer there.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right. So you --  
16 you're wanting to know about whether or not that was  
17 factored into the settlement or not?

18 MR. SCHULTE: Yeah. But Laclede should  
19 not be able to profit by getting rid of employees.  
20 It's my understanding, and I can't get a direct answer  
21 from them, that they have over 600 management people  
22 and less than 1,300 workers. That's something like  
23 2.25 to 1. That's kind of ridiculous. If they want to  
24 trim some fat, let them start trimming at the top and  
25 get rid of a lot of dead weight at the top.



1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you, Mr. Schulte.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Murray, did  
3 you have any questions?

4 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't believe I  
5 do. Thank you.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton, did  
7 you have a question?

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Mr. Schulte, I want  
9 to be clear about part of your testimony. Right now,  
10 the salaries of the 90 people that you're talking  
11 about, The 90 bodies that are meter readers and who  
12 work out in the community. Their salaries are included  
13 in this rate settlement? Is that your understanding?

14 MR. SCHULTE: That's my understanding.  
15 They're included with the rates now, and the future  
16 rates, whatever they're going to be, but these  
17 employees are going to be gone, they're telling us, in  
18 two years, so there's, there's a profit that's being  
19 made there, but nobody will tell us anything.

20 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Can you tell me --  
21 and if you don't know, that's perfectly fine. I'll  
22 find out elsewhere, but the change to an outside  
23 contractor, is that something that will come before the  
24 Commission at a later time outside of this rate case?

25 MR. SCHULTE: Well, I think the Commission

1 has already approved CellNet.

2 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Thank you.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Chairman Davis, did you  
4 have a question?

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mr. Schulte, what's the  
6 approximate, average salary of a meter reader?

7 MR. SCHULTE: I would guess around 21  
8 bucks an hour, 20 to 21.

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Twenty to twenty-one plus  
10 benefits?

11 MR. SCHULTE: Plus benefits, yeah.

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Is that a 40 hour a week  
13 job?

14 MR. SCHULTE: That's correct.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: And you say approximately  
16 90 plus of them are going to lose their jobs; is that  
17 correct?

18 MR. SCHULTE: Yeah. Excuse me.

19 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I don't think I have any  
20 other questions, but I just want to respond. In  
21 response, in response to your question about whether  
22 the number was 10.5 or 8.5. My understanding is that  
23 it's a 10.5 million dollar increase, which includes an  
24 interest charge of approximately 6.2 million, which,  
25 after amortizations and depreciation, was an

1 approximate 8.5 million dollar increase in rates.

2 MR. SCHULTE: When you talk about the  
3 amortization and depreciation, I don't understand what  
4 you're saying there.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Instead of -- I think  
6 those, that's the amount being amortized over a period  
7 of years, and then depreciation being deducted. So,  
8 therefore, I think the actual increase is approximately  
9 8.5 million. Based on my understanding of reading the  
10 proposed -- that almost everyone agreed to. I don't  
11 believe your counsel signed on to it, but I don't  
12 believe they objected, either.

13 MR. SCHULTE: No, we didn't sign on to  
14 anything.

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: I know you didn't sign on  
16 to it, but they didn't object it. either.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would there be any  
18 questions from Laclede for Mr. Schulte?

19 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions, your Honor.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: From the staff?

21 MR. MEYER: No.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Office of the Counsel is  
23 not here. All right. Thank you, Mr. Schulte.

24 MR. SCHULTE: Thank you.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

1 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It was Dr. Knight's  
2 turn. She takes my turn. I know I talk fast.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm sorry, Dr. Knight.  
4 I'm sorry. I was just reading down the list.

5 DR. JAMES W. KNIGHT,  
6 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
7 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
8 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
9 follows:

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you please state  
11 your name and address for the court reporter?

12 DR. KNIGHT: Dr. James W. Knight, 7601  
13 Natural Bridge, 63121.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a customer of  
15 Laclede Gas?

16 DR. KNIGHT: Yes, I am.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Go ahead and give us your  
18 comments. Thank you.

19 DR. KNIGHT: I'm adamantly against the gas  
20 rate increase because I think it affects the health of  
21 the older and the disabled patients. I'm only here to  
22 discuss the, the health issues. I think the elderly  
23 and disabled are already in trouble. They can't pay  
24 their bills already. A rate increase is going to do a  
25 couple of things. One, it's going to make them not pay

1 their bills and use space heaters, or they're going to  
2 have to make a decision between eating and paying their  
3 utilities. And I think the whole group is going to  
4 decide to eat and they're going to suffer a lot of the  
5 disease processes that are going to be increased by  
6 extreme temperatures. The older patients, they don't  
7 dress well already. I mean, they don't know how to  
8 dress well. They suffer a much higher increase of  
9 frost bite. Their asthma is exacerbated. Their  
10 diabetes is worse. Everything just gets worse with  
11 extreme temperatures and we're here to try to make a  
12 decision to make them pay more out of their check where  
13 their check stays the same all the time.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Are there any  
15 questions for Dr. Knight, Commissioner Murray?

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Dr. Knight, did you  
17 take a look at the extra million dollars for the low  
18 income energy assistance that was a part of this  
19 settlement agreement?

20 DR. KNIGHT: I saw that, yes.

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And do you not think  
22 it will be helpful?

23 DR. KNIGHT: No. That's not enough.  
24 That's almost nothing.

25 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. So you don't

1 think they should --

2 DR. KNIGHT: I think if they really want  
3 to make an impact on the health issues that affect  
4 older people, they should be willing to find a way to  
5 decrease their bills. Let's look at this. The older  
6 people, with that assistance that they offer, how do  
7 they get it? I mean, how do they get that assistance?  
8 They have to apply for it, is what I'm asking.

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, they do.

10 DR. KNIGHT: Well, but the older patients  
11 don't know how to apply for it. They don't. That's  
12 going to be a lot of teaching. It's a big state.

13 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Right. Do you think  
14 that they need to do something in that regard in terms  
15 of education for what's available and how to access it?

16 DR. KNIGHT: Well, I think for the older  
17 people -- no, I'm not sure education is the answer. I  
18 think they see their bill and they try to pay their  
19 bill. I don't think you can teach them how to apply  
20 for other assistance. If you really want to impact how  
21 the older patients and disabled patients are treated by  
22 the utility is we need to look at a way to decrease  
23 their utility rather than have them apply for extra  
24 funds.

25 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And how much do they



1 need to decrease their bills?

2 DR. KNIGHT: I'm sure that's going to  
3 change from family to family, but I'm sure they're  
4 going to take whatever is offered.

5 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you for coming,  
8 Dr. Knight. For people who aren't familiar with your  
9 credentials, for the record, would you mind giving us a  
10 little of your background?

11 DR. KNIGHT: I'm a vascular surgeon and  
12 I've been practicing in St. Louis now for about 24  
13 years.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you see, do you see  
15 patients full-time?

16 DR. KNIGHT: Full-time, yes.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: And a number of your  
18 patients, I assume, are also customers of Laclede Gas?

19 DR. KNIGHT: I'm sure they are, yes.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Have you had an  
21 opportunity to see the impact of individuals or others  
22 that you know who experience difficulties in dealing  
23 with the price of a gas bill and what the consequences  
24 of that can be in regard to their health?

25 DR. KNIGHT: I think not a day goes by

1 that I don't sign this little slip from the energy  
2 assistance for utilities. That if I sign this they'll  
3 not turn off their air conditioning or not turn their  
4 heating off. I see it often.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: What does that mean?  
6 What does it mean for those patients not to be able to  
7 pay their bills and have their heat cut off? What  
8 consequences do you see with that?

9 DR. KNIGHT: I think it's psychological.  
10 I mean, working and making a certain amount of money.  
11 I mean, they get that bill every month and get very  
12 antsy. They get nervous. They get up in the middle of  
13 the night and turn that heat down a little bit and then  
14 they get very cold in the middle of the night. I mean,  
15 that's a psychological impact for a man trying to raise  
16 a family. And it's physical. Because a lot of  
17 patients I see have debilitating diseases that are made  
18 worse in extreme temperatures, be it hot or cold.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: What kinds of  
20 consequences are there to that when you say that their  
21 symptoms or the issues that they have are made worse?  
22 Are these symptoms that are serious in some cases that  
23 can be debilitating in some cases, perhaps resulting in  
24 death?

25 DR. KNIGHT: Very debilitating. Can

1 result in -- let's say you have a diabetic who lives in  
2 an apartment and pays a certain bill each month and all  
3 of a sudden, now he can't pay it. Diabetics have a  
4 poor sense of sensation. That means when it's real hot  
5 or real cold, they can't tell if they're hot or they're  
6 cold. So they suffer increased incidence of frost bite  
7 that can result in amputations.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: You've seen that occur?

9 DR. KNIGHT: Yes, I have.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Here in St. Louis?

11 DR. KNIGHT: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you find that  
13 sometimes that particularly seniors will make  
14 sacrifices in order to try to continue to pay their  
15 heating bills in taking their medication or perhaps  
16 skipping meals?

17 DR. KNIGHT: I think it's just the  
18 opposite. What happens is they either have to decide  
19 whether they eat or get their medication or pay their  
20 utilities. A lot of the times, they do a little bit of  
21 both. They'll buy some of their medicine, but not all  
22 of it. They'll buy some food, but not the right food,  
23 just to try to pay a little of their utilities to keep  
24 it from being cut off.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: And again, what happens

1 if that occurs?

2 DR. KNIGHT: If they cut their utilities  
3 off -- just imagine it's minus two degrees in January  
4 in a very cold place. Patients die.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: What happens if they  
6 don't take all of their medications that they're  
7 supposed to take?

8 DR. KNIGHT: Most of the older patients  
9 have more than one disease process. A lot of those  
10 patients die, also.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: I think that's all I  
12 have. Thank you very much, Dr. Knight.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner  
14 Clayton, any questions?

15 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't have any  
16 questions. Thank you for being here, Doctor.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Chairman Davis?

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No questions. Thank you,  
19 Dr. Knight.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Any questions  
21 from the representative?

22 MR. MEYER: No, your Honor.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Dandino, any questions  
24 for Mr. Knight?

25 MR. DANDINO: No, I have no questions.

1 Thank you, sir, for attending and testifying.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast, any  
3 questions?

4 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes, Dr. Knight. Hi, my  
5 name is Mike Pendergast.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Can you stand up and speak  
7 loudly?

8 MR. PENDERGAST: I'll try to talk loudly.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'll repeat what he says.

10 MR. PENDERGAST: Hi, everybody. My name  
11 is Mike Pendergast. I'm with Laclede Gas Company. Can  
12 everybody hear me now? I just wanted to go ahead and  
13 thank Dr. Knight for his testimony, and I also want to  
14 go ahead and offer him any help I can give him with  
15 special programs the gas company has. And the Missouri  
16 Public Service Commission has placed into effect the  
17 Cold Weather Rule and other rules to assist elderly and  
18 low income customers, and the disabled to obtain their  
19 utility services. It's very important to do that  
20 whenever we possibly can. There are special  
21 provisions, and this company has a long history of  
22 taking into account and trying to protect those  
23 customers, and we would be very pleased to work with  
24 you to see that we do that as best we can. Thank you.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast's comment

1 was that he would be happy to work with Mr. Knight on  
2 providing assistance.

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Dr. Knight.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm sorry. Excuse me. I  
5 apologize. Dr. Knight. Any questions from staff for  
6 Dr. Knight?

7 MR. MEYER: No.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Dr. Knight.

9 DR. KNIGHT: Thank you very much.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right, then. Mr.  
11 Trotter.

12 MR. GENTRY W. TROTTER,  
13 of lawful age, being first duly affirmed to tell the  
14 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
15 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
16 follows:

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you state your name  
18 and address, please?

19 MR. TROTTER: Jeffrey W. Trotter, 1509  
20 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, 63103, and I'm  
21 a Laclede Gas customer.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, sir. And  
23 please give us your comment.

24 MR. TROTTER: Okay. First of all, the  
25 comment made by Mr. Pendergast, the previous speaker



1 from Laclede Gas, they don't have enough programs and  
2 cold weather relief. The Cold Weather Rule is  
3 insufficient. The Cold Weather Rule has went up only  
4 by a couple of degrees, so that's not enough to deal  
5 with the issues that the seniors deal with and the  
6 people that I've talked to deal with. So the Cold  
7 Weather Rule that Laclede talks about is one that was  
8 negotiated by the monopolies to their benefit. So I  
9 would not tout how great that program is, because it  
10 needs to be reworked.

11 The reason I'm here, in addition to that,  
12 is to say that we do not need another rate increase. I  
13 congratulate, however, even though I agree with some of  
14 the previous speakers and in the earlier session that  
15 this was a fait accompli. In other words, you did the  
16 settlement first and then you came back, and then you  
17 did the other settlement. But I want to, where it is  
18 due, I want to give credit for at least a fleeting  
19 moment to this Commission, for at least knocking that  
20 price down from, I think -- forgive me for remembering  
21 38 million down to 8 million or 10 million, I think  
22 it's 8 million now. And that's not enough. And while  
23 you've made an effort, it's still not enough when you  
24 look at the salaries and you see how much money they're  
25 making, and you look at their management, when you look

1 at all of their expensive cars, when you look at all  
2 the perks, and when you look at the seniors and when  
3 you hear from the seniors or the disabled -- they're in  
4 trouble. You add Katrina onto that now, down in the  
5 Gulf area, with money leaving here.

6           You know, people don't understand, it's  
7 only so much money we all have. We all live from  
8 paycheck to paycheck. All of us in this room,  
9 including the cameramen who operate the camera and the  
10 lady who's the stenographer. We all have expenses.  
11 What's going to happen now if we -- look at the natural  
12 gas prices, which we do not control. Unfortunately,  
13 due to the problems in the Gulf, they're going to spike  
14 up. We have no control. It's further up the pipeline.  
15 If you add that 30 to 50 to 70 percent or whatever  
16 everybody's predicting, everybody has a different  
17 prediction. You throw that in along with this increase  
18 -- that's too much burden. Take in the gasoline price  
19 -- that's too much burden. Take in the grocery prices,  
20 the medicine prices -- that's too much burden. What  
21 we've got to do is relieve the burden and we have to do  
22 it in a way that Laclede Gas takes some of its multi-  
23 million dollar profit, and as the lady previously said  
24 as I was sitting there, and let them put it in the  
25 till.

1                   We've been playing this game of, of where  
2                   you go to the circus and you put the little coin  
3                   underneath it and you shuffle it around. That's all  
4                   we've been doing for the last 20 years is shuffling it  
5                   around at the expense of the poor, at the expense of  
6                   the elderly, and at the expense of the working class  
7                   people. We're going to be hurt in this room by how the  
8                   fall-out of what's going on, both in terms of giving,  
9                   where people are going to have less to give this time  
10                  because they, you, you, and everybody in this room and  
11                  the cameraman and the lady over there -- we're going to  
12                  be paying a higher utility rate. Laclede had nothing  
13                  to do with that higher utility rate on the natural gas,  
14                  but you're going to pay it and it's realistic.

15                         So for the sensitivity of the poor,  
16                         understand that we're in tough times, this time, this  
17                         cycle. What we should try to do is say, "No, you can  
18                         live without those expenses." If everybody else has to  
19                         pull their belt tight, then so do the directors of  
20                         Laclede. They've made enough money off enough people  
21                         as fat cats that they can afford to go for a while  
22                         without a rate increase and other issues. I'm adamant  
23                         on that.

24                                 I'm also adamant on the issue that the  
25                                 union person spoke of. I got this in the mail. I'm

1 very disappointed that the majority of the Missouri  
2 Public Service Commission approved this new automated  
3 meter reader. And I could tell you stories without  
4 getting any employee in trouble with Laclede. The  
5 stories I've heard over the years, over at least 20  
6 years, where it's been the meter reader who's been the  
7 first line of ears, eyes, and nose to know when there  
8 was an issue in somebody's home. Because the meter  
9 reader also helped some of these people when the  
10 management didn't know. I don't want to talk about  
11 that because I don't want to get anybody in trouble.

12 So the reality is, the reality is you  
13 shouldn't have passed this. You should reconsider  
14 this. There is an appeal up for this. I think it's a  
15 bad thing. I got one in the mail saying that I have to  
16 do this automatic meter reader and it's going to be  
17 some outside person. For years, Laclede's always said  
18 that the best safety people to put your BBQs together  
19 and put your pools together and all the other stuff has  
20 been their employees. Now, all of a sudden, they're  
21 going to do this automated -- and you have a safety  
22 division, too, that's not doing a good job in the  
23 Commission, because as you look at the automated meter  
24 reading, they're contractors. They're not Laclede Gas  
25 employees that we've trusted since we were kids.

1 They're not the same group of people.

2 We need to do something about this, ladies  
3 and gentlemen. We need to do something quick about  
4 this, and I plead to your sensitivity and your humanity  
5 that we need to do something about this and this  
6 outrageous increase of 8 million dollars.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Trotter, just so the  
8 record is clear, could we possibly either have that  
9 letter or a copy of it to be used as an exhibit?

10 MR. TROTTER: Make a copy, yes, ma'am. I  
11 got this in the mail last week. I almost had a heart  
12 attack. And then I got a call, a computer call from  
13 somebody saying that we'll be in your area on such and  
14 such and such and such, so people are getting those  
15 now.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay. I'll mark that as  
17 Exhibit 1 for the record.

18 MR. TROTTER: Okay. I need a copy of  
19 that. I need to get that back from you.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Well, I'll try to get a  
21 copy today.

22 MR. TROTTER: I'll get it later on.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Did you have  
24 further comments?

25 MR. TROTTER: As a footnote at the end of

1 this conversation is I think I said, when I say God has  
2 blessed me with a big mouth to help those poor people  
3 who can't speak for themselves. Thank God, you're  
4 right. And for people who couldn't get here and I do  
5 appreciate, with all due respect, Mr. Chairman, and no  
6 disrespect to you, I do appreciate the attempt of  
7 moving the site, even if it's a little congested.  
8 Monday is a big day at Harris-Stowe. Once again, if  
9 staff would have called me or anybody in the community  
10 who has an interest in seeing justice and fairness for  
11 everybody, including the Commission, and I would have  
12 told them today was a bad day here. Other than that, I  
13 think I said what I came to say.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner  
15 Murray, do you have any questions for Mr. Trotter?

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, I don't. Thank  
17 you, Mr. Trotter.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: I don't think so.  
20 Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Trotter.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

22 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I've never heard  
23 anyone say they were blessed to have a big mouth, but  
24 we're glad to have you here.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Chairman Davis?



1 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Just one question. Mr.  
2 Trotter, is the Harris-Stowe location in the evening,  
3 is that a better location?

4 MR. TROTTER: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. So we're getting a  
6 little bit better?

7 MR. TROTTER: Yeah. Yeah.

8 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. All right. Thank  
9 you.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Do you have any questions  
11 for Mr. Trotter from the Office of Public Counsel?

12 MR. DANDINO: No questions. Thank you,  
13 your Honor.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast?

15 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions, your Honor.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Meyer?

17 MR. MEYER: No.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Mr. Trotter.

19 MS. DELORES MCMILLEN,  
20 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
21 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
22 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission as  
23 follows:

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you state your name?

25 MS. MCMILLEN: Okay. My name is Delores,

1 Delores McMillen.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Can you give us your  
3 address?

4 MS. MCMILLEN: 8307 Garfield.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a Laclede Gas  
6 Company customer?

7 MS. MCMILLEN: Yes, your honor. Laclede  
8 Gas Company is very familiar with me. I would like to  
9 pause for a second. I would like to especially give  
10 you this. There's a picture in the back of bed sores.  
11 Okay. Let me give her one, too. You all can keep  
12 these.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. I'll mark this  
14 as Exhibit 2.

15 MS. MCMILLEN: Please do, and show them to  
16 the stockholders and the people that own Laclede Gas  
17 Company, because they are the ones that should be here,  
18 the stockholders and the people that own Laclede Gas  
19 Company, because we're wasting time with these people,  
20 really. I'm telling you.

21 This is what I would like to know. I  
22 would like to know, this ad, everyone once in a while,  
23 it appears in the paper about the elderly people and  
24 the handicapped people. And I would like to know why  
25 is this ad here telling a lie? Right here, this

1 summer, in August or even the latter part of July, they  
2 found a lady in her house in the Soulard area,  
3 decomposed so badly, they didn't know what she was.  
4 They didn't know whether she was a male or a female.  
5 They had to go around in the neighborhood and ask, who  
6 was this lady? Who lives here? And you know what they  
7 found out is that it was an elderly female victim. She  
8 didn't have no utility on.

9 Now, Laclede Gas Company is not the only  
10 underdog here. Ameren UE is another underdog because  
11 it was hot and that same time, they was sending the  
12 space shuttle up to the moon and spending two and a  
13 half billion dollars and it was falling apart in the  
14 sky when it was going up there, and that poor woman  
15 died like that. It's a disgrace to the United States.  
16 It really is, and I want to know if it's a lie. Here's  
17 what I want to know. Because you know what, Laclede  
18 Gas Company needs to be sued if they can get a lawyer  
19 to take the case, because all the lawyers in St. Louis,  
20 Missouri, is scared of Laclede Gas Company. I've tried  
21 it. I have worked with Lazy Clay, Jr. and I have  
22 worked with old man Bill Clay before he left. This is  
23 my package. This is some of my package. This is not  
24 all of my package. And it's a disgrace I have to fight  
25 with Laclede Gas Company and Ameren UE in order to keep

1 my service on in my home.

2 I've been in my home 27 years, and I don't  
3 think I should be forced out because Laclede Gas  
4 Company decided to cut my gas off or even Union  
5 Electric decided to cut my electric off. I think it's  
6 a disgrace and I don't think I should be forced to go  
7 into a nursing home because I cannot keep up my house,  
8 and I give up my house and go to a nursing home. You  
9 know what, I just turned 60 August the 20th. 60. And  
10 you know what, this is a problem to me. And all I want  
11 to know is it a lie. Because it's a disgrace.

12 I have worked at a nursing home for 19  
13 years and the government do not give a damn, excuse my  
14 expression, don't give a damn about old people. They  
15 don't give a damn about babies, either. They don't  
16 care about nobody, but making the money. If you ain't  
17 got a dollar sign attached onto your head, they not  
18 thinking about you at all. And I think it's a disgrace  
19 the way this whole country feels about old people and  
20 babies. Now, if old people and babies was treated like  
21 sports athletes, how they run down to the Cardinals  
22 game and have all kink of to do down there for the  
23 Cardinals; we wouldn't even be here. Them people are  
24 making million dollar salary down there, and you got  
25 nurses at the nursing home trying to take care of

1 patients and don't have enough to take care of them,  
2 enough supply, enough people. But yet, still the  
3 Cardinals go on. The Rams go on. All these people  
4 steady going on.

5 And Laclede Gas Company is a monopoly.  
6 And you all don't got no fear. Fear of you all cutting  
7 the gas off, Ameren UE cutting our lights off. You  
8 just don't have no fear. And it's a shame old people  
9 have to live in fear. Old people are scared of their  
10 neighbors, that's why they stay in their house. You  
11 done got old people in the house, no phone, no nothing,  
12 and everything is airtight because they're scared of  
13 their neighbors. They're scared to turn their lights  
14 on. They're scared to turn a fan on. I had a lady in  
15 my neighborhood about three years ago. She had a space  
16 heater and she had her lights cut off, gas cut off.  
17 She had this long extension cord connected to her  
18 neighbor's house to try to get a little heat. Her  
19 house burned down and she burned down in that.

20 Now, this shouldn't be happening in the  
21 United States. It's a disgrace. And we should be  
22 telling them to stop all of this and the horror and  
23 this monopoly. Not you all, because you all are not  
24 making the money. You all are poor just like I am.  
25 And I want to know when we talk to the stockholders and

1 the owners and I want to know when we can talk to the  
2 big dogs, because I'm tired.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Ms. McMillen, would you  
4 like me to put a copy of that ad you were holding up  
5 into the record?

6 MS. MCMILLEN: You know what, you all got  
7 this ad. I'm not turning loose of my ad, you all,  
8 these papers are mine.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay.

10 MS. MCMILLEN: You got all the papers  
11 saying that, you know, you all can work with people  
12 some kind of way. This is another little ad you had in  
13 the paper. I saved these ads, but I thought maybe  
14 you'd look at them, but it's just a waste of time.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Just so that the record is  
16 clear. I saw you had a date written on that ad. Can  
17 you tell me what paper and what date?

18 MS. MCMILLEN: Yeah. It's August 12 of  
19 2001, and the other one is November the 7th, '01.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: And were those in the St.  
21 Louis Post-Dispatch?

22 MS. MCMILLEN: They was in the St. Louis  
23 newspaper.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay. Thank you.  
25 Commissioner Murray, do you have any questions for Ms.

1 McMillen?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Just one. Ms.  
3 McMillen, the exhibits you gave us, they were related  
4 to nursing homes; is that --

5 MS. MCMILLEN: Nursing home. I worked  
6 there 19 years. I found the door one night and got the  
7 hell out because I knew the government didn't care  
8 about them people. I went home and cried. Do you  
9 understand me? Because I cared about my people, but  
10 the government don't care. I sent letters to Holden  
11 when he was in office, Governor Holden I sent letters  
12 Claire McCaskill. She lied and said she was all hung  
13 up on old people. She didn't do nothing. I sent all  
14 them letters certified and neither one of them answered  
15 my letter. Now, I sent them certified. I got the  
16 green card back. I didn't get no response. I sent  
17 letters to the Post-Dispatch telling them about how old  
18 people are catching hell in nursing homes, and nobody  
19 has never answered my letter.

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You understand the  
21 Missouri Public Commission has no jurisdiction --

22 MS. MCMILLEN: I know, but I've been  
23 talking about old people living in people living in  
24 fear and they wind up going to nursing home because  
25 they could not keep their house going. Do you

1 understand?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you very much.

3 MS. MCMILLEN: It's sad. It's a sad  
4 situation. You should have to live in a house thirty-  
5 something years and have to be forced out of it. You  
6 want to walk out with some dignity if you want to walk  
7 out of it. It's not right. Do anybody else have  
8 anything else to say?

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Excuse me, Ms.  
10 McMillen. I appreciate you coming down.

11 MS. MCMILLEN: You look at those pictures  
12 there, because those pictures are for real.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: I've looked at them.

14 MS. MCMILLEN: You talked about  
15 application, there's application going on there.  
16 Gangrene, bed sores, everything you can name is right  
17 there.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Are these, are these  
19 pictures recent?

20 MS. MCMILLEN: These pictures are recent.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: And --

22 MS. MCMILLEN: And this stuff is going on  
23 in the nursing homes every day.

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: And have --

25 MS. MCMILLEN: Wait just a minute. Have



1 you ever seen everybody choking on their bowels? Dying  
2 like that? That's what I put up with. I've seen that  
3 four times -- people choking on their bowels, because  
4 somebody was too lazy to check their bowels to see if  
5 they were moving their bowels the right way, bowel  
6 obstruction. It shouldn't be happening in America.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. McMillen, have you  
8 turned these pictures into anyone?

9 MS. MCMILLEN: I've turned them in and  
10 I've wrote books. I've gave it to these news people,  
11 but they choose not to show me because I tell the  
12 truth. I went to meetings, back to back. They choose  
13 not to show me because I tell the truth.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Are these pictures  
15 within the last year?

16 MS. MCMILLEN: No, Hon, they like from  
17 last three years.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. All right.

19 MS. MCMILLEN: But they go on every day.  
20 You can go into any nursing home. You think those  
21 pictures are horrible, you need to smell that smell.  
22 Dead tissue is a horrible smell, sir. It really is.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: I appreciate you  
24 coming, Ms. McMillen.

25 MS. MCMILLEN: You know what, I think only

1 God can straighten this problem out. I think we done  
2 went too far. It's all a big mess. He all we got.  
3 It's sad, but that's the way it is.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you, Judge.  
5 Thank you, Ms. McMillen, for coming here today and  
6 giving us your comments.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't have any  
9 questions. Thank you.

10 MS. MCMILLEN: Read the paper, sir.

11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I've been reading  
12 it.

13 MS. MCMILLEN: You might go there one day.  
14 You know what, you might all go. You can be  
15 handicapped. You could out here and get hit. These  
16 people run these red lights today.

17 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I'm not if sure  
18 I'll do that today, but --

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Ms. McMillen.

20 MS. MCMILLEN: Thank you all.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you for taking time  
22 from your work.

23 MS. MCMILLEN: Thank everybody for letting  
24 me speak.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay.

1 MS. JO DILALLO,  
2 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
3 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
4 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
5 follows:

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you go ahead and say  
7 your name and could you spell it for the court  
8 reporter?

9 MS. DILALLO: Jo Dilallo, and it's D-I-L-  
10 A-DOUBLE L-O. I live at 9626 Newton Drive, Ferguson,  
11 Missouri, 63136.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a Laclede Gas  
13 Company customer?

14 MS. DILALLO: Yes, I am, and I'm very  
15 happy.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Go ahead and  
17 give us your comment.

18 MS. DILALLO: Well, I'm here you giving  
19 back the money, and I don't like it because you're not  
20 giving it back to the customers that deserve it. If  
21 you want to give it back and contribute to somebody, I  
22 want you to do it with your own money, not the  
23 customer's money and that's my only complaint.

24 I think we should keep all our jobs here  
25 in the United States and I don't like all the big

1 companies sending their jobs overseas and also  
2 downsizing different jobs that they could keep. How  
3 are we going to live in the United States with poverty?  
4 I am the working poor, but I can pay all my bills, but  
5 I don't go on trips and my entertainment is taking a  
6 walk in the evening. And I think we should keep all of  
7 our jobs here in the United States so our children  
8 won't have all of these problems paying bills. They  
9 all have large bills like new homes and cars, so forth.  
10 That's my case.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner  
12 Murray, do you have questions for Ms. Dilallo?

13 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Ms. Dilallo, were  
14 you saying that you don't think there should be any  
15 programs where customers themselves contribute to  
16 subsidizing other customers, such as low-income  
17 customers?

18 MS. DILALLO: No, I want the customers to  
19 get their money back. I think that's the right thing.  
20 I think I should have my money back if I overpaid. I  
21 work hard. I'm 77 and guess what, I'm still working.  
22 I started out part-time. I'm going full-time because  
23 I'm helping my son. He couldn't even find a job. He  
24 just found a job making eight dollars an hour. How can  
25 you make eight dollars an hour and pay a house payment,

1 a car payment, and all your insurance on your car and  
2 everything else? How can you do that? All I do is I  
3 live within my means, but it is hard to support my son.  
4 I have never had any trouble because I do not have a  
5 credit card. I do not have any credit at all and I  
6 live fine.

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Congratulations.  
8 You're a wonderful example. And, also, I did just want  
9 to clarify because sometimes programs that help low  
10 income people are spread across all of the customers.  
11 In other words --

12 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mr. Trotter, if you can't  
13 keep your remarks to yourself, I'm going to ask the  
14 judge that you be removed.

15 MS. DILALLO: Would you please restate  
16 your question?

17 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Sometimes there are  
18 subsidies put into utility bills and I'm not, I'm not  
19 specifically talking about Laclede here in this  
20 specific case, but it sounded to me as if you were  
21 saying that you don't think that it's right for some  
22 customers to have to subsidize other customers. Is  
23 that right?

24 MS. DILALLO: That is what I'm saying,  
25 because I'm the working poor and I don't have a lot of

1 money, but I live on what I make and I think a lot of  
2 people should do the same.

3 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, and I  
4 agree with you.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw, did you  
6 have any questions?

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Well, I'm not sure what  
8 the status of this hearing is right now. If the people  
9 are allowed to comment or not.

10 MS. DILALLO: I hope I wasn't out of  
11 order.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: No, not at all.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. You're not out of  
14 order, Ms. Dilallo.

15 MS. DILALLO: I'm here for the first time,  
16 as you know.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: We appreciate you being  
18 here and you're doing just fine. I will ask that  
19 comments from people seated in the gallery -- keep your  
20 comments to yourself. I usually ask that people don't  
21 make outbursts such as applause and so forth. I  
22 understand that people are passionate about their  
23 feelings and you're here to testify today, but I will  
24 ask the audience to keep your comments to yourself so  
25 that we can hear the speakers.

1 MR. TROTTER: Point of order. Your  
2 Commission again --

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Trotter.

4 MR. TROTTER: Your Commission had no  
5 business talking to me that way.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Trotter.

7 MR. TROTTER: I made my point.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Trotter.

9 MR. TROTTER: I made my point.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Murray is  
11 asking me just to make it known that we are having a  
12 court reporter, and if more than one person talks at a  
13 time, it is difficult for her to take that down. Sir,  
14 do you have a procedural question?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes. Well, I would  
16 like to know do you have to name be on that list to be  
17 able to speak? Because I got something to say.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Yes. We would like you to  
19 sign up. There's another sheet in the back of the  
20 room. If you came in late, you can sign it there or  
21 when everyone is finished that I have on the witness  
22 list, then I will ask if anyone would like to talk.

23 Commissioner Gaw, did you have any  
24 questions for this witness?

25 Do you have a question about the

1 procedure, sir?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'm probably out of  
3 order, but I would just like to know what is the  
4 function of the Commissioners?

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: The Commissioners are the  
6 bodies of the Commission. They're the ones that make  
7 the decisions about regulating investor-owned  
8 utilities, and it will be the Commission's decision  
9 whether or not to approve the settlement agreement  
10 between the parties. And so we're today to take public  
11 comments and we're trying to do that in an orderly  
12 fashion, and right now, Mrs. Dilallo is commenting and  
13 I will ask for any further Commission questions, and we  
14 will continue and to try to make sure that we can get  
15 through everybody here today.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: Let me just say to you  
17 that I thank you for coming. I appreciate your  
18 comments and I appreciate that fact that you took the  
19 time to be here and I appreciate the fact that everyone  
20 that's here took the time to be here. And if someone  
21 has something to say here, I want to hear what you have  
22 to say. That's all I have. Thank you.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

24 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Judge, all I have  
25 is a question for you. Do we have any restrictions on



1 time for this facility here today?

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: We asked to be here until  
3 three o'clock.

4 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I mean, if someone  
5 wants to come back up, they can do that, or if anyone  
6 else wants to add their name to the list, we have time  
7 for them to provide that testimony, correct?

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: We have the facility until  
9 three o'clock. I don't know if we can run over, but if  
10 we keep moving, I think we'll get through it.

11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have no questions  
12 for you, ma'am. Thank you for being here.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Chairman  
14 Davis?

15 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mrs. Dilallo, one  
16 question just to clarify your testimony. You support  
17 the -- I think, if I recall your testimony and you just  
18 tell me if I'm wrong. You supported the low-income  
19 programs so long as they were funded by the  
20 shareholders. Is that right?

21 MS. DILALLO: That's right.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Okay. Thank you.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Dandino, do you have  
24 any questions?

25 MR. DANDINO: I have no questions. Thank

1     you so much for attending.

2                   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Mr. Pendergast?

3                   MR. PENDERGAST:   No questions, Your Honor.

4                   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Mr. Meyer?

5                   MR. MEYER:   No, thank you.

6                   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Thank you, Ms. Dilallo.

7     You may be excused.   Lillian Harris?

8                   MS. HARRIS:   I'm Lillian Harris but --

9                   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Did you not want to speak?

10                  MS. HARRIS:   I spoke earlier.   Do I have  
11     to speak here?

12                  JUDGE DIPPELL:   You don't have to speak if  
13     you don't want to.   Earlier, I think that was a  
14     question and answer session, but if you'd like your  
15     comments to go into the official transcript of the  
16     proceedings.

17                  MS. HARRIS:   Well, I guess I will then.

18                                 MS. LILLIAN HARRIS,  
19     of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
20     truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
21     deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
22     follows:

23                  JUDGE DIPPELL:   Okay.   Can I get you to  
24     speak into the microphone and give us your name and  
25     address?

1 MS. HARRIS: Yes. My name is Lillian, and  
2 the last name is Harris. I live at 4421 Ellenbeck  
3 Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

4 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry, ma'am. Ma'am?

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: The court reporter's  
6 having a little trouble hearing you. Could you speak  
7 into the microphone for us, ma'am?

8 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

9 MS. HARRIS: A few months ago I moved to  
10 this address and I got Laclede Gas. The first month  
11 was an estimated bill for \$448. I called constantly  
12 and asked when do they read the meters in my area, and  
13 I couldn't get an answer. I got -- I've been there  
14 going on 19 months and I've had 15 estimated bills.  
15 When do they come out? They just state actual  
16 estimated bills. I've had about 5 readings and I get  
17 the estimated bill. That's paid. Then the actual  
18 reading when they come out plus an estimated bill.  
19 That's another bill. So to me, that's two bills.  
20 Okay, you pay the estimated. When they've estimated,  
21 they take nothing off. And that's been going on for 15  
22 or 19 months that I've been here.

23 And I'm just not accustomed to it. So  
24 this is the first time I've had problems. No one in  
25 the office can tell me when the meter readers will be

1 in the area. They wanted me to read the meters for  
2 them and I pay two bills. I pay the estimated bill and  
3 I pay the actual reading bill and I'm tired of that. I  
4 want my meters read because I'm home. I've been  
5 retired for over 27 years. I'm home anywhere between  
6 seven and two in the day, I am home. So I couldn't get  
7 an answer as to when the meter readers were in my area.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Is that all of your  
9 comments?

10 MS. HARRIS: That's my comment. I'm tired  
11 of estimated bills. I'm tired of them not giving me an  
12 answer, and I am home.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: The Missouri Public  
14 Service Commission has a customer service staff and we  
15 have some of our staff here today.

16 MS. HARRIS: Well, I've been there 19  
17 months and 15 of that were estimated bills and I  
18 constantly called and got no response.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Well, we want to know if  
20 you have complaints with Laclede's service, so if you  
21 haven't already spoken to our customer service --

22 MS. HARRIS: Well, I was constantly on the  
23 telephone. I stay on there until someone comes to the  
24 phone. I just hold my phone out.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: This is a customer service

1 staff apart from Laclede Gas Company. This is with the  
2 Missouri Public Service Commission. Have you spoken  
3 with them?

4 MS. HARRIS: No. I mean, I'll give them  
5 what I had. In fact, they can go back and check my gas  
6 record with Laclede for 50 years and see that I was a  
7 very good patient -- patron, paid my bills on time. I  
8 mean, they can go back and take any kind of credit  
9 rating. I pay my bills on time. For all this twenty-  
10 some years that I've been retired, I've paid my bills  
11 on the first of every month and that's the kind of  
12 treatment I got.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Well, I want you to be  
14 sure and speak with one of our customer service  
15 representatives and pick up one our pink cards if you  
16 haven't already. All right?

17 MS. HARRIS: All right.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. Can I see if  
19 there's any Commission questions for you before you  
20 leave?

21 MS. HARRIS: Oh, I guess.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Murray, did  
23 you have any questions?

24 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't. Thank you.

25 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Did you talk to someone  
2 before we came in here, before this group came in here?  
3 Just, just in the last hour or two?

4 MS. HARRIS: I talked to, I guess, a  
5 representative from Laclede, some lady and I gave her  
6 the paper that I had to show all of you -- the  
7 estimated bills that I'd gotten.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Did you also  
9 talk to the staff of the Public Service Commission --  
10 let's go at that again. Did you talk with Laclede as  
11 well? I see our staff's hand up. Did you talk to  
12 Laclede as well?

13 MS. HARRIS: No, the gentleman, Mr.  
14 Pendergast, gave me his card, gave me his card.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is it possible that  
16 someone could let us know if that issue is resolved in  
17 the near future or not?

18 MS. HARRIS: Well, the lady said she'd  
19 call me in a couple of days. She asked for the paper  
20 that I brought with me where I had all these estimated  
21 bills.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. HARRIS: I didn't bring the actual  
24 stuff with me. I just wrote down for the year of 2004  
25 and 2005.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: What I'm asking is  
2 whether or not our staff can let the Commissioners know  
3 whether or not your problems been taken care of.

4 MS. HARRIS: I just got it to them about  
5 an hour and a half ago, sir.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: I understand but I want  
7 to make sure that we know that your problem is dealt  
8 with.

9 MS. HARRIS: I really hope so.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right.

11 MS. HARRIS: I've been trying. I mean,  
12 I've been called using the telephone. You have to wait  
13 and then you couldn't get no answer.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: I understand.

15 MS. HARRIS: I mean, that was very simple.  
16 When do the meter readers be in my area?

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: I'll be interested in  
18 hearing what we find out.

19 MS. HARRIS: Well, all right then.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton, did  
22 you have any questions?

23 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I want to be clear.  
24 The PSC Consumer Services staff person that's here,  
25 could that person stand up. Thank you. If anyone has

1 concerns regarding consumer services, the PSC has a  
2 staff person here and I would urge them to get a hold  
3 of that person and I just wanted to be clear that you  
4 provided your information to that person.

5 MS. HARRIS: That is correct.

6 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Thank you  
7 very much. No more questions.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

9 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No questions. Thank you.

10 MS. MILDRED GRIFFIN,  
11 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
12 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
13 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
14 follows:

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you state your name  
16 and give us your address, please?

17 MS. GRIFFIN: My name is Mildred A.  
18 Griffin. I live at 4593 Mackett Avenue. My zip code  
19 is 63113.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Are you a Laclede Company  
21 customer?

22 MS. GRIFFIN: Yes, I am.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Please give us  
24 your comment.

25 MS. GRIFFIN: Okay. I would like to say I



1 disagree with the increase because I've been living at  
2 my residence for 36 years. All the time that I've been  
3 living there my utility bill has been \$200, \$190, all  
4 been high bills before I went on the budget. I went on  
5 the budget when I retired in '98, and during the day my  
6 thermostat wouldn't be up because there wouldn't be  
7 anybody home, but it's just that somehow my utility  
8 bill was always high, but I was always expected to pay  
9 them. I was just wondering, is there some reason that  
10 in certain areas they charge some people more than they  
11 do others? Because I lost my husband in '95. When we  
12 had the two incomes, it was okay. I was still working,  
13 but now I'm retired and I just have my income and a lot  
14 of times you can afford that but you have other bills  
15 also. Because they charge us a lot for auto insurance  
16 and homeowner's insurance and everything but I always  
17 been blessed to being able to pay my utility. I know  
18 that not applied to this meeting but I just would like  
19 to know that they just charge so much. This might not  
20 be the time to say that.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: And we appreciate your  
22 question and as you anticipated, this isn't exactly the  
23 time to answer those kind of questions but we are  
24 taking comments on the rate increase, and so I will  
25 take it that your comment is that you are opposed to

1     that rate increase?

2                   MS. GRIFFIN:  Yes, as I indicated.

3                   JUDGE DIPPELL:  And if you have any  
4     billing, specific billing questions or questions where  
5     you think Laclede has violated some rule or regulation  
6     or the tariff, then I would encourage you to talk to  
7     our customer service person that the commissioner  
8     pointed out earlier.  We want to hear those kinds of  
9     concerns.  Did you have any other comments about the  
10    rate increase?

11                  MS. GRIFFIN:  Yes.  Well, I have advocated  
12    that I would disagree with it.  I feel that we senior  
13    citizens shouldn't continue getting increases every  
14    year because we get a small, maybe increase on our  
15    salaries but then they come and take it away on  
16    utilities.

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

19                  COMMISSIONER MURRAY:  No, I don't.  Thank  
20    you very much.

21                  JUDGE DIPPELL:  Commissioner Gaw?

22                  COMMISSIONER GAW:  Ms. Griffin, thank you  
23    very much for your time.

24                  JUDGE DIPPELL:  Commissioner Clayton?

25                  COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:  I have no

1 questions. Thank you for being here.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No questions. Thank you,  
4 Ms. Griffin.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Ms. Griffin.  
6 Oh, I'm sorry. Were there any questions from counsel?

7 MR. DANDINO: No questions.

8 MR. PENDERGAST: No questions, your Honor.

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Ms. Griffin.

10 MS. GRIFFIN: Thank you.

11 MS. ROSEMARY VAN NUYSE,  
12 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
13 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
14 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
15 follows:

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Can you please state your  
17 name and give us your address?

18 MS. VAN NUYSE: Rosemary Van Nuyse, 1432  
19 Riddell, 63117. It's in Richmond Heights, the town,  
20 63117-2109.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you spell your last  
22 name?

23 MS. VAN NUYSE: V-A-N CAPITAL N-U-Y-S-E.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Can you give  
25 us your comments, please?

1 MS. VAN NUYSE: Yes. I'm very upset about  
2 this increase. I've already got my increase. I'm on  
3 the budget and I was paying \$84 a month and that was in  
4 August. So they put it on the bill that my bill would  
5 be \$115 in September. That's a \$31 increase and I  
6 think that is outrageous for such a large increase at  
7 one time. I'm a senior citizen and I'm on a limited  
8 income and I think it's terrible. I don't understand.  
9 All they have in the paper is that people are going to  
10 get a dollar increase, four dollar increase. Then all  
11 the people that on the budget have got these increases  
12 and the people on the straight bills have gotten no  
13 increase. So I don't understand that.

14 And I haven't had my gas furnace on since  
15 April. How can they estimate from \$84 to \$115 from  
16 April until September when I've had no gas on. I've  
17 got a gas water heater. I've got a gas dryer and very  
18 little cooking and I don't understand how they can sit  
19 in their office and figure out this big increase. I, I  
20 don't know what they base it on. I just don't  
21 understand these increases. It's just too much. I  
22 think it's -- I don't think they need it and I don't  
23 know why I've got -- my other girlfriend, she got a \$20  
24 dollar increase. So I don't know how they base all  
25 this. What are they basing this on? When you have

1 nothing going from April to September. Nothing. No  
2 heat. Very little of anything and a \$31 increase.  
3 That's outrageous. I think that's entirely -- I go  
4 with them. I've always gone along with them and they  
5 have been reasonable but this is outlandish. I've  
6 never had an increase like that -- \$31. That's just  
7 too much.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: I will ask you to go ahead  
9 and talk to Mr. Pendergast.

10 MS. VAN NUYSE: I already have. I've  
11 talked to him. I have my bills here. Showed him the  
12 bills. It's just that I don't know how they base it,  
13 you know, when you don't have any gas going for those  
14 amount of months and then all of a sudden you've got a  
15 \$31 increase. And I'm a senior citizen and I, I think  
16 it's typical. It seems like the regular people who pay  
17 regular bills, who are not on a budget are not getting  
18 the increases that we're getting. They have nothing so  
19 far. They have had no increases. I've talked to my  
20 friends, and they've had no increases and they've got a  
21 regular bill, and all the budget people have gotten  
22 increases. So I don't understand it.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: And I'm no expert on the  
24 budget process, but it's my understanding that the  
25 budget billing spreads your yearly amount over the 12

1 month period, so --

2 MS. VAN NUYSE: Right. Yeah. I pay that  
3 year round.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: So the people that are  
5 paying the straight bills, as you call it, they're  
6 going to get their increase when they review them  
7 again?

8 MS. VAN NUYSE: It won't be nothing like  
9 mine. I'll bet on it. It won't be that high because  
10 see, they pay the big amounts in, in the cold weather,  
11 the \$200, \$300, if there houses are big. They pay the  
12 big amounts, and they may not get as big a increase as  
13 I've got. I'm waiting to see what my girlfriends get,  
14 the ones that are on the straight bills. I'm waiting  
15 to see what they're going to do. I don't know why they  
16 pick on the budget people first and give us the big  
17 increases. I mean, we've always had increases, that's  
18 true, but nothing like this. No \$30, \$31 increases,  
19 ever. I've never had it in all the years -- and I've  
20 been on the budget for, for a number of years.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you think that you have  
22 a service or a billing complaint, that you do talk to  
23 our service person that's here today. Get her number  
24 so that you -- if you think for some reason that  
25 Laclede is charging some customers differently.

1 MS. VAN NUYSE: I do. Like I said, I've  
2 been with them for years and they have never had an  
3 increase like this.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: As far as today, however,  
5 and I kind of eluded to this in the beginning, we're  
6 here to talk about the settlement, which is the base  
7 part of the rate and not the natural gas charge for the  
8 actual gas usage. But this is for that base rate which  
9 pays for their operation and so forth.

10 MS. VAN NUYSE: Yeah.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: And that's the charge that  
12 they're talking about the dollar increase per month.

13 MS. VAN NUYSE: Yeah. Well, see, I mean,  
14 the way they were stating it -- the people that have  
15 the straight bills are going to have the dollar, four  
16 dollar increase and we, on the budget, are not having  
17 that. We get the big increases. That's the way it  
18 reads to your customers.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm sorry that that's been  
20 confusing, but I'm going to assure you that everybody's  
21 going to have the, have an increase if the Commission  
22 approves it and that would be on the base rate. But  
23 everybody is probably also going to have natural gas  
24 increases.

25 MS. VAN NUYSE: But what about the people

1     that don't have their increase yet and the people that  
2     have the increase. How do you know? See, what I'm  
3     saying is when the increase goes into effect for the  
4     ones that don't have the increase -- I've got mine.  
5     I've got mine and I've got mine enough for the next two  
6     or three years, I think. But when you put this all  
7     through for this new increase, does that mean the  
8     budget people are going to have to pay more, too? And  
9     with the people that are going to pay -- see the people  
10    with the straight bills have had no increase yet.

11                   JUDGE DIPPELL: I understand what you're  
12    saying.

13                   MS. VAN NUYSE: But when they put that  
14    through, are the people on the budget going to get  
15    another increase?

16                   COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Ms. Van Nuyse, is  
17    that how you pronounce your name?

18                   MS. VAN NUYSE: Yes.

19                   COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I think these are  
20    valid questions that need to be asked. We are not in a  
21    position to provide responses at this panel right here,  
22    but I'm sure that we have someone that could meet with  
23    you either immediately or following the hearing that  
24    would provide information that will address some of  
25    those questions.



1 MS. VAN NUYSE: I've talked to Mr. -- the  
2 one man from Laclede Gas.

3 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Well, we have  
4 people here, too. The staff does -- that can provide  
5 you additional information or at least direct you where  
6 you can look. I think you have some legitimate  
7 questions.

8 MS. VAN NUYSE: But I will -- if I get  
9 another increase -- when you people get through with  
10 whatever you're going to do, I will be calling somebody  
11 because I feel that I have got enough, more than  
12 enough. I don't need any more increases. When you're  
13 paying a \$115 a month and it's a \$31 increase.

14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Could one of our  
15 staff members identify themselves? Warren, would you  
16 raise your hand? Warren will meet with you either  
17 immediately or at your convenience. Okay?

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

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, I didn't but I  
21 would also suggest that you meet with one Warren.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: I don't think so, but I  
24 appreciate you bringing this to our attention. This  
25 isn't the first time we had this issue. The last set

1 of hearings, we also had this issue come up. And the  
2 importance of it would be -- the importance of it would  
3 be whether or not it's tied to an anticipation of a  
4 rate increase in this case. And it's my recollection  
5 that Laclede states that it's not, but I want you to  
6 get that clarified. We can't give you information in  
7 this proceeding from this panel, but the staff can. So  
8 if, as Mr. Clayton suggested, if you would talk to them  
9 afterwards, and if that doesn't give you satisfaction,  
10 then we need to know that.

11 MS. VAN NUYSE: Well, this increase that  
12 you people are working on, that's got nothing to do  
13 with our billing -- that's got nothing to do with the  
14 billing; is that right?

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: It shouldn't. It  
16 should not have anything to do with it.

17 MS. VAN NUYSE: But I think it has because  
18 all of a sudden I got this big increase and then you  
19 people are arguing about what they want.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: You are right to  
21 question. It is a very legitimate question and if I  
22 were in your shoes, I'd want to know the answer, too.

23 MS. VAN NUYSE: Well, yeah, because I  
24 wouldn't even be here, but that \$31 increase just  
25 knocked me out. I've never had that.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: I understand. If you  
2 would talk to Warren back there when we're finished  
3 with this and see if that sheds some light on it.  
4 Unfortunately, natural gas prices, which are separated  
5 from the particular rates we are dealing with, are  
6 very, very high right now and that is another thing  
7 that is not involved in this particular case but it  
8 down impact your bill.

9 MS. VAN NUYSE: Oh, yeah. But see what  
10 I'm worried about is when you people get through with  
11 whatever you're going to do, we're -- they're going to  
12 slap another increase on us. That's what I'm afraid  
13 of.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: I understand.

15 MS. VAN NUYSE: And I don't think that's  
16 fair.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: I understand what  
18 you're saying.

19 MS. VAN NUYSE: I think \$31 is enough to  
20 cover anything.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Talk to Warren and  
22 hopefully that will help.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

24 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have no  
25 questions. I just want to make sure -- please make

1 contact with our person because they can provide you  
2 with some, some answers to your questions.

3 MS. VAN NUYSE: All right. Thank you.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No questions. Thank you.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Are there any  
7 questions from you?

8 MR. DANDINO: No questions. Thank you for  
9 coming.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Other counsel?

11 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes, Your Honor. Once  
12 again, ma'am, I would just ask -- I think I gave you my  
13 business card?

14 MS. VAN NUYSE: Yeah, I talked to you.

15 MR. PENDERGAST: If you would like to  
16 discuss it further, I do want to go ahead and clarify  
17 it for you that under our budget billing procedures,  
18 there are no more adjustments until February. So  
19 whatever the Commission does with this particular case,  
20 it will not have any impact on your budget bill.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast is saying  
22 that the budget billing cycle, there should be no more  
23 increases until February. Is that correct, Mr.  
24 Pendergast?

25 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: And if anybody needs to  
2 talk to him about budget billing process, he's  
3 available. All right. Thank you.

4 MS. VAN NUYSE: Thank you.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Is Senator Kennedy here?  
6 She's with his office. Is Senator Kennedy here? Okay.  
7 I'm having difficulty reading the next one. The first  
8 name -- it's looks like Josh. The last name maybe T-O  
9 --

10 MR. TUHILL: T-U-H-I-DOUBLE L?

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: That's it. I'm sorry,  
12 sir. It looks like the pen maybe was running out of  
13 ink.

14 MR. TUHILL: It was running out of ink and  
15 I can't write very well.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you please raise  
17 your right --

18 MR. TUHILL: James Tuhill. No, unless I  
19 have to. I'm not up hear for a trial.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you swear on your  
21 testimony?

22 MR. TUHILL: If I have to. I'll swear I'm  
23 telling the truth, but not because you make me.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Well, I'm, I'm not going  
25 to make you, sir. It's just so that --

1 MR. TUHILL: Thank you.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'll just explain. The  
3 reason that we do it --

4 MR. TUHILL: I'd rather not.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: The reason we do it is  
6 just so it can be used as evidence.

7 MR. TUHILL: I'd rather not.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. Thanks. Go  
9 right ahead.

10 MR. TUHILL: I've already talked about the  
11 one thing.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Oh, I'm sorry. Could you  
13 spell your name and give us your address?

14 MR. TUHILL: James Francis Tuhill, T-U-H-  
15 I-L-L. I live at 4710 Fig Avenue in Northwoods. I've  
16 lived there since 1950.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: And you're a customer of  
18 Laclede?

19 MR. TUHILL: Aren't we all down there? Is  
20 that a question to ask everybody?

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: I'm trying to make the  
22 record clear, sir. But thank you.

23 MR. TUHILL: Yes, I am.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right.

25 MR. TUHILL: I get kind of tired of

1 foolishness. I was in too many union meetings that  
2 ended up in fights. You get tired.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: I understand.

4 MR. TUHILL: I already explained why I was  
5 here for, about the gas. I have a threatening letter  
6 here, what I would call a blackmail letter. It's from  
7 Laclede Gas. At the bottom it says, sincerely, but  
8 nobody's signature, nobody's signature, and Laclede Gas  
9 Company under it. And it reads, "We value your  
10 business and are committed to providing you with a high  
11 level of customer service. As part of this continuing  
12 commitment, we are currently working to improve the way  
13 to read gas meters." I talked about that already. "A  
14 contractor for Laclede Gas Company will be in your area  
15 within the next 30 to 45 days to install a new gas  
16 automated meter reader, a device on the meter at your  
17 location. With this system, we will no longer need to  
18 gain physical access to your meters in order to obtain  
19 monthly readings, virtually eliminating situations in  
20 which we have previously found it necessary to estimate  
21 bills."

22 I already told you why they don't do it,  
23 because they don't come that often. You never know  
24 when they're coming. The housewife's not there every  
25 day no more. With this system, they don't want to do

1 that. So I assume they think that they're so honest, I  
2 trust them. I don't trust them.

3 "A typical installation takes about 15  
4 minutes to complete and will not disrupt your gas  
5 service."

6 Are you taking this down, darlin'? Good.  
7 Court reporters can take it down and they don't need a  
8 copy.

9 "If you have an inside meter, we will  
10 initially attempt to perform the installation without  
11 scheduling an appointment. Whether you have an inside  
12 or outside meter, if it is not accessible when an  
13 installer arrives, a door hanger will be left  
14 containing a phone number for you to call to schedule  
15 an appointment. If you have any questions, please  
16 refer to the enclosed flyer for answers to frequently  
17 asked questions." That's this thing. "Check out the  
18 AMR link on the Laclede Gas website, at ww Laclede Gas  
19 dot com crap, which is unnecessary. Most people my  
20 age -- I'm going to be 80 next January. We don't know  
21 how to run computers, and I don't trust the people that  
22 do run them.

23 And in big black letters -- no, it does  
24 say, "Check out the AMR or call 314-621-6969." I  
25 called them and never got an answer. And this letter -



1 - this part is in big black letters. "This letter is  
2 for notification purposes only. There is no need to  
3 contact Laclede Gas Company at this time."

4 Now, to me, that's a blackmail letter.  
5 Where I grew up, if somebody stuck a note like that in  
6 your pocket and turned around and you didn't see who  
7 put it in there. Or if you didn't come up with a  
8 nickel, somebody was going to hit you with a brick.

9 So here's what the facts about the  
10 automatic meters. I don't know if it's honest or not,  
11 and I think they can cheat just like I can cheat when I  
12 was cheating the electric company. The electric  
13 company knew we were cheating and we knew they were  
14 cheating us when they gave us higher bills. And the  
15 gas company does the same thing.

16 THE REPORTER: Sir, could you speak up,  
17 please?

18 MR. TUHILL: I'm not talking for an  
19 audience. I'm talking for these people.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: You need to be taken down  
21 and if the court reporter cannot hear you --

22 MR. TUHILL: You don't hear me, darlin'?

23 THE REPORTER: I can hear you sometimes.  
24 I didn't hear that last sentence.

25 MR. TUHILL: All right.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: Talk into the mic.

2 MR. TUHILL: I don't like microphones.  
3 I've seen unions destroyed by hiring outside  
4 contractors, just like they did through the war. Big  
5 companies operate everything, including feeding the  
6 people who are in the service, overseas getting their  
7 brains blown out. I'm not interested in that. There's  
8 nothing you can do about the sad state of human beings  
9 and the higher up they get, the more greedy they get.  
10 Howard Hughes is a prime example. He could never get  
11 enough, could he? He was scratching it out when he  
12 was dying. That's my information. I'll take any  
13 questions.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: I will just note for the  
15 record that Mr. Tuhill -- he was referring to the same  
16 letter and flyer that we previously put into the record  
17 as Exhibit 1.

18 MR. TUHILL: I don't know. Is yours the  
19 same as mine? Would you like to see it?

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you'd like me to  
21 compare them and make sure that they're the same?

22 MR. TUHILL: Yes, I would.

23 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I would like the  
24 letter in the record, so I want to make sure that  
25 either we have a copy or if it's the same thing.

1 MR. TUHILL: Here you just go ahead and  
2 make a copy. You can put down faster than they can  
3 think.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: All right. I'll just go  
5 ahead and mark that as Exhibit 3.

6 MR. TUHILL: I'm going to get my letter  
7 back.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could I see the letter,  
9 sir?

10 MR. TUHILL: She's got it.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you just verify for  
12 me, sir, that it's the same letter?

13 MR. TUHILL: When you don't sign your  
14 name, you've got a blackmail.

15 JUDGE DIPPELL: Any questions for Mr.  
16 Tuhill, Commissioner Murray?

17 MR. TUHILL: I won't answer.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, thank you.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you, Mr. Tuhill.

21 MR. TUHILL: They've never answered my  
22 questions, not any of them. Not one have ever answered  
23 my questions.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: I just want to announce  
25 that we will give the court reporter a break at about

1     ten till, and we'll take a ten minute break at that  
2     time.

3                     MRS. HELEN JACKSON,  
4     of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
5     truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
6     deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
7     follows:

8                     JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, ma'am. If you  
9     could state your name and your address for the record  
10    and if you could talk into the microphone, that would  
11    be helpful.

12                    MS. JACKSON: My name is Mrs. Helen  
13    Jackson. I reside at 1514 Oak Grove, Wellston,  
14    Missouri, 63133.

15                    JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a Laclede Gas  
16    Company customer?

17                    MS. JACKSON: I am a Laclede customer.

18                    JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Could you  
19    please give us your comment?

20                    MS. JACKSON: I am here today -- I am a  
21    senior citizen and I'm proud of my age. I'm 70 years  
22    old. I'm retired from United Food Commercial Workers.  
23    I'm a past elected official, councilperson, past  
24    elected official of Wellston School District. I'm a  
25    citizen and I'm a taxpayer.

1 My concern is with the increase of gas  
2 would be a hardship on me as a senior and other  
3 seniors. With the high cost of medicine, it would be a  
4 hardship on me as a senior. Some of my medication, 30  
5 pills is \$100 or better. So with being on a fixed  
6 income, you not only have enough to pay your medicine,  
7 you don't have enough to feed yourself or pay your  
8 utility bills. Being on a budget -- if you miss one  
9 payment on your budget, you will be removed from the  
10 budget. People's gas are being cut off and these are  
11 still summer months. Some of the bills coming out are  
12 over \$200 or better. I am one of them and I have  
13 evidence to show you.

14 And when you call down to speak to someone  
15 concerning your bill -- I come here with respect and I  
16 demand respect. You are not giving respect with some  
17 of the people that you speak to. And no respect to any  
18 of you sitting on this Commission board. I wish you  
19 could be sitting out here in the audience and see the  
20 expression on some of your faces. I don't believe  
21 these people would come here if they wasn't concerned  
22 but I feel that you should give them respect, also,  
23 sir. And that, that is mostly my concerns. I've  
24 worked all of my life. I'm retired and I'm sure you up  
25 there have parents. You wouldn't want this to happen

1 to your parents. So I pray to you, respect these  
2 people in the audience. Thank you very much for  
3 hearing me.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: You mentioned that you had  
5 some evidence to show us. Did you have something that  
6 you wanted to put in the record today?

7 MS. JACKSON: No, ma'am. I have my gas  
8 bills if I need to show them to anyone, and I'm just  
9 sitting out here looking in the audience. With all of  
10 the information and hearings given to everyone, I'm  
11 sure the audience would have been packed if everyone  
12 had transportation and knew of what was going on,  
13 because it's not only going to affect me, it's going to  
14 affect everyone. I think you should a little lenient  
15 with our concerns. Thank you for being heard.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could I ask you to stay  
17 until we see if there any Commission questions?

18 MS. JACKSON: Yes, ma'am.

19 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner  
20 Murray, did you have any questions?

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't believe so.  
22 Thank you.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Jackson, thank you  
25 for coming. I want to tell you that it's important for

1 you to be here. It's important that everybody's here  
2 so we can hear something. Otherwise, this stuff is  
3 done in a vacuum and you don't know how it impacts  
4 people unless you imagine it or it impacts you  
5 directly. We need to know that.

6 MS. JACKSON: And if I may say, sir, I am  
7 a diabetic, and when Mr. -- Dr. Knight, one of the best  
8 doctors in the area, and out of the area goes in and  
9 out of his pocket to help people. If you want to know,  
10 without the medicine, what the diabetic does, you ask  
11 me because I could go blind and lose my sight and a lot  
12 of times, I do not have my medicine.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ma'am, when you say  
14 your medicine costs \$100, is that --

15 MS. JACKSON: My inhaler cost is \$100.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just for the inhaler?

17 MS. JACKSON: Just for the inhaler.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: When you add up the  
19 costs of your medicine total, can you give me -- if you  
20 want to. Only if you want to share it, about how much  
21 that might run a month?

22 MS. JACKSON: My medicine runs me over  
23 \$300 or better a month. A lot of times if my doctor  
24 has samples, he would give them to me but they have cut  
25 the people that come in that bring the samples. Their

1 jobs are gone, so he's not able to give that medicine.  
2 I have to borrow from people, and my income is only  
3 over a thousand dollars. I had to retire early because  
4 of carpal tunnel and I only get \$1,006 a month and this  
5 is what I have to live off of, sir.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, ma'am. And  
7 sometimes, I assume, for you, it's difficult to make  
8 choices about what you can pay.

9 MS. JACKSON: Yes, sir, and I even tried  
10 to apply for a job because I qualify. I went to AARP.  
11 They told me I made a hundred dollars too much to get  
12 into the program, and I'm out here trying to find a  
13 reception or any kind of job I can even just to get a  
14 little money to pay medicine. I have a car, which is  
15 paid for. I can't use the car that often because I  
16 can't pay the gas --

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. JACKSON: -- with the high cost of  
19 gas. And I don't think I'm only speaking for myself,  
20 sir. I feel this is hurting a whole lot of people  
21 because if I could get a job, I'm willing and able to  
22 work. I'm not a free loader. I pay my bills.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: You've already shared,  
24 ma'am, that you're 70 years old.

25 MS. JACKSON: I'm 70 and be 71 November



1 29, but my doctor told me never tell anybody that.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: You've got to listen to  
3 your doctor always.

4 MS. JACKSON: Oh, no.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: But it does sound to me  
6 like, ma'am, for 70 years old, you're one of the people  
7 in this country that helped to build this country and  
8 make it what it was and we ought to be thanking you.

9 MS. JACKSON: Well, I thank you, sir.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton, did  
11 you have any questions?

12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have no questions  
13 for Ms. Jackson. Thank you for being here.

14 MS. JACKSON: Thank you kindly for letting  
15 me speak.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

17 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: No questions. Thank you.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

19 MR. FRED JONES,  
20 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
21 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
22 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
23 follows:

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you state your name  
25 and address for the record?

1 MR. JONES: My name is Greg Jones. I'm at  
2 5829 Ferris. Zip, 63120.

3 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a Laclede Gas  
4 Company customer?

5 MR. JONES: Since the 40's, yes.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. If I could get  
7 you to speak into the microphone just a little bit  
8 more. That way, we can hear you and the court reporter  
9 can hear you. Thank you. Go ahead and give us your  
10 comment.

11 MR. JONES: The only comments I have --  
12 I've been reading my own meter since '63 where I live  
13 now. Once a year, around, the meter man will come in  
14 and read my meter. During the hot months, I had one  
15 bill was \$163. Now, me and my wife are both senior  
16 citizens. We're 77 years of age. I've been a citizen  
17 of St. Louis all my life and really, it's ridiculous.  
18 I know you people can't do anything about it. You all  
19 on a salary, also. But we need to do something about  
20 it. All of these utilities. Now, I don't really know  
21 if the people who got the biggest stock are Americans  
22 or immigrants. This is what is getting me. Most of  
23 your utilities are owned by other than American people.  
24 I found out about different things and what they're  
25 doing is robbing us, the poor people here in America.

1 You all in this. Everything that I took a survey on is  
2 not owned by Americans. It's owned by other people  
3 from different countries. We've got people going into  
4 the government and becoming citizens. I tell you, it's  
5 ridiculous, and I'll tell you one thing about it, I'm  
6 really sick of it.

7 The neighborhood I live in, we moved in  
8 there, my wife and myself, in '63 and really, I'm  
9 relieved that these utilities as far -- they charge as  
10 far as community. I really believe, if you live in a  
11 poor community, I really believe they charge you more.  
12 I'm telling you sincerely. I'll tell you one thing,  
13 it's hell for a black person in this country. I,  
14 myself, have been fortunate, my wife and myself. We  
15 put our kids through college and everything. We have  
16 neglected ourselves. We just came from the doctor  
17 today and got our prescriptions at the drug store. We  
18 got a choice: Take your medicine or starve. Now, you  
19 know good and well, during the summer, I had no  
20 business getting a bill for \$163. I say, it's  
21 ridiculous.

22 I have trouble in the neighborhood with  
23 those dope addicts and really, I told the chief of  
24 police that I'm going to be a vigilante and that's what  
25 I feel like being. I took my pistol and a club and

1     went down to the corner and whipped me some. I told  
2     the chief, I told him, "This is what I'm going to do  
3     from now on." You call them, they don't, they won't  
4     come to you. What'd they look like? How old are they?  
5     What's they momma's name? All that. You know, it's  
6     ridiculous. So I just come to tell you all that I'm  
7     really sick of it. As far as me trying to -- I'm going  
8     to have some heat. You all can tell gas -- Laclede Gas  
9     I'm going to have some heat. The gas come out the  
10    ground, anyway. It's a natural thing. And these  
11    people are getting rich. I don't understand this. So  
12    what I'm going to do, I'm going to get up. That's all  
13    I have to say. My wife, now, she's a better spokesman  
14    than I am. Take my word for it. I've been married to  
15    her for 57 years. Anybody got any questions for me?

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

18                   COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Would your wife  
19    agree with that last statement?

20                   MR. JONES: Will you stand?

21                   MRS. JONES: I'm his wife.

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

24                   JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

25                   COMMISSIONER GAW: I'd say, judging from

1 what you just said, Mr. Jones, she must be a darned  
2 good spokesman because you did a good job.

3 MR. JONES: She deserves a purple heart  
4 putting with me.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: I think she might be a  
6 little proud of you, Mr. Jones. Thank you for coming.

7 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have not  
9 questions. Thank you for being here.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

11 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Mr. Jones, let me just  
12 make sure that I did have one of your statements right?  
13 Would you like us to look into either by community, by  
14 little town or zip code, whether Laclede is charging  
15 certain communities more than they are charging other  
16 communities?

17 MR. JONES: Yes, I would. I definitely  
18 would. I believe -- I'm not saying this, but I believe  
19 they've got a code of what nationality you are, too.  
20 I've noticed even on Social Security, all black people  
21 got even numbers and all white people got odd numbers.  
22 I don't know what it is.

23 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: We'll look into that,  
24 too, sir.

25 MR. JONES: Oh, you don't have to look

1 into it, sir. You already know that, sir. That's how  
2 come you sitting up there. You are paid to do this.

3 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

4 MR. JONES: Okay.

5 JUDGE DIPPELL: Are there any questions  
6 for Mr. Jones, Mr. Dandino?

7 MR. DANDINO: No questions. Thank you.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast?

9 MR. PENDERGAST: Yeah, Mr. Jones. How are  
10 you, sir? I just want to go ahead and give you my  
11 business card. If you have a problem with that \$163  
12 bill, I'd like to look into it and see if there's  
13 anything I can do.

14 MR. JONES: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. PENDERGAST: And I also want to let  
16 you know that we charge the same rates throughout our  
17 service area but, but there are different  
18 municipalities that charge different taxes on those  
19 rates and you may have a higher tax in one jurisdiction  
20 than you do in another and I'd be happy to go ahead and  
21 give you some information on that as well.

22 MR. JONES: You got that with you?

23 MR. PENDERGAST: I do not have it with me,  
24 but I can get it.

25 MR. JONES: That's all I ever get from you

1 people or pharmacists.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Meyer, any questions?

3 MR. MEYER: No, thank you.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Mr. Jones. I  
5 think we're going to go ahead and take just a ten  
6 minute break and give the court reporter a break and we  
7 will resume at two o'clock.

8 (Thereupon, a short recess was taken.)

9 JUDGE DIPPELL: While the next witness is coming up, I  
10 just wanted to acknowledge that Representative Barbara  
11 Fraser has also joined us.

12 MS. RUTH ANN ANDERSON,  
13 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the  
14 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
15 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
16 follows:

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Would you state your name  
18 and give us your address, please?

19 MS. ANDERSON: My name is Ruth Ann  
20 Anderson. I live at 3516 Oakdale Avenue.

21 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a Laclede Gas  
22 Company customer?

23 MS. ANDERSON: Yes, I am.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could you please give us  
25 your comments?

1 MS. ANDERSON: Well, first of all, I'd  
2 like to say that I do not agree with the increase. And  
3 secondly, I would like to say that I have not been  
4 pleased. I am a senior citizen, yes and my gas bill is  
5 so expensive that it's real hard to live during the  
6 winter months. I have a gas bill from the 27th of  
7 January for three hundred and some dollars. I have  
8 other bills. I have medication that I have to take  
9 care of and it's just really hard. It should not be  
10 that they charge that much.

11 And I tried going on the budget but that  
12 didn't work out for me very well. So I got off the  
13 budget. All right. I'll eat or I'll pay my gas bill.  
14 I do not want to sit in the cold. So I really feel  
15 that if some people want to help a senior citizen out  
16 in any way, decrease the bill. Just decreasing the  
17 bill would help out an awful lot.

18 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner  
19 Murray, do you have questions?

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Just one, briefly.  
21 You didn't care for the budget billing? Is that what  
22 you said?

23 MS. ANDERSON: Well, I did. I thought it  
24 was going to work nicely for me but at the end of the  
25 season, they send me a bill for like \$1,800. I said --



1 I told them I want to go on the budget now. She said,  
2 you would have to pay the entire months. I suggest  
3 that you pay so much a month until you get it paid  
4 down. It took me almost a year to get it paid down and  
5 by that time, it was almost the winter season again.  
6 So it doesn't work for me, but I would like a break  
7 between my bills. A senior citizen should live  
8 comfortable during the winter months.

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Do you know what  
10 your bill is averaging now?

11 MS. ANDERSON: My bill now, November,  
12 March -- I'd say those are the two highest ones and  
13 they was \$300 plus for those two months. And maybe  
14 November's is around a hundred and some and then  
15 increase, and then in March then they kind of taper  
16 off.

17 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: What was your  
18 payment on the budget billing? Do you remember?

19 MS. ANDERSON: No. I don't really recall.  
20 I believe, they started out like \$100, \$110, around  
21 that amount.

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Anderson, just  
25 along that line. If you want to share it with us, what

1 size of house do you have? Is it a large house? Is it  
2 an apartment?

3 MS. ANDERSON: No, I have an eight room.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Eight room house?

5 MS. ANDERSON: Yes.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is it an older home?

7 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. It's an older home.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you know if the  
9 furnace, is it older?

10 MS. ANDERSON: Excuse me?

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: The furnace. The heat,  
12 the heating unit in it. Is it older or newer?

13 MS. ANDERSON: I would say, I would think  
14 newer. It's a good furnace. I would say newer.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. All right.  
16 Thank you very much, ma'am.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have no questions  
19 for Ms. Anderson. Thank you for being here.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Chairman?

21 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: Ms. Anderson, we've heard  
23 a lot of complaints about budget billing and let me  
24 just see if I understand what happened to you.

25 Basically, you were on budget billing for a year and

1 then all of a sudden, you got a big bill at the end  
2 saying you owe this much; is that correct?

3 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. That was my first  
4 time to really try the budget bill thing.

5 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: So you think it would be  
6 helpful if we require utilities to notify people who  
7 are on budget billing if they were not -- if they were  
8 accruing a bill that was going to be more than they  
9 were paying, that they ought to have to notify people  
10 in advance if, if they see, you know, if they're  
11 gaining a big bill?

12 MS. ANDERSON: Yes. I think that would be  
13 fine. The only thing is, that I wasn't -- I was  
14 getting assistance from one company and I couldn't pay  
15 myself \$1,800 total. That was my concern. If they was  
16 not getting anything, that would be one thing, but I  
17 was paying on it.

18 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: You were paying on it and  
19 they still sent you the bill for \$1,800?

20 MS. ANDERSON: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN DAVIS: All right. I have no  
22 further questions.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Dandino, any  
24 questions?

25 MR. DANDINO: Ms. Anderson, would it be

1 helpful if, if they made the adjustments more than just  
2 twice a year? Maybe four times a year? Would that --  
3 you think that -- would that help you or other people  
4 on the budget billing?

5 MS. ANDERSON: Perhaps, it could. You  
6 know, because sometimes, I think, they look at your  
7 meter and stick a price on it. If people's was  
8 evaluated, it would help.

9 MR. DANDINO: Thank you. That's all I  
10 have, your Honor.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Pendergast?

12 MR. PENDERGAST: Ms. Anderson, I believe I  
13 gave you my card?

14 MS. ANDERSON: Yes, you did.

15 MR. PENDERGAST: Good. And I would like  
16 you to talk to me or talk to Gloria after this is over.  
17 I'm a little concerned about your whole experience and  
18 I would make sure and get to the bottom of it.

19 MS. ANDERSON: Thank you.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Meyer?

21 MR. MEYER: No, thank you.

22 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, ma'am. You can  
23 be excused.

24 MS. BARBARA FRASER,  
25 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the

1 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,  
2 deposes and says on behalf of the Commission, as  
3 follows:

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you.

5 MS. FRASER: I'm Barbara Fraser. I live  
6 at 581 Strafford Avenue, University City, 63130 and I  
7 am a Laclede Gas customer.

8 And I do appreciate the hearing notice  
9 that Laclede Gas sent out to all, well, I guess, to the  
10 constituents. Thank you, first of all, to the Public  
11 Service Commission for opening this up for public  
12 comment and for being here today and for coming to St.  
13 Louis. I know that your taking the time is certainly  
14 an effort by you to listen to the concerns of the  
15 people whom you represent. I believe that if New  
16 Orleans flood and Katrina has taught us anything, it  
17 has taught us that we need to take care of those less  
18 fortunate, and I believe that the issue before you is  
19 not just singular. It's not just about \$1.05 addition.  
20 It has to be looked at in terms of some of the things  
21 that are going on in our state.

22 Almost 100,000 people have been cut by  
23 Governor Blunt from their Medicaid services, 100,000  
24 people. Just in the St. Louis area, that comes to a  
25 considerable amount of people. Thirty-five thousand

1 children will lose their health care as a result of the  
2 same cuts in what is called the Children's Health  
3 Insurance Program. Gas prices, as we all know, have  
4 reached an all-time high. I have a gas station in my  
5 district that closed a little more than a year ago. On  
6 the sign at that gas station, that gasoline station is  
7 the last gas prices. It's \$1.39. Now, it's almost  
8 double that down the street at the one remaining gas  
9 station in my neighborhood. People even without cars  
10 are having to feel the pinch because buses, all sorts  
11 of transportation, buses, trucks, you name it, all of  
12 those businesses have to go -- have to deal with the  
13 cost of gasoline. Add to that, the natural gas  
14 increase that, I believe, Ms. Van Nuyse mentioned.  
15 That the cost of gas, natural gas have gone up. So  
16 even though the gas company has not allotted this  
17 particular addition to the cost of our bills, in fact,  
18 in the broad picture of things, the natural gas  
19 increase, the cost of everything else seeming to go up,  
20 this is just a little bit more added to the current  
21 problems we have.

22 I think that more than anything, those who  
23 are disabled, those who are elderly, young, and  
24 disadvantaged are going to find this a hardship and I  
25 really believe that as Commissioners in a publicly

1 regulated monopoly, you have to look at the entire  
2 picture, not just what is \$1.05 to somebody's gas bill  
3 on a per month basis. I see this as such a broad issue  
4 and I, I don't have the solution, but I am curious  
5 about a specific aspect of the piece that you're -- the  
6 piece of legislation you're looking at, and that has to  
7 do with the infrastructure end of this. As I  
8 understand, 6.1 million has been allotted already for  
9 infrastructure into a permanent rate increase and then  
10 yet, it seems to me, and perhaps I'm looking at it  
11 incorrectly. But there's a double-dipping opportunity  
12 here, that their cost of infrastructure is a year to  
13 year issue. So consequently, if in fact, the yearly  
14 amount was one million more next year, that we would  
15 not be collecting, or that the gas company would not be  
16 collecting just the 6.1, but that we would be adding  
17 that amount as well. So we'd have like 6.1 extra, in  
18 addition to the million that you needed to have for a  
19 year.

20 I'm not sure that I've explained this  
21 particularly well, but I'm assuming that you understand  
22 this issue and that, in fact, you look very carefully  
23 at trying to make the infrastructure base amount, 6.1  
24 million, into a permanent rate increase and adding to  
25 that a yearly rate increase base on the cost of

1 infrastructure. Certainly, this is important and I  
2 believe it should be looked at very carefully. As I  
3 look over the rate increase, I also see provisions that  
4 perhaps are worthy of being made, perhaps, more help  
5 for the poor. But again, I notice, the help for the  
6 poor comes to a 1.5 poverty poor limit. And then that  
7 brings me to the issue of the working poor. People who  
8 are working hard, perhaps two jobs and yet, this  
9 increase and these changes will, in fact, negatively  
10 impact them.

11 So the broad picture of things, I hope  
12 you'll look very, very carefully at what this will do  
13 in the whole picture. It's not just about \$1.05.  
14 Perhaps small economies can be made. Perhaps you as  
15 Commissioners will look at the entire picture of  
16 everything that you're looking at. Public Service  
17 Commission is -- you are our representatives of the  
18 public, as am I. You represent thousands and thousands  
19 of St. Louis region people and I encourage you to be  
20 courageous, to look carefully at the total impact on  
21 our society and to remember the greater lesson that,  
22 hopefully, we all learned from the New Orleans disaster  
23 and that is our community is our community and that we  
24 are all responsible for everyone in it, no matter what  
25 their age, race or economic situation is. Thank you



1 for listening and thank you for being here.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Murray, do  
3 you have any questions for Representative?

4 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, I don't. Thank  
5 you for coming in front of the Commission.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Gaw?

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Representative Fraser,  
8 as always, it's a pleasure to see you and to see your  
9 service to the public. You've done a great job over  
10 the course of time that you've been active and I  
11 appreciate you being here on this issue today. Thank  
12 you.

13 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton?

14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I suppose it's one  
15 question, which I'll throw in with a few comments.  
16 There are many components to energy efficiency and low  
17 income assistance and providing assistance where it's  
18 needed regarding heating bills and as we approach a  
19 winter heating season and we approach another  
20 legislative session, I want to ask a rhetorical  
21 question. I ask if we can count on you. Looking at  
22 finding additional funding to fund the programs that  
23 are in place to assist those people would certainly be  
24 of help. In your capacity, as a leader in the House of  
25 Representatives and I suppose my question is, can we

1 count on you? Otherwise, thank you for being here  
2 today.

3 MS. FRASER: Thank you, Mr. Clayton and I  
4 appreciate that questions. I would say, quite clearly,  
5 that we are dealing with an administration that is  
6 cutting people off from their health care. It is very  
7 difficult to pass legislation that, in fact, help the  
8 poor, the disadvantages and the disabled and the  
9 elderly and young to have even this kind of help. But  
10 you certainly have my promise and agreement that I will  
11 work toward that end. I don't see that we are in a  
12 legislature in which this is the main concern and I am  
13 sorry for that. I would say that those who are  
14 concerned about those most needy are certainly out to  
15 even restore health care. But certainly, it is a great  
16 concern and I would work towards that end to provide  
17 more help for the poor and the disadvantaged and the  
18 disabled and elderly and children to have heating in  
19 their homes. That is certainly something that should  
20 not be based, I mean, on anything. It should be  
21 available.

22 Unfortunately, I think we find, too, that  
23 the least able to pay are living in homes often that  
24 are the most drafty, and so we have a terrible circle  
25 situation in which it does cost more sometimes to heat