

1 STATE OF MISSOURI
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

3
4
5 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

6 Public Hearing

7 October 29, 2003
8 Mexico, Missouri
9 Volume 4

10
11 In the Matter of Union)
12 Electric Company d/b/a)
13 AmerenUE for Authority to)
14 File Tariffs Increasing Rates) Case No.: GR-2003-0517
15 for Gas Service Provided to)
16 Customers in the Company's)
17 Missouri Service Area)

18
19 RONALD D. PRIDGIN, Presiding,
20 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE.

21
22 STEVE GAW, Chair,
23 ROBERT CLAYTON,
24 COMMISSIONERS.

25 REPORTED BY:

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: On the record, please.

3 Good evening. The Missouri Public Service
4 Commission has set this time for a local hearing in
5 Case No. GR-2003-0517 in which Union Electric Company,
6 doing business as AmerenUE, seeks to implement a rate
7 increase.

8 The Missouri Public Service Commission
9 regulates the rates charged by investor-owned utility
10 companies in Missouri to ensure that those rates are
11 just and reasonable. The Commission also regulates the
12 quality of service and safety of the operation of
13 investor-owned utilities.

14 The Commission is made up of
15 five Commissioners, two of whom are here this evening.
16 The Commissioners are appointed by the Governor to
17 fixed terms and confirmed by the Senate. The
18 Commissioners employ a Staff of engineers, accountants,
19 attorneys, financial analysts and other specialists in
20 the field of utility regulation.

21 I'm Ron Pridgin. I am the Regulatory Law
22 Judge for the Missouri Public Service Commission, and I
23 will preside over this evening's hearing. With me this
24 evening on my right are Commissioner Gaw, on my left
25 Commissioner Clayton. Staff Counsel Lera Shemwell is

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1 here, and I'll ask her to -- to enter an appearance and
2 introduce herself here in a moment.

3 This is an official hearing of the Missouri
4 Public Service Commission, and the statements and
5 testimony of witnesses will be recorded by the court
6 reporter and must be given under oath. All the
7 Commissioners will have the chance to read your -- the
8 witnesses' remarks.

9 In addition to this local hearing, a
10 trial-type evidentiary hearing is scheduled to begin on
11 January 2nd, 2004, and then to re-convene on
12 January 12th, 2004 starting at nine o'clock in the
13 morning at the Commission's office at the Hotel
14 Governor Office Building in Jefferson City, Missouri.

15 That hearing is a public hearing, and the
16 Company will have the burden of showing that the
17 proposed rate increase is just and reasonable. The
18 various parties will present their witnesses for and
19 against the rate increase at that time.

20 The purpose of this hearing is to hear from
21 you on the subject of this proposed rate increase. The
22 Company will not present witnesses tonight and will not
23 answer questions.

24 This is your chance to testify, and your
25 comments will be made a part of the official record. I

1 will call the name of each witness who has signed up to
2 speak. I will call you in the order that you've signed
3 up. When your name is called, please come forward to
4 the podium and be sworn in.

5 I will ask you to spell your name for the
6 court reporter, so she can get it on the record
7 correctly. I will ask you some preliminary questions,
8 such as your name and your address, and you can then
9 make your statements.

10 Again, there may be questions from the
11 Commissioners or from me and perhaps from other
12 counsel. Please do not leave the witness area until
13 you're excused.

14 To get as many of you on the record as
15 possible, I ask that you be brief with your statements.
16 If a previous statement has made the points that you
17 would like to make, you may simply state that you agree
18 with what has previously been said.

19 There may be someone who wishes to testify,
20 but because of re-- religious beliefs cannot take an
21 oath. If so, please indicate that to me, and I will
22 ask you to affirm your testimony instead.

23 Does anyone have any questions about the
24 procedure we will follow?

25 (No response.)

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1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Seeing none, we will begin the
2 public hearing on Case No. GR-2003-0517, In the Matter
3 of Union Electric Company, doing business as AmerenUE.

4 Can we get counsel to make their entries of
5 appearance, please?

6 MS. SHEMWELL: Thank you, Judge.

7 I'm Lera Shemwell. I represent the Staff of
8 the Commission -- the accountants and engineers that
9 work for the Commission. I represent them in this
10 case.

11 My address is Post Office Box 360, Jefferson
12 City, Missouri 65109 --

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. --

14 MS. SHEMWELL: -- 102. Thank you.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Shemwell, thank you.

16 On behalf of the Office of Public Counsel?

17 (No response.)

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: On behalf of AmerenUE?

19 MR. DUFFY: Could the record reflect the
20 appearance of Gary W. Duffy, the law firm of Brydon,
21 Swearngen & England, P.C., P.O. Box 456, Jefferson
22 City, Missouri.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Duffy, thank you.

24 Before I call the first witness, Commissioner
25 Gaw, do you have any remarks?

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1 COMMISSIONER GAW: I just want to thank you
2 all for coming tonight. This is an important part of
3 this proceeding and -- and we need to hear from you
4 about -- about what your viewpoints are about this case
5 and what you -- how it impacts you.

6 And it's -- I know it takes a lot to come out
7 on an evening and -- and take away from other things
8 that everybody has to do at home and -- or at work, and
9 we appreciate you doing that.

10 The Commissioners who are not here will have a
11 transcript of what you say to consider when this rate
12 case is decided, so -- and those Commissioners will --
13 will get the transcript in -- shortly.

14 So it's important that -- that -- that if you
15 have something to say, you know that you're not just
16 speaking to Commissioner Clayton and -- and myself,
17 you're also speaking to the other Commissioners.

18 So -- but we -- again, we thank you for being
19 here and -- and appreciate what your -- that you're --
20 that you're interested in -- in letting us know what
21 you think about this.

22 Thank you very much, Judge.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank you.

24 Commissioner Clayton?

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: My name is Robert

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1 Clayton, and I -- I stand up. I'm not as tall as
2 Steve. I just wanted to also say thank you for coming
3 here tonight. There are a couple of observations I
4 just wanted to point out.

5 This isn't my first time in Mexico. I've been
6 here many times, because I come from Hannibal. And
7 it's -- it's a great -- an opp-- opportunity for both
8 Steve and I to be here, because Steve comes from
9 Randolph County, which is close by, and I come from
10 Marion County.

11 And so it's a rarity in state government when
12 you have two representatives that actually come from
13 the same part of the state. So it's a pleasure for us
14 to be here and -- and back in northeast Missouri.

15 And that said, I know we also should recognize
16 Representative Hobbs, who's here.

17 Is he still here?

18 PARTICIPANT: He's outside.

19 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: He's outside.

20 Well, Representative Hobbs is here as well,
21 and we ought to recognize his presence.

22 Thank you for being here.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner, thank you.

24 Let me call the first witness, and I will
25 apologize if I misread or mispronounce this name. I

1 believe it is a -- a Danny Goe. And I apologize if
2 I -- if I've mis--
3 MR. GOE: You've got it right.
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Very good, sir.
5 If you would, please come forward, raise your
6 right hand and be sworn.
7 (Mr. Danny Goe was sworn.)
8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
9 If you would, stand back there, and I've just
10 got a few questions for you.
11 Would you please state your name for the
12 record and spell your last name.
13 MR. GOE: Danny G. Goe. G-O-E is the last
14 name.
15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,
16 please?
17 MR. GOE: 515 East Holm, Mexico, Missouri.
18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And, Mr. Goe, are you a
19 customer of -- or officially a gas customer of
20 AmerenUE?
21 MR. GOE: Yes. My mother lives at
22 515 East Holm. She is 92 years old -- of age, and she
23 is on Social Security. And I live with her as her
24 primary caregiver.
25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Goe, any --

1 any statements you'd like to make to the Commission?

2 MR. GOE: Yes, I do.

3 The economic snapshot of -- of Missouri since
4 July 2003 has been very bad. My information comes from
5 the AFL-CIO website, and it reflects the jobs and
6 numbers as of that term.

7 Jobs and unemployment -- of course, in
8 Missouri the unemployment rate was 5.6. But this does
9 not represent the job quality and ta-- and taxes and --
10 and standard of living of many citizens in Missouri.

11 As we know that we've lost 135,300 jobs,
12 according to this website, as of -- since January 2001.
13 Changes in manufacturing jobs over the last two years
14 have minused 38,800.

15 Mexico has significantly lost 500 jobs or more
16 from the closure of a 50-year plant that made bricks,
17 the A.P. Green Plant, and the National Refractory brick
18 plant, and also the water plant of DD Optec, which had
19 been bought out and renamed.

20 Poverty in Missouri continues to grow. We see
21 many -- 9.7 percent, and depending on how you declare
22 or define the count; there are many poor children, 12.9
23 percent, 180,000; health coverage is -- is growing. It
24 is very bad.

25 High costs re-- is -- is one of the highest

1 costs and rates have increased throughout our -- our
2 economics. Pension coverage -- workers who have
3 pensions provided by their employment, 52 percent,
4 we -- we now know that there's another 13.5 percent
5 which will retire in the next -- by 2010, 2012.

6 Some may retire earlier, because they cannot
7 find a job or they cannot make a decent living and will
8 try to get by on their Social Security at 80 percent.

9 Schools will be hit by this, too. They will
10 be spiraling up their costs to cover their higher costs
11 on the communities. Hunger -- we have people that
12 are -- are -- many food banks are -- are pressed
13 heavily in our community. Bankruptcies have gone up.
14 Nationally they're 23 percent higher.

15 Affordable housing: 33.1 percent of
16 households in Missouri spend more than 30 percent of
17 their income on housing. Higher costs are spiraling
18 out of control. Our roads and bridges are in major
19 disrepair, and our government is trying to affect that,
20 but through higher cost itself.

21 State financing situations: The budget of
22 Missouri already has resulted in cutbacks to keep
23 programs and undermines the State's ability to meet
24 critical needs. Missouri's current state budget faces
25 a shortfall of 1 -- \$1 billion.

1 There are unmet -- many unmet needs in
2 Missouri. Proposed federal taxes, budget cuts will
3 make it even harder to meet these existing needs in
4 Missouri. Residents will conti-- while contributing to
5 the escalating of these needs.

6 Missouri is most -- most recent two-year
7 budget gap is about \$1.848 billion. The economics of
8 Missouri is not good. These higher rates will only
9 cause -- only move to spiral many rural areas outside
10 of economic viability.

11 That means many more citizens will have no
12 choice but to move to a much more viable -- economic
13 viable area. Total tax fees burdens of state, cities,
14 counties, schools and special districts continue to
15 climb.

16 Therefore, Missouri will not -- will not and
17 cannot grow because of these -- because of the loss of
18 the most valuable resource, working citizens, and the
19 lack of jobs in the State of Missouri.

20 I oppose any rate increase at this time to
21 better address the standard of living of the
22 citizens -- of all Missouri citizens. I ask that this
23 Missouri Public Service Commission consider
24 alternatives to franchising, so that a more competitive
25 pricing may come into a free market.

1 This should include some methods that citizens
2 can make supply purchases from national market sources.

3 Thank you.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Goe, thank you very much
5 for your comments. Let me see if we -- if we have any
6 questions for you.

7 And, Counsel, I won't allow any cross per se,
8 but do you have any clarifying questions for -- for
9 Mr. Goe?

10 (No response.)

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Seeing none, thank
12 you.

13 Commissioner Gaw, any questions?

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. But thank you,
15 Mr. Goe, I appreciate you --

16 MR. GOE: Thank you.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No, no questions.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Goe, thank you
20 very much for your testimony and your time, sir.

21 (Mr. Danny Goe was excused.)

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next name, Janet
23 Chambers. I hope I'm reading that and pronouncing that
24 correctly.

25 Yes, ma'am. Okay. Did I -- did I say that

1 correctly, ma'am?

2 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you.

4 If you would, please raise your right hand to

5 be sworn.

6 (Ms. Janet Chambers was sworn.)

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.

8 If you would, please -- please stand back

9 behind the podium and let me ask you a couple of

10 questions.

11 Would you please state your name for the

12 record and spell your last name.

13 MS. CHAMBERS: Janet Chambers,

14 C-H-A-M-B-E-R-S.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,

16 please?

17 MS. CHAMBERS: 1015 East Lafayette --

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that --

19 MS. CHAMBERS: -- Mexico.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in Mexico?

21 And are you a gas customer of AmerenUE?

22 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes, I am.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you'd like to

24 make for the Commission?

25 MS. CHAMBERS: I am here on -- with the group

1 Grass Roots Organizing, and I'm also unemployed due to
2 injuries. I cannot afford another gas hike.

3 I was working and I fell, and I have other
4 major health problems. And I just cannot afford
5 another -- a rate hike. I'm on oxygen at night, and I
6 have a daughter in school -- in college that needs my
7 help, but I can't help her right now.

8 And I hope that you would take in
9 consideration the rest of us who do not have an income
10 to provide the extra that you -- the increase that you
11 are going to put on our gas bills.

12 And, I mean, I'm in solidarity with the rest
13 of the people that have spoke so far. And that's all I
14 have to say right now.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Ms. Chambers,
16 thank you. Let me see if we have any -- any questions
17 first from Counsel.

18 MS. SHEMWELL: No, thank you.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: No, thank you.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Chambers, thank you so
22 much for your time and your testimony.

23 (Ms. Janet Chambers was excused.)

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I see as the next
25 name Sabrina Matheis. I hope I pronounced that

1 correctly.

2 MS. MATHEIS: Matheis.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Matheis. I -- I apologize.

4 If you would, please come forward to be sworn.

5 (Ms. Sabrina Matheis was sworn.)

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very

7 much, ma'am. If you'd like to stand back there, I've

8 got a couple of questions for you.

9 First of all, would you please state your name

10 for the record and spell your last name for the court

11 reporter.

12 MS. MATHEIS: Sabrina Matheis, M-A-T-H-E-I-S.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And then your

14 address, please?

15 MS. MATHEIS: 1022 Breckenridge in Mexico,

16 Missouri.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of

18 AmerenUE?

19 MS. MATHEIS: Yes.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Thank you.

21 Any statements you'd like to make for the

22 Commission?

23 MS. MATHEIS: I'm Sabrina Matheis, and I'm a

24 young mom of two. And I'm on a fixed income. I know

25 this ain't -- this is gonna affect everyone, and not

1 just the citizens -- the US citizens.

2 And I would like to know how do you all expect
3 us to -- on a fixed income to pay for these high
4 increases?

5 And I do not support any increase for
6 AmerenUE.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Ms. Matheis, thank
8 you. Let me see if we have questions from counsel. I
9 assume not.

10 MS. SHEMWELL: No.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank -- thank you for
12 coming.

13 COMMISSION CLAYTON: Thank you.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ma'am, thank you very much for
15 your statement and for your time.

16 (Ms. Sabrina Matheis was excused.)

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Robin Acree. Did I pronounce
18 that correctly?

19 MS. ACREE: You did.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Raise your right hand to be
21 sworn.

22 (Ms. Robin Acree was sworn.)

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
24 much, if you'd like to stand back there.

25 And, Ms. Acree, would you please state your

1 name for the record and spell your last name for the
2 court reporter.

3 MS. ACREE: My name is Robin Acree, R-O-B-I-N,
4 A-C-R-E-E.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Ms. Acree, your
6 address, please?

7 MS. ACREE: 628 West Love Street here in
8 Mexico, Missouri.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
10 AmerenUE?

11 MS. ACREE: Yes, I am.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statements
13 you'd like to make for the Commission?

14 MS. ACREE: Yes, there is.

15 I would like to go before the Commissioners
16 today and speak on behalf of our membership with GRO,
17 Grass Roots Organizing of Mexico, Missouri today, and
18 we will also have folks giving testimony in the
19 Columbia -- at the Columbia hearing tomorrow night.

20 The -- the one thing about our organization is
21 that we represent pre-- predominantly over 300 families
22 right here in Mid-Missouri. And the only cri-- the --
23 the primary criteria that we track around the
24 demographics of our membership is that over 70 percent
25 of the people that are in our organization -- of them

1 more than 70 percent are below 50 percent of the
2 federal poverty level.

3 Now, the reason I bring that up is because
4 when you are at 50 percent of the federal poverty
5 level, you have real tough choices to make every day.

6 I work very close with these families in Cole
7 County, Randolph County, Callaway County, Audrain
8 County, Boone County and even other places across the
9 state.

10 I personally have trouble with my current
11 income even paying the bills myself every month,
12 because they've increased so much with my mortgage
13 payment. I was very proud to say that I did become a
14 homeowner, but now I also became a grandma.

15 And when you become a grandma and you see that
16 that child is suffering because of this, too -- my
17 daughter has a rental property here in Mexico located
18 at -- on Meyers Street. That rental property is the
19 property that she can afford right now while she goes
20 to school and while she works to -- to support her
21 child.

22 That rental property is what she can afford,
23 so that does not mean that that property is -- that
24 that's maintained property when it comes to winter--
25 winterization or the furnace or any of the -- the gas

1 water heater.

2 So when -- the thing that concerns me is that
3 she has one of those rising air -- you know, floor
4 furnace kind of situations, and last year I had to help
5 her.

6 And the Dollar More Program was an option, but
7 the Dollar More Program is something that me, as a
8 customer, who knows what it's like to have a disconnect
9 notice in my past, contribute to. And everybody else
10 in this room is con-- puts that check on that box and
11 it gives you that -- and gives AmerenUE that dollar
12 every month.

13 The sad part about it is, I don't see the
14 contribution being reciprocated by AmerenUE. And the
15 cost sharing of this proposal is primarily on the
16 burden of the people and the families that we
17 represent.

18 And I want to say that I agree, because
19 comments that was made by the Office of Public
20 Counsel's representative that was here earlier before
21 we went on record in that the real increase that
22 they're proposing is almost 78 percent on our backs.
23 And that is outrageous. And that we support zero
24 increase for them on these non-gas costs.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Acree, thank you very much

1 for your testimony. If you'll see if we have any
2 questions for you -- see if we have any questions from
3 counsel.

4 Ms. Shemwell.

5 MS. SHEMWELL: Hi. I'm Lera Shemwell, I
6 represent the Staff, and I was -- I wanted to ask --
7 you mentioned 50 percent of the poverty level. What
8 does that mean in terms of monthly income?

9 MS. ACREE: That -- that will vary on your
10 family size.

11 MS. SHEMWELL: Uh-huh.

12 MS. ACREE: So predominantly we're looking --
13 oh, here's the way that we measure. If you look at a
14 TANIF family -- a temporary assistance for needy
15 fam-- needy -- yeah, temporary assistance for needy
16 families -- family, that is around about 30 percent of
17 the federal -- 100 percent of the federal poverty
18 level.

19 So, for example, when I was on TANIF -- well,
20 I wasn't on TANIF, but I was on AFDC -- the old welfare
21 cash payment program -- that was approximately
22 \$4,000 -- \$4,200. And so if you can take that -- that
23 amount -- and that has not changed, by the way, that --
24 I have been off of public assistance, and that's never,
25 never goes up.

1 The benefit levels for Social Security and all
2 the fixed incomes, the percentagewise of how that goes
3 along with inflationary things do not
4 proportionately -- you know, I mean, come on AmerenUE
5 has probably had -- I can't tell you how many increases
6 since then.

7 So it varies, but it -- it does look at it
8 like a family requires 100 percent of poverty level, if
9 you would talk an average family between three and four
10 would be less than \$13,000 a year at 100 percent. So
11 we're talking less than that. We're talking probably
12 in the range of -- seems like it was at between 3 --
13 from zero income to probably close to \$8- or \$9,000.

14 MS. SHEMWELL: A year?

15 MS. ACREE: A yeah. Annually, yes. And this
16 proposal -- my understanding is that it -- we're
17 talking close to nearly \$200 more a year.

18 Now, if you proportionally took a person's
19 income making, you know, that amount of money, that is
20 much more regressive on the -- you know, on our part --
21 it's gonna be proportionately more out of a person who
22 is on a fixed income.

23 And I do know that this ma-- the majority
24 wages that are left in this town have no benefits, so
25 people are paying the doctors more. We don't have jobs

1 that pay a livable wage around here anymore.

2 Most folks are doing seasonal work right now
3 and praying that they get to stay on -- or 'til
4 January. So it's a really hard time.

5 MS. SHEMWELL: Just one more question.

6 MS. ACREE: Sure.

7 MS. SHEMWELL: You said you worked with them.
8 Are these families eligible for any of the --

9 MS. ACREE: Low-income --

10 MS. SHEMWELL: -- LIHAP-type assistance?

11 MS. ACREE: Yes. I'm glad you brought up
12 LIHAP up actually, because that's another thing that I
13 feel -- I find it really interesting, you know. The
14 beneficiary -- when people always ask about the
15 Low-Income Heating Assistance Program, you know, they
16 tend to think that that money somehow goes directly to
17 that family.

18 And it -- it's just -- to me it's just another
19 mechanism that this big corporate entity has created to
20 continue to get taxpayer dollars and -- and -- and the
21 dollars from folks that goes directly to them, and
22 doesn't even have to pass through me to get there.

23 I mean, and those every year are being cut
24 back and -- and threatened every year. And we have
25 to -- as an organization, we work on that, too.

1 MS. SHEMWELL: Okay. I just have one more
2 question. But then the LIHAP funds were credited to
3 your account; is that right?

4 MS. ACREE: Right.

5 MS. SHEMWELL: They were credited to your
6 account even though they went directly to the Company?

7 MS. ACREE: Yes. And their -- and they
8 ranged -- the general payments back in the days, they
9 used to be much more proportionately higher. Those
10 have been reduced as well.

11 So when we look at the budgetary cuts that are
12 being made in the State budget, and when we also look
13 at the crisis political environment that we're in right
14 now, we're -- we're proposing sending \$87 billion to
15 Iraq, but yet we can't -- our uninsured in this country
16 has increased. Poverty in the Midwest has increased by
17 over 15 percent since 2002, so the priorities are a
18 little bit different right now.

19 And I don't see it getting better. I don't
20 see there being any safety net really to maintain the
21 health and safety of these families if they're not able
22 to pay their bills.

23 MS. SHEMWELL: Okay. Thank you very much.

24 MS. ACREE: You're welcome.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Shemwell, thank you.

1 Let me see if -- Commissioner Gaw, do you have
2 any -- any questions?
3 MS. ACREE: I love you.
4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, I do.
5 MS. ACREE: What can I do for you?
6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Oh, I just have -- have
7 just a few things.
8 MS. ACREE: Okay.
9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Tell me -- tell me
10 about -- about the assistance issue a little bit more.
11 I want to know what programs are working and you --
12 deal with, if you could, the case that's in front of
13 us. If it's outside of -- of the assistance for gas,
14 maybe we should ignore it.
15 MS. ACREE: Uh-huh.
16 COMMISSIONER GAW: And I don't know that --
17 that that makes any difference. But I want to know
18 which ones are working, which ones people know about,
19 how they find out about them, those kinds of things.
20 MS. ACREE: Well, I think the -- like I said,
21 the assistance programs, I don't know if you all are
22 aware, that those go up for contract or a bid or
23 whatever -- I don't know if it's annually, but they do
24 go up.
25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

1 MS. ACREE: And my understanding is there's
2 some confusion right now, because it used to be that
3 you would go through the family services -- well, it's
4 now been changed -- excuse me -- the Division of Family
5 Services is now call the Family Services Division.

6 So it used to be you would go to your county
7 welfare office. And if you were receiving a -- if you
8 received food stamps, you would automatically get a
9 card. And so you would know that it was time to go in
10 and apply for that one-time amount of money to go
11 towards the cost of your utilities.

12 That is to -- my understanding is now that
13 that is not necessarily the case. My understanding is
14 that the contracts have gone out to the CAP agencies.
15 And the CAP agencies or the community action
16 agencies -- the human development corporations here in
17 Mid-Missouri are predominantly where folks know to go
18 to if there is a cut off -- a disconnect --

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

20 MS. ACREE: -- emergency assistance monies.
21 They have been receiving the emergency assistance
22 monies for years. And so that is what -- you know,
23 people know if they get a disconnect notice that not to
24 bother pretty much, except occasionally there's been --
25 I think there was -- I think there was a little bit of

1 money that came back from another deal --

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

3 MS. ACREE: -- that we were able to get some
4 monies into folks' hands. But predominantly that's
5 what has been the case.

6 It's been -- what I think this gentleman said
7 earlier was that that disconnect had to happen or be
8 imminent before there's even any assistance offered.

9 So I -- you know, if I had to fix the system
10 and if I had to offer a solution to AmerenUE and to
11 enable the customers to be feeling -- to feel like
12 there was a little bit more equity in the burden, I
13 would suggest to them, too, that they would offer some
14 type of percentage-of-income payment plan that is a
15 real program.

16 Because I don't know, sir, if you've ever had
17 to call your line for the help program, but it's a
18 joke. And I've had to -- many times have to prove
19 someone -- I mean, it's -- it's horrible when you say,
20 look, if you cut these folks' utilities off, they're
21 gonna die because their oxygen machine is gonna go off,
22 you know.

23 Then they get -- they put some kind of -- what
24 do you call it -- oh, rad-- I don't want to say it's a
25 radar -- but anyways, they -- they -- they like ration

1 the amount -- I've never heard of such a thing -- but
2 they'll ration the amount of electricity.

3 If you finally do get them -- to get them to
4 put it on, then they ration it, and their lights will
5 go off at a certain time and their oxygen will come --
6 I don't know -- I don't know exactly how it works, but
7 it's really insane.

8 But what I would do is create a program that
9 really did look at a person's income, and it would
10 percentage -- you know, it was -- it was -- it was
11 fair, equitable in that that person paid that
12 percentage.

13 If we knew that they were gonna -- their
14 income is not gonna go up, it's kind of like when you
15 take that budget class that they proposed now through
16 the HDC office before you can even get the utility
17 assistance -- I asked them how the recidivism rate was
18 since people started going to the budget class.

19 Well, the recidivism rate has not gone down,
20 because no one's income has gone up. So it's kind of
21 nonsense to sit there with a bunch of M&Ms and, you
22 know, try to ration out your M&Ms when we already know
23 that the amount of M&Ms you got there were ate up
24 before you even opened the bag.

25 So I would propose that. And I would also

1 propose one -- another thing would -- I would propose,
2 too, is that the corporations pay a higher share.
3 Because I said this earlier when -- before we went on
4 record, I believe they have more wherewithall in the
5 long term to sustain this hit if they need it.

6 I am not under the understanding -- I don't
7 think they need anything. I think they profit very
8 well. He couldn't answer the question earlier when I
9 asked how much they did profit -- I don't -- you
10 weren't in the room when I asked this.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Right.

12 THE WITNESS: So let me let you know this one
13 on the record, too. I was sitting here talking to
14 these guys. They can break down for the lady from the
15 Office of Public Counsel how that 78 or 77 percent was
16 misleading -- they could break that down to -- to the
17 public right here into the percentagewise, but couldn't
18 tell me what their profit was per day. Please. Give
19 me a break.

20 What kind of corporation -- it's a profit
21 monopoly -- would not know the answer to that
22 question? If they could not go to their stockholders
23 and go in in that room and say what their profit was,
24 then they shouldn't -- they would be out of a job in a
25 heartbeat.

1 So -- I'm sorry. I don't --
2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: No. No. I -- I -- I
3 appreciate it.
4 MS. ACREE: Give me a -- give me a soapbox.
5 COMMISSIONER GAW: I appreciate you being
6 here.
7 MS. ACREE: Well, thank you. I appreciate you
8 being here.
9 COMMISSIONER GAW: And that's quite all right.
10 I will -- I -- I think that -- that I'll -- I'll stop.
11 I may keep someone else from being able to speak.
12 MS. ACREE: I don't want to keep anybody else
13 either.
14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Well, I'm talking about me
15 doing that. But I -- I thank you again.
16 THE WITNESS: You're welcome. Thank you,
17 Commissioner.
18 COMMISSIONER GAW: You're very welcome.
19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?
20 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Robin, you're never at
21 a loss for words.
22 MS. ACREE: This would be correct.
23 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Congratulations on the
24 grandchild.
25 MS. ACREE: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't have any
2 questions.
3 MS. ACREE: Appreciate it. Thank you.
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Acree, thank you very much
5 for your time and your testimony this evening.
6 MS. ACREE: You're welcome. Thank you.
7 (Ms. Robin Acree was excused.)
8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see the next name is Hazel
9 Roberts.
10 Ms. Roberts, good evening. If you could
11 please raise your right hand and be sworn.
12 (Ms. Hazel Roberts was sworn.)
13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, ma'am.
14 If you would, please approach the podium and -- and if
15 you would, state your name for the record and spell
16 your last name for the court reporter, please.
17 MS. ROBERTS: My name is Hazel Roberts,
18 R-O-B-E-R-T-S.
19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please?
20 MS. ROBERTS: 1524 Fairground, Mexico,
21 Missouri.
22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
23 AmerenUE?
24 MS. ROBERTS: I am.
25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statement

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1 you'd like to make for the Commission?

2 MS. ROBERTS: Okay. I am on -- not a fixed
3 income, but a limited income. I have worked at Audrain
4 Medical Center for 29 years. And I have the potential
5 to make a very good income, but I have problems with
6 working full time. And I'm now drawing Social Security
7 as a survivor's benefit.

8 And that limits how much I can make, even
9 though if I would be able to work more days, I can only
10 work so many days. But I have to work to have
11 insurance until I'm old enough for Medicare.

12 I pay a Dollar More. I pay budget billing.
13 But I'm not sure how much longer I can do that if
14 they're going to keep raising these rates.

15 I don't see that people -- whether they're on
16 a fixed income, no income or limited income are
17 expected to pay an increase that's more than a couple
18 of dollars.

19 I mean, you know, you go to the store,
20 something's gone up a couple of dollars. Okay. If I
21 really want it, I'll pay it. With your gas and
22 electric, you don't have the option of paying it or not
23 paying it.

24 If you don't pay it, you lose that service.
25 And I understand that, yes, it's a service company and,

1 yes, they have overhead and they have maintenance fees
2 and things like that. But I don't think that so much
3 of that cost should come back to us.

4 I'm thinking, yes, if the gas prices go up, we
5 pay a little more on gas. If the cost of the pipes
6 that they have to replace goes up or the guys that sit
7 on the back of the truck drinking sodas -- if their
8 salary needs to go up or whatever, that shouldn't all
9 come from the little people. And whether we're little
10 or big, we -- we deserve a break.

11 I don't think this cost should all come from
12 us. And I -- I agree with everything that has been
13 said thus far, as far as the hardship that it could
14 cause a lot of people.

15 And I -- I have sleep apnea. I sleep with a
16 Bi-PAP machine at night. And I -- I shudder to think
17 if my utilities were cut off, what would happen. So I
18 wanted -- I wanted to be sure that my -- my voice was
19 heard.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, Ms. Roberts. I
21 appreciate your testimony. Let me see if we have any
22 questions -- any clarifying questions from Counsel?

23 MS. SHEMWELL: No. But thank you.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
25 much.

1 Commissioner Gaw?

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you very much
3 for coming, ma'am.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?

5 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have one question,
6 ma'am.

7 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You -- you said that
9 you were on budget billing?

10 MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Before we even take
12 into consideration this rate increase or -- or anything
13 associated with this hearing, has your budget billing
14 changed recently or has it stayed the same for like the
15 last 12 months?

16 MS. ROBERTS: It changed a little.

17 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Just a little bit?

18 MS. ROBERTS: But -- last year it was a little
19 more, but I started on budget billing in March of the
20 year that I started the budget billing when I knew my
21 income was going to be drastically reduced.

22 And the first year -- at the end of that year,
23 they evaluate, you know, how much money is there and so
24 forth. And I got the next month paid for and a few
25 dollars on the next one. This is good. Hey, this is a

1 good thing.

2 Well, when that happens, that's okay. But
3 this year in March I had a horrible bill to pay to
4 catch up, because budget billing wasn't covering it.
5 And it put a hardship on me --

6 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: So had -- did they --

7 MS. ROBERTS: -- to get that paid.

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did they re-evaluate
9 the -- the budget amount after that?

10 MS. ROBERTS: My budget amount was adjusted,
11 yes.

12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. And -- and did
13 it go up a great deal then?

14 MS. ROBERTS: No.

15 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: It didn't. Okay.

16 MS. ROBERTS: No. Because I keep my heating
17 and cooling expenses at a minimum.

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't have any other
19 questions. I was just gonna suggest that if you want
20 to report any of those loafers sitting on the back of
21 the truck, you may want to tell one of those guys over
22 there.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Roberts, thank you very
24 much for your testimony this evening. We appreciate
25 it.

1 (Ms. Hazel Roberts was excused.)

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I hope I'm reading the -- the

3 next name correctly. Liz Johnston.

4 Good evening, ma'am.

5 MS. JOHNSTON: Good evening.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would, please raise

7 your right hand and be sworn.

8 (Ms. Liz Johnston was sworn.)

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. If you

10 would, take a -- take a stand -- why don't you stand

11 back there behind the podium.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And say your name and spell

14 your last name for the court reporter, please.

15 MS. JOHNSTON: My name is Liz Johnston,

16 J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And, Ms. Johnston,

18 your address, please?

19 MS. JOHNSTON: 1424 Hickory Hill Drive in

20 Mexico.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of

22 AmerenUE?

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes, I am.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ma'am, any statements you

25 would like to make for the Commission?

1 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes. I made part of it earlier
2 when I said that part of AmerenUE's problem is, I
3 think, some poor management in the way they do
4 business.

5 I manage a housing and urban development
6 complex. And we may be all electric, but anybody can
7 come in and they can call -- and I'm sure they can do
8 this on the gas side, too -- and connect utilities with
9 a phone.

10 You can use anyone's name, you can use
11 anyone's address, you can use anyone's Social Security
12 number that maybe you found on the street, and you can
13 connect your utilities on that 1-800 number. A lot of
14 people use children's numbers.

15 A lot of children now, when they turn 18, are
16 having bad debts charged against their Social Security
17 numbers. This happens, I know, sometimes because
18 people get in desperation. They've lost their job.

19 But it wouldn't happen at all if AmerenUE had
20 the ability to have people come to a place, show an ID
21 that would say it's me, Liz Johnston, applying for this
22 service.

23 And I would have to pay a deposit. And when I
24 paid my bill, I would then after a certain time show
25 them that I am a good person and I'm paying my bills.

1 I could get that deposit back.

2 My husband and I have lived all over the
3 United States. We have never lived in a state or a
4 town where you could call on the phone and connect
5 something by talking to a person on the phone. They
6 wanted to know who you are, something about you and
7 that you actually are that person.

8 I also want to bring up the subject about the
9 recent public service thing that happened. And this
10 had to do with the electric refund. I believe
11 AmerenUE made a very large amount of money in some kind
12 of a program.

13 I wrote a fax and called the Public Service
14 Commission a couple of times. They made a great deal
15 of money. You guys said, hey, you can't do that. You
16 made too much money. You're gonna have to give some of
17 this money back. And this was just this year.

18 My apartment complex is all electric, and this
19 was on the electric side. So they came up. Apparently
20 you guys came up -- someone came up with the -- the
21 lawyers came up with this idea that, well, you're gonna
22 set up a fund and you're gonna help the people who
23 haven't paid their bills who are -- who have problems.

24 So it was the -- the program was turned over
25 and it was given to some of those groups who helped

1 people when they have delinquent bills. And I know
2 that this is true, because I helped tenants and a lot
3 of people that I know in this city get their delinquent
4 bills paid through this program.

5 Those people like myself who live and work and
6 pay their bills on time got, I believe, \$1.06 refund.
7 If you haven't paid your bill at all and your electric
8 had been disconnected, you had to come up with
9 20 percent of whatever you owed AmerenUE.

10 If you owed them, you know, whatever, you gave
11 them 20 percent if it was totally disconnected. And
12 they would take the remaining balance out of this -- I
13 think it was 135 million. And I think it's been --
14 been put -- some kind of money has been put into
15 certain segments and they have to give this money back
16 to people who are delinquent.

17 Now, maybe you think that was a fine to -- to
18 AmerenUE. I think you just gave them a wonderful gift.
19 They overcharged people. They have all of these people
20 who didn't pay their bills, for whatever reasons,
21 whether it was legitimate and they lost their job or
22 they just flat out didn't want to pay it because they
23 had other things to do.

24 If you are delinquent and you go to this fund,
25 which is AmerenUE's money which they got and you guys

1 penalized them for -- and they go to this fund and it
2 is all wiped out. That's really good for them. But
3 for those of us out here who have paid our bills -- and
4 we're the ones who helped make all of this wonderful
5 profit possible, I believe we got \$1.06 refund.

6 So the bottom line for us is, don't pay your
7 bill. If you want to get something from AmerenUE, just
8 don't pay your bill.

9 Now, you have a program -- and I understand
10 some of the things that were said before. I work with
11 people who have -- who require Section 8 assistance.
12 My property is Section 8, so I'm very familiar with a
13 lot of these programs.

14 Yes, they live on fixed income. A great many
15 of them receive all of their rent paid. Our property
16 receives a utility allowance, which is deducted from
17 the rent or paid to them.

18 When we made the checks payable to AmerenUE,
19 AmerenUE got the money for the utility bill. When it
20 went off of their check, some of them pay it, some of
21 them don't. They use it for their own personal things,
22 whether it's a necessity or not.

23 So there are many, many ways that you can look
24 at all of these things. But the bottom line is that
25 I'm looking at the fact that AmerenUE on one side had a

1 very large amount of money that they got that they were
2 penalized for getting that they had to supposedly do
3 something with to give back as a penalty.

4 If somebody told me that I had all of this
5 money and I had to give you a chance to pay me an
6 average of 15 percent of this amount in order to access
7 it, and now I got to keep that 15 percent and the
8 original amount, I'd be laughing all the way to the
9 bank.

10 So I imagine the head of AmerenUE and the
11 attorneys who worked this out for AmerenUE were -- were
12 very, very happy. Because those of us who are out here
13 that paid our bills didn't get much. But we are the
14 ones who really made that overage possible.

15 So now you're turning around and you're coming
16 back to us on the gas side and you want more money.
17 And as I said before, as some of these other people
18 said, when they changed the gas meters on our street --
19 and they came in and they changed them all -- we had
20 work crews and we had heavy equipment that came to our
21 street.

22 And they literally did sit on the back of the
23 truck -- the first day I think it was four hours with
24 their feet dangling and drinking sodas and having a
25 good time. The second day my neighbor called me at

1 work and said, you're not gonna believe this. She
2 said, they're taking a nap under the tree in the front
3 yard of the Simmons' house. And one guy slept for an
4 hour and a half in the shade.

5 Now, granted you think this is not true, but
6 it is. And I called and I deal with the local office.
7 So I had a line and I called and talked to one of the
8 people.

9 And I said, hey, you know, how can I get hired
10 by AmerenUE, cuz I want to take a nap. Well,
11 apparently somebody said something to one of the
12 employees. And my flower bed where they were changing
13 the meters the first day that they were there
14 was -- survived just fine. After I made my complaint,
15 my flowers were trampled.

16 They went to the neighbor's yard and they did
17 some -- some digging, and that dirt ended up in my
18 front yard. It came across the street to my front
19 yard, so I had that for a while.

20 And I called and complained and said, would
21 you please do something about it? And when the
22 gentleman came out to finally do something about it, he
23 made kind of a derogatory comment about me to my
24 89-year-old neighbor, who had made the call and told me
25 they were sleeping. And she said, well, how would you

1 like to have that in your front yard? You would have
2 complained, too.

3 So, you know, you can complain and you -- you
4 get penalized for complaining. But the bottom line
5 that I see is that AmerenUE has probably a lot of
6 business expenses, and costs are going up. And I am a
7 person who believes that there are two sides to every
8 story, and I'm sure AmerenUE has expenses that they
9 have to cover.

10 But I just feel that this increase at this
11 time, the way it's being presented after one side of
12 their business got this huge overage and had to give it
13 back, but really didn't have to give it back, got to
14 keep it, what happened to all that money? All this
15 money that -- that went to pay off all of these
16 bills -- all of these electric bills -- it's still the
17 same company.

18 Now, why all of a sudden they don't have any
19 money for the gas side. I mean, it -- it -- it's a
20 large company. It's got to be there somewhere. We
21 just can't afford that much of an increase. I don't
22 want to do without gas, trust me, I don't, or electric
23 or anything.

24 But the -- our -- our area is very, very
25 depressed and distressed, as is the State budget. And

1 that's why a lot of these people that are here tonight
2 are talking about, you know, how much it costs them.
3 And if you're out of work and you're on a very, very
4 fixed income, they really can't afford it and they
5 can't.

6 I deal with this segment every day, and it is
7 very hurtful to see people who need help, a job, would
8 work if they could get one and not be able to have one
9 and they're struggling right now to pay their bills.
10 And another increase is just gonna push them over the
11 edge.

12 If you haven't been in their shoes, you need
13 to come out and take a look at some of the people that
14 you're gonna affect.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Johnston, thank you --
16 thank you for your testimony. Let me see if we have
17 any questions from Ms. Shemwell -- well, I see no --

18 MS. SHEMWELL: No questions.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Duffy?

20 MR. DUFFY: The incident that you talked about
21 where your flower bed was damaged.

22 MS. JOHNSTON: Uh-huh.

23 MR. DUFFY: You said they were changing the
24 gas meters and -- and they were digging holes. I'm --
25 I'm confused. Why were they digging holes if they were

1 changing the gas meters? But they were -- were they
2 digging the gas lines?

3 MS. JOHNSTON: But they were out -- all I know
4 is I ended up with dirt in my front yard.

5 MR. DUFFY: Okay.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: And they were changing -- they
7 were changing the -- you know, the meters.

8 MR. DUFFY: Can you --

9 MS. JOHNSTON: And I know everybody is going
10 to say it's water, but it wasn't. We've had -- we've
11 had the water meters --

12 MR. DUFFY: You're -- you're sure this was the
13 gas company that was doing this?

14 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes. That's what we --

15 MR. DUFFY: Can you tell me the approximate
16 date when this occurred?

17 MS. JOHNSTON: I'd have to -- it's -- it's
18 been not -- not this year. I'm not even sure it was
19 last year. I mean, it -- I don't -- I don't remember
20 how long ago it's been, but it has been a while.

21 But you can -- people do -- they -- they're in
22 groups, and I guess the supervisor has to radio them or
23 something, because they were -- they -- they wait
24 for -- they -- they leave one job and they go to the
25 next and they kind of gather. And they wait.

1 And they have to wait, I guess, until a
2 supervisor gives them some type of an assignment.
3 Because I know that I spoke with someone inside the
4 AmerenUE office about this. So I know that it
5 was -- you know, it was -- it was the gas because they
6 changed out -- out the gas meter.

7 MR. DUFFY: But you --

8 MS. JOHNSTON: And they -- but they said --
9 but I was told when I called, that they -- they leave
10 one job and they know where they're going to the next
11 job so they all kind of go over there. But they have
12 to get some kind of coordination from the supervisor
13 before they can actually start work.

14 MR. DUFFY: Okay. Let me -- let me ask: This
15 happened in the year 2000 or -- or sometime before
16 that?

17 MS. JOHNSTON: To be honest, I don't -- I
18 don't really remember. I'd have to go back and check.
19 I'd probably have to ask my husband, because he works
20 out of the house and he was there and he was watching
21 it.

22 MR. DUFFY: Okay. And you did call the local
23 office of AmerenUE --

24 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes.

25 MR. DUFFY: -- at the time and you made the

1 complaint?

2 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes.

3 MR. DUFFY: And were you satisfied with the
4 resolution of that or is there still something that's
5 unresolved with that?

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Well, I mean, my flower garden
7 obviously came up the next year, and they -- and they,
8 you know, took care of the -- you know, took the dirt
9 that they had piled in my yard and got rid of it and
10 put -- and put grass there, so yes.

11 But what bothers me the most is that, you
12 know, you're coming in and you're asking us for an
13 increase, but yet you can have employees that can sit
14 by the hour take naps under a tree and get paid to do
15 nothing.

16 I -- I work -- I've worked all my life and
17 I've never had a job where I could take a nap under a
18 tree and get my paycheck. And -- and sit un-- and hang
19 my feet off of the back of the truck and drink sodas
20 and wait for my supervisors to get there.

21 I mean, you're either gonna work -- if you
22 want to get paid, you're gonna work. And if you -- if
23 you don't want to get paid, you're not gonna work. So
24 it seems like to me there's some internal problems
25 within AmerenUE that need to be resolved.

1 But they want to increase my prices yet
2 they -- they drop service, because you can't pay a
3 bill. You know, you're supposed to pay by mail or if
4 you want to do something, you have to go to that 1-800
5 line.

6 There was an office out here with a brand new
7 window that was all revamped and everything in that
8 office so people could pay their bills there, but it's
9 closed. And -- and they don't want anybody to call
10 this local office.

11 As a matter of fact, they get very upset. And
12 somebody's probably gonna get in trouble tomorrow
13 because I said I have a line that I know how to get in.
14 But service should be part of it.

15 I mean, if -- if you want to raise my rates,
16 then give me a little better service, because you --
17 you can't pay the bill. I manage a housing and
18 development project. People don't have cars, most of
19 them. And they -- you know, they have to -- they --
20 they'd like to go someplace -- and I don't know how you
21 pay your bills, but we mail ours.

22 But a lot of -- they don't have checks. They
23 have to go get money orders. And then they have to,
24 you know, put them -- mail them. This is -- it costs.
25 Commerce Bank -- I didn't know how much money orders

1 were. I got a \$20 money order at Commerce Bank. It
2 cost me \$2 just to get a \$20 -- and it's based upon
3 whatever the amount of your utility bill is.

4 So you just look at it that way. So if you're
5 living in a housing complex and you're living on a
6 fixed income and you have to go get a money order so
7 that you can pay your bill, and you -- and -- and
8 either put a stamp on it or walk, because we don't have
9 very good taxi service in this town. It's kind of
10 hard. And if you don't have the money, you can't
11 afford to pay that round trip. You have to walk in
12 whatever weather to get there to pay your bill.

13 And if you have a disability or something,
14 that's very difficult to do. But it just seems like,
15 you know, they keep cutting services -- and it's not
16 just AmerenUE. A lot of the companies are doing it.

17 But it's -- don't do anything for me, but
18 what -- you know, they should be doing a little
19 something. I mean, if they were -- if that office was
20 open over there or you could call direct or
21 something -- but I am the manager and we're all
22 electric.

23 And when I have somebody move in or move out,
24 I have to verify first that this tenant, before they
25 can move in, has the utilities on. Okay. And I can

1 get on that line -- and I kid you not, they will tell
2 you up front, you know, this -- we're very busy. Maybe
3 you should call back later.

4 I can't call back later, because I can't give
5 that tenant the key to that apartment until I know that
6 the utilities are on in their name. I have literally
7 sat on that line 45 minutes to get to a representative
8 just to check something like that.

9 They want to raise my rates, they give me
10 something, too. Give -- give us better service or some
11 way, because they're sitting in an office and they keep
12 closing this and closing this and changing this and
13 changing this. And I understand everybody has to stay
14 in business, but it's hard times out here. We don't
15 all drive cars. They -- and everybody doesn't have,
16 like they say, a lot of money.

17 MR. DUFFY: That's all the questions I have.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Duffy, thank you.

19 Commissioner Gaw?

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. And thank you, ma'am,
21 very much.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And thank you very much for
23 your testimony and your time this evening.

24 (Ms. Liz Johnston was excused.)

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: The next witness I have -- I

1 hope I pronounce the name correctly -- is a Jerome
2 Mayer. I believe I'm reading that --
3 MR. MAYER: Right here, but I decline.
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
5 much.
6 Harriet Weiss.
7 Thank you. If you would, please raise your
8 right hand to be sworn.
9 (Ms. Harriet Weiss was sworn.)
10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. If you
11 would, please state your name for the record and spell
12 your last name.
13 MS. WEISS: My name is Harriet Weiss,
14 W-E-I-S-S.
15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,
16 please?
17 MS. WEISS: 716 East Jackson.
18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in Mexico?
19 MS. WEISS: Yes.
20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
21 AmerenUE?
22 MS. WEISS: Yes.
23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, ma'am. Any
24 statements you'd like to make for the Commission?
25 MS. WEISS: I have a whole lot of them, but

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1 I'm just gonna tell you about one little incident.

2 I have -- I live on on a fixed income. I'm
3 disabled. I have a husband who doesn't work. Our
4 total income a month is \$580. This is for two people.

5 My mortgage payment is \$362 a month. You want
6 to raise my utility bills. I already pay out \$100 a
7 month for utilities. You do the arithmetic and you see
8 that I have no money.

9 I run on air most of the time. I was a
10 hairdresser. I was making a very lot of money. And I
11 know how to live on a lot of money and I know how to
12 live on a little money.

13 And what I would like to do is come and work
14 for you to show you how to live on a little bit of
15 money and where you waste your money.

16 That's all.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Ms. Weiss, thank
18 you very much. Any -- any questions from Counsel,
19 Commissioners?

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: I -- I don't think so.
21 Thank you -- thank you very much.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Weiss, thank you very much
23 for your -- for your time and your testimony.

24 (Ms. Harriet Weiss was excused.)

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see the next name -- I hope

1 I -- I'm reading it correctly -- Robert Marty.
2 If you would raise your right hand to be
3 sworn, please.
4 (Mr. Robert Marty was sworn.)
5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
6 If you would, please state your name for the
7 record and spell your last name for the court reporter.
8 MR. MARTY: Robert H. Marty, M-A-R-T-Y.
9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please, sir?
10 MR. MARTY: 1411 Bennington, Mexico.
11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
12 AmerenUE?
13 MR. MARTY: I am.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statements
15 you'd like to make for the Commission, sir?
16 MR. MARTY: I'd like to tell you, that among
17 other things, I'm on the board of trustees of the Human
18 Development Corporation. The headquarters is in
19 Columbia, but it covers several counties, which -- one
20 of which is Audrain County, which is primarily
21 concerned with low-income people.
22 I'm also a former councilman and mayor of the
23 City of Mexico. I'm currently chairman of the board of
24 education for Mexico School District 59, and I'm on the
25 board of the Children's Trust Fund.

1 That -- I don't appear specifically under
2 direction of any of those people, but I do appear to --
3 to try to show you that I have a range of experience in
4 this community.

5 We had a meeting on this same topic two years
6 ago -- within the last two years, and I don't recall
7 you all gentlemen being there. There was a lady and
8 somebody else.

9 I -- is this the first time you all have been
10 to Mexico? One -- one in the same. Well, anyway, I'm
11 glad you're here.

12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: First hearing.

13 MR. MARTY: All right.

14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No, not the first time
15 in Mexico.

16 MR. MARTY: All right. All right. Well, then
17 you all weren't at the other one, and I'm gonna bring
18 up the same point as this last time.

19 You wanted to raise -- they wanted to raise
20 the monthly figure from \$6 to \$16 then. I say 6. I
21 can't remember exactly what it was. And I made the
22 point, as you hear now in testimony, that they reduced
23 the offices, they read the meters from satellites, they
24 have a mechanical an-- answering system. When would
25 those economies take affect that really the rates ought

1 to be reduced?

2 After some period of time the --
3 AmerenUE said, you know what, we only need to go to \$9.
4 And when they were asked by the media why -- why are
5 you satisfied with 9 now rather than 16, they said,
6 well, we used -- and I'm quoting -- we used old figures
7 when we made our request for \$16.

8 MS. KELLY: That's right.

9 MR. MARTY: Now, on my -- aren't I, Ms. Kelly?
10 They used old figures. That means they went
11 and filed with the Missouri Public Service Commission
12 with old figures that they did not know were incorrect
13 that didn't reflect the cost savings.

14 The least they are were stupid; the most they
15 are were deceiving. That makes me ask you this
16 question tonight: Is this \$16 valid? Does it take
17 into affect (sic) the cost savings they've had?

18 I think that you need to go beyond that.
19 You've heard the various testimonies. I think that
20 AmerenUE and the Missouri Public Service Commission
21 have got to find ways to really make savings and
22 reductions in costs.

23 We're not gonna be able to continue
24 increasing, and I think we're gonna have to come up
25 with something dramatic, if you let us use a cheaper

1 rate when we use things at night or on the weekend,
2 something very significant.

3 I do want to say in closing that the local
4 management of AmerenUE is very civic minded. They take
5 ac-- activities -- I think Mr. Loesch has been or is
6 the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce or has been at
7 sometime. We're pleased with that. They've been very
8 helpful to this community.

9 I thank you.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Marty, thank you very much
11 for your statement. Let me see if we have any
12 questions from anyone. I don't see any.

13 Commissioner Gaw?

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you, sir.

15 MR. MARTY: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No questions.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Marty, thank you very much
18 this evening for your -- for your time and attention.

19 (Mr. Robert Marty was excused.)

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And before I call the next
21 witness, let me just briefly recognize Barb
22 Meisenheimer from the Office of the Public Counsel.
23 Make sure people know -- very good. If -- and she will
24 be available for questions if anybody has any questions
25 during or after the hearing.

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1 Ms. Meisenheimer, thank you.

2 The next witness, I -- and I hope I again

3 pronounce the name correctly. I believe it says Ralph

4 Mike (sic). And if I've-- if I've said --

5 MR. MIKA: Mika.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry, sir?

7 MR. MIKA: Mika.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mika. Excuse me, sir. I'm

9 sorry.

10 If you would, please come forward to be sworn.

11 (Mr. Ralph Mika was sworn.)

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.

13 If you would, please state your name for the

14 record and spell your last name.

15 MR. MIKA: Ralph Mika, M-I-K-A.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please?

17 MR. MIKA: 609 West Boulevard, here in Mexico.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Here in Mexico.

19 And are you a gas customer of AmerenUE?

20 MR. MIKA: Yes.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you'd like to

22 make for the Commission, sir?

23 MR. MIKA: Yes. I'd like to direct this as

24 much to the Commission as to AmerenUE. I have lived

25 here in Mexico now for about 10 years, and prior to

1 that I lived in Iowa.

2 And I have 30 rental houses here in Knox-- or
3 in Mexico. I have four in Knoxville, and two or three
4 in Oskaloosa, which is a different power company, of
5 course.

6 And I want to echo a great deal of what
7 Mrs. Johnston said in terms of how people get service
8 in terms -- and also tell you right now, for example,
9 in one of my rental houses I have the service, which
10 has just been shut off, but the person's name that the
11 service was in has not been there for four months.

12 The -- the phone system that they have and how
13 they collect information is -- is something to behold.
14 And I -- I think that the -- the Public Service
15 Commission really needs to look into that, as much as
16 AmerenUE does. It's a matter of service, you know, and
17 it's a matter of regulation as to what they're doing.

18 I ran into a situation, and I have the -- I'm
19 going to have more and more as we go along with the
20 increase in rates and -- and the economic situations
21 here in Mexico. The properties that I have are
22 moderate-income properties. And the two-bedroom homes
23 rent from between \$300 to \$375 a month; the
24 three-bedroom homes -- three-bedroom homes rent between
25 \$400 and \$450.

1 It's obvious that the people that live in
2 them, that's all they can afford and they are on
3 probably \$10 to at the most \$12-an-hour jobs. I
4 experienced last year a situation where I had
5 two renters who lost their service for non-payment of
6 utility bills.

7 When I discovered it, I had -- both of them,
8 by the way, were very responsible and they came over.
9 And they presented me with these disconnect notices.
10 Had they not presented me with the disconnect notices,
11 I would have never known it.

12 I called AmerenUE on the 800 number, and at
13 that time it was in the evening. Since then they've
14 changed their hours. But, anyway, it was in the
15 evening.

16 And I asked AmerenUE if -- since I knew both
17 of the renters and they had a fairly good track record
18 and reputation -- and I have landlord leave-on
19 agreements on all of my properties -- that if I could
20 put the utilities in my name for a short period of
21 time. And they told me, no, that wasn't possible.

22 I asked them if they could in the future send
23 me the notice or let me know if the utilities were
24 gonna be shut off, because it was wintertime, pipes
25 freeze, you get damage in houses, you have all kinds of

1 problems. Fortunately I don't have any hot-water
2 boilers, but if I did, there would be even more
3 problems.

4 They told me, no, that was not possible
5 because that was confidential. So I asked them what
6 the -- what a person was to do. And, of course, they
7 didn't have any answers. But if I wanted the service
8 back on, they would either have to pay the bill or I
9 would have to "kick them out of the property." That
10 was a direct quote.

11 Well, of course, landlords -- the State of
12 Missouri has a landlord rental law, and that's totally
13 illegal. And if -- you know, you just don't go around
14 locking doors, shutting utilities off, kicking people
15 out without due process. And due process takes a
16 considerable length of time.

17 So one of the people I finally gave enough
18 money to make the agreement with AmerenUE to keep the
19 utilities on. But I became very concerned about that,
20 and so I wrote to the Public Service Commission --
21 well, first of all, I wrote to AmerenUE on several
22 occasions.

23 And AmerenUE sent me a letter back on
24 March the 11th, and here's what they hang their hat on.
25 At the request of the Missouri Public Service

1 Commission I am writing this letter to explain we're
2 unable to put the service in your name under the rules
3 of the Department of Economic Development, Division 240
4 Public Service Commission, Chapter 13, Service and
5 Billing Practices for Residential Customers of
6 Electric, Gas and Water Utilities in the State of
7 Missouri.

8 These are -- are practices and regulations
9 that are not promulgated by AmerenUE. They are
10 promulgated, I suppose, in conjunction with the utility
11 companies by the Public Service Commission. So I was
12 not satisfied with that, and so I made a complaint and
13 we went to arbitration.

14 And the first contact I had with AmerenUE was
15 on 2/28/03. The arbitration was requested on 4/2/03.

16 MR. DUFFY: Your Honor, I just want to
17 interrupt. If -- if he's getting into some kind of
18 current case --

19 MR. MIKA: No, we're not.

20 MR. DUFFY: -- before the Commission --

21 MR. MIKA: It's over.

22 MR. DUFFY: Okay.

23 MR. MIKA: Okay.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry. Go ahead, sir.

25 MR. MIKA: There was an agreement on 6/18/03,

1 which I have tried to work with. And it is -- it is
2 not very acceptable by any means both to the tenants
3 and to the landlords -- landlord. And I'll explain
4 that in a minute.

5 What we -- what we came up with was a -- the
6 form that we would send to AmerenUE that has -- it's
7 very simple. And it has the person who was the tenant
8 at the time of a rental agreement being signed, signing
9 their name stating that I may receive disconnect
10 notices. That's all I want is disconnect notices. I
11 don't -- I don't care about anything else.

12 I just want to know if a -- when the property
13 is going to be shut off, so that I can protect the
14 property from the standpoint of pipes freezing, damage
15 and -- and so forth and so on.

16 But there's a problem. And the problem
17 is -- is that the tenant has to have their account
18 number on it. I -- I -- in the arbitration I had saw
19 that and thought that was very cumbersome and I didn't
20 think it would work, and that it was really a lot of
21 paperwork, because tenants come and go.

22 And you are basing the -- the -- the agreement
23 on the tenant, not on the property like other power
24 companies do. So -- but I tried -- so we tried. So
25 far I have as many as three pieces of paper on an

1 individual property. It depends on how -- how your
2 tenants move in and out, of course, you see.

3 I was told, of course, that they couldn't do
4 this because of the rules and the regulations of the
5 Public Service Commission, and also because it was "a
6 breach of confidentiality."

7 Well, now, when you get your gas bill, you get
8 a little green card. Okay. It's got everything on it;
9 your prior balance, your present balance, what you
10 used, your kilowatts, you know. There's no
11 confidentiality that I can see.

12 But in any event, that was the -- that was the
13 issue. Fortunately or unfortunately I also deal with
14 a -- a sister company called Mid-America Energy.
15 That's in Iowa. That's the old Iowa Power, Iowa
16 Southern.

17 And I have landlord leave-on agreements with
18 all of them -- with all my houses up there. And it
19 works very, very well. They have several different
20 options. They -- it's a -- it's a minimum of -- of
21 work for the landlord, for the tenant -- well, it's no
22 work for the tenant, because the power company has
23 noted on the computer whether this is an owner-occupied
24 or tenant situation, which apparently AmerenUE doesn't.
25 At least their computers don't at the 1-800 number call

1 center.

2 And then if something happens, they have on
3 record who the owner is, his address, his phone number.
4 And by Iowa's regulations, they must make
5 three attempts to contact him before they turn the
6 power off. And there's a time limit. It's about
7 10 days, but there's a time limit.

8 So I would simply like to request that -- and
9 whether these rate increases go in or whether they
10 don't, there's gonna be more and more people in this
11 community and throughout the state that are gonna find
12 themselves in financial difficulty in terms of their
13 energy costs and in terms of paying their bill.

14 And it's gonna be more and more important, not
15 only to them, but also to landlords to know what's
16 going on and to have effective communication. You can
17 have no effective communication with AmerenUE, because
18 everything is confidential.

19 The office out here is locked up like Fort
20 Knox with button locks, you know. I don't have a phone
21 number, unlike Mrs. Johnston, so I just have to park at
22 the gate and walk in back behind the fence and try to
23 find somebody, which I did a couple of days ago.

24 But I would like to present to the Commission,
25 if the Commission would accept it, copies of

1 Mid-America's -- Energy's landlord leave-on agreement.
2 There are four different options, and -- well, they're
3 self-explanatory.

4 And all the communication in relation to this
5 case is contained with a lady at the Consumer Services
6 Department, Gay Fred (phonetic sp.).

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes.

8 MR. MIKA: Do you know her?

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes.

10 MR. MIKA: Well, it's forever voluminous and
11 it's -- it's -- it's almost hilarious to read some of
12 it. But anyway, I'd like to present that to you and
13 suggest that the Public Service Commission take that
14 into serious consideration for appropriate
15 communication and protection of property, as well as
16 the individuals in homes that their property is about
17 ready to be shut off.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
19 much for your comments. Let me see if we have any
20 questions from counsel or real quickly, Ms. Shemwell?

21 MS. SHEMWELL: I don't have any questions.
22 Thank you.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Could we get a copy
24 of this?

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Absolutely.

1 MR. MIKA: Sure.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I'll -- I'll identify for
3 this record and make sure that -- that everybody has
4 access to copies.

5 Commissioner Gaw?

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Mr. Mika, thank you very
7 much. And I -- and I am aware of some of what you have
8 said tonight, because we've had some communication from
9 Staff about it. And I know Commissioner Lumpe --
10 former Commissioner Lumpe -- you may have talked to her
11 at one point in time.

12 MR. MIKA: I think that's who it is -- I think
13 that is.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: And -- and -- but I had not
15 heard -- and I don't believe the -- the final outcome
16 of -- of your -- your case in regard to --

17 MR. MIKA: Well --

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- so it's -- so that's
19 another thing.

20 MR. MIKA: Well, we settled the case -- we
21 settled the case with a -- with a -- and I will give
22 you a copy of it here -- with a third-party
23 notification. Okay. This third-party notification
24 will work, provided we don't have this "my account
25 number is."

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

2 MR. MIKA: When people call in, whether it's
3 owner-occupied or tenants, they don't get an account
4 number. Now, they can ask for an account number, but
5 they don't know to ask for an account number.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

7 MR. MIKA: And so they don't get an account
8 number. So we can't send this in. Well, it's a month
9 before they get their bill. Well, they pay it or they
10 get a money order or they -- they lose it or whatever,
11 you know, and it goes on and on.

12 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

13 MR. MIKA: But this piece of paper can be
14 generated -- well, sometimes once every five years if
15 that's how long your tenant stays, or if you have a
16 turnover of three times a year, you've got
17 three different pieces of paper you're sending in, you
18 know.

19 And it's superfluous and it's not needed.
20 First of all, it's a lot of paperwork for everybody,
21 including AmerenUE. Secondly, it'd be like me asking
22 one of you Commissioners to give me your bank card
23 number or your credit card number.

24 You know, I mean, that -- you know, the --
25 the -- the -- the good point of this from AmerenUE from

1 what they told me was that, well, then I could call
2 with this account number and I could get the whole
3 history of this person for the last 15 years. Well, I
4 don't want that. And I don't even think as a landlord
5 I should have that. If you don't want to talk about
6 confidentiality --

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Right.

8 MR. MIKA: -- and invasion of privacy, this is
9 a good way to invade the privacy. Okay. Now, we have
10 27 of these ready to go to AmerenUE.

11 The other thing is, as a landlord, you know,
12 what I am interested in is the protection of the
13 property, as well as the individuals. The protection
14 of the property and the individuals comes in the winter
15 months.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

17 MR. MIKA: Probably the same days as you have
18 for your restrictions for cutoff services --

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yeah.

20 MR. MIKA: -- and so forth and so on.

21 Okay. That's all that's needed. You'll
22 notice that in Mid-America's, you can -- you can do a
23 lot of things. You can get billing procedures, you can
24 get all kinds of things. But you can also specify what
25 you need. And it needs -- and it needs to be limited.

1 And what I have with Mid-America is exactly
2 what's underlined in red. And in six years I've only
3 got two notices. One, it was a good thing I got it,
4 and it was -- it was bona fide; the other one, in fact,
5 I got just about two months ago, but the guy's mother
6 had passed away in California. He had -- he had gone
7 to California. He had to settle the estate.

8 His mail piled up and they -- they hadn't
9 heard from him, so they were gonna shut his utilities
10 off. And he got back in time and there was no
11 problem -- it wasn't a problem to begin with.

12 But the hoops that people have to go through,
13 based upon the rules and regulations that the Public
14 Service Commission has promulgated, you know, need to
15 really be looked at.

16 I'll give you a copy of this.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yeah.

18 MR. MIKA: It'll work, but it really generates
19 a lot of paperwork --

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

21 MR. MIKA: -- for everybody. But this is the
22 problem.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Mr. Mika, did you
24 present this -- the Mid-America provisions in the
25 arbitration that you referred to earlier?

1 MR. MIKA: No. No, I did not. I -- I have
2 not had any contact with Mid-America up until about
3 two months ago, like I say, with this one situation for
4 four years.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: But -- but you're -- you're
6 telling us that from your perspective it works very
7 well?

8 MR. MIKA: Oh, yeah, it works very well.
9 It -- it seems to be a company that -- well, I -- I --
10 to be honest with you, and you would have to verify
11 this, but I think the same things were happening in
12 Iowa. It gets a little colder up there. There's just
13 a few more problems up there.

14 Because of that, the same thing happens in
15 Iowa. And I think, but I don't know for sure, that
16 this went to court and that's what was developed at the
17 time. But you would have to check that with
18 Mid-America.

19 I know it looks a lot like the old Iowa Power
20 and not like the Iowa Southern, because I -- when I was
21 up there, I dealt with those companies -- well, that's
22 been 20 years ago, of course, and -- and they did have
23 different ones, you know, but then they merged or
24 something.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Thank you very much.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton? I'm
2 sorry. We still may have some questions.

3 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I tell you, everyone is
4 all excited to run before I get a chance. Before you
5 take off Mr. Mika, I have two questions.

6 No. 1, did you have the -- the rule that you
7 referenced earlier that the Company used? I was
8 wondering if you had that exact rule number or if you
9 could recite that again for me?

10 MR. MIKA: Well, you know, let me find it.
11 Okay. The lady that wrote me this -- well, I thought
12 it was a man all the time I was communicating, but it's
13 D-H --

14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Let's not get too
15 personal about these.

16 MR. MIKA: -- and -- and she was -- she was a
17 lady.

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

19 MR. MIKA: Okay. Chapter 13, Services of
20 Billing Practices for Residential Customers of Electric
21 and Gas, Water Utilities in the State of Missouri.

22 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. You have no
23 other numbers, though? That's -- we'll find them.
24 Don't worry about it.

25 MR. MIKA: It's under S-- SCR (sic)

1 240.13.050, Discontinuation of Services --
2 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: That's it.
3 MR. MIKA: -- to --
4 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Got it. Second
5 question.
6 MR. MIKA: Okay.
7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You mentioned that --
8 the case that you had referenced -- the -- the
9 complaint with our -- the customer services folks, is
10 that under your name or is that under a company name?
11 MR. MIKA: Mika Rentals.
12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.
13 MR. MIKA: You know, I just run it.
14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Thank you. That's all
15 I've got. Now you can go.
16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Well, actually I've got a
17 couple of questions. I just want to identify the
18 exhibits for the record.
19 And I -- I -- Mr. Mika, did I understand that
20 you had -- you had handed over to the Commission a
21 four-page document from Mid-American Energy?
22 MR. MIKA: That's right.
23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that correct, sir, from --
24 from Davenport, Iowa?
25 MR. MIKA: Uh-huh.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And -- is that a yes, sir?

2 MR. MIKA: Yes, sir.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And is that what

4 looks to be called a Landlord Agreement Option?

5 MR. MIKA: That's right.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Is that something

7 that you wanted offered as an exhibit?

8 MR. MIKA: Yes. I --

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

10 MR. MIKA: Yes.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Well, I'll mark this as

12 Exhibit 1.

13 (EXHIBIT NO. 1 WAS MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION.)

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I will -- I only have

15 one copy. I obviously will make this available to all

16 counsel who would like to -- to have copies.

17 And, Mr. Mika, you also presented another

18 document from Ameren; is that something you want as an

19 exhibit as well?

20 MR. MIKA: You can. That's what we agreed

21 upon. I've tried to make it work. It is extremely

22 cumbersome. It really doesn't work, like I said,

23 because of the account number. And then, of course,

24 the volumes of paper --

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay.

1 MR. MIKA: -- you know.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And do I --

3 MR. MIKA: And I think it is obtrusive. I
4 think -- I think for -- for a -- a tenant to have to
5 give their account number to a -- a landlord with all
6 that that entails be -- and -- and the reason I -- it
7 has to be done this way is because AmerenUE's computers
8 are not set up to do it any other way.

9 Well, now, we all know computers can be
10 changed, you know. I -- and -- and, you know, in all
11 fairness to AmerenUE, I would certainly say that if a
12 landlord is not willing to have a landlord leave-on
13 agreement -- you see what I'm saying --

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Uh-huh.

15 MR. MIKA: -- well, then I think landlords
16 should be on their own to be honest with you. But I
17 have landlord leave-on agreements with all of them and
18 keep them up to date.

19 And -- and -- and I -- and just in reference
20 to time, there is a lot of letters back and forth
21 between me and AmerenUE that are in your office
22 somewhere.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yeah.

24 MR. MIKA: And I think it would -- I think it
25 would behoove the Commission to review the case, and --

1 and you'll get a full flavor of what's really going on.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Mika, if I could just
3 simply identify for the record what it is you've given
4 me. And I -- I see this is a letter that appears to be
5 dated June 24th, 2003 from Ameren to you; is that
6 correct, sir?

7 MR. MIKA: That's correct.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And it's --

9 MR. MIKA: That's what I'm supposed to use.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And it's entitled Third-Party
11 Notification in the Event of Disconnection?

12 MR. MIKA: That's right.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I'll label that as
14 a one-page letter, and I'll label that as -- as
15 Exhibit 2.

16 (EXHIBIT NO. 2 WAS MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION.)

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I only have one copy, and
18 obviously this will be available for -- for counsel
19 to -- to copy and look at.

20 Mr. Mika, that's all the questions I have.
21 Thank you so much for your time and your testimony this
22 evening.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you.

24 MR. MIKA: Thank you.

25 (Mr. Ralph Mika was excused.)

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1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next witness
2 Carletta Connor.
3 Good evening. If you would please raise your
4 right hand, Ms. Connor.
5 (Ms. Carletta Connor was sworn.)
6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, ma'am.
7 If you'd like to stand behind the podium and
8 give your name for the record and spell your last name
9 for the court reporter, please.
10 THE WITNESS: My name is Carletta,
11 C-A-R-L-E-T-T-A, Connor, C-O-N-N-O-R.
12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please?
13 MS. CONNOR: 920 Hassen, H-A-S-S-E-N, Drive in
14 Mexico, Missouri.
15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you --
16 MS. CONNOR: 65265.
17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Are -- are you a
18 gas customer of --
19 MS. CONNOR: Yes, I am.
20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: -- AmerenUE?
21 All right. Thank you.
22 Any statements you'd like to make to the
23 Commission at this time?
24 MS. CONNOR: Yes. First I'd like to say this
25 one, AmerenUE was giving the Forgiveness Program this

1 summer. I missed it, because I found out late. And
2 there are many families like me that missed it.

3 Is there any way we could get that back or
4 something that you could do or -- on that level again
5 for the families that missed?

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And that's something --
7 and -- and -- and you're free to give comments. You're
8 certainly free to talk to Staff, Office of Public
9 Counsel and the Ameren after -- after the hearing.

10 MS. CONNOR: Oh, after?

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Yes, ma'am.

12 MS. CONNOR: Okay. I'm sorry.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's quite all right.

14 That's quite all right.

15 MS. CONNOR: Okay.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: They'll be glad to -- they'll
17 be glad to --

18 MS. CONNOR: Okay.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: -- answer your questions.

20 MS. CONNOR: Okay. I am a GRO member, and
21 myself, I am on a fixed income. I get \$6,000 a year.
22 And when I first got back to Missouri in 2000,
23 AmerenUE had me under the pretense that after 12 months
24 my budget billing would be up and I would have the
25 whole bill paid off.

1 Well, when I went to call them on the
2 12th month, I found that my bill was not paid off, and
3 I still owed them over \$1,200. Right now my bill is
4 \$2,500. I'm trying to pay it. They do not give me any
5 slack.

6 I call. I ask. They tell me, no, if you
7 don't do this, then we're gonna cut you off. If you
8 don't do that, I'm gonna cut you off.

9 And -- and I live in public housing. And I
10 can't afford to be cut off. Because if I don't pay my
11 utilities when I first get my check, and I wait around
12 and go and do something else. And I pay some more
13 bills, then I'm kicked out. Me and my kids are on the
14 street, not them and their kids -- me and my kids.

15 Because we have five days to get our utilities
16 back on. And this rate is not working, and what about
17 the rest of us?

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Ms. Connor, thank you.
19 If you would, just stay --

20 MS. CONNOR: I'm sorry.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: -- in case we have any
22 questions. Do we have any questions from counsel?

23 (No response.)

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I don't see any indication.

25 Commissioner Gaw?

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you.
2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?
3 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No.
4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I don't -- Ms. Connor, thank
5 you very much for your --
6 MS. CONNOR: Thank you.
7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: -- time and your testimony.
8 (Ms. Carletta Connor was excused.)
9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next witness --
10 and I hope I pronounce the name correctly -- Elenore
11 Schewe. I -- I apologize if I -- if I misspeak.
12 MS. SCHEWE: Close.
13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. If you would,
14 please raise your right hand to be sworn.
15 (Ms. Elenore Schewe was sworn.)
16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. If you
17 would, please state your name for the record and spell
18 your last name for the court reporter.
19 MS. SCHEWE: My name is Elenore Schewe. The
20 first name is spelled E-L-E-N-O-R-E; the last name is
21 spelled S-C-H-E-W-E.
22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I apologize for
23 mispronouncing your name. Could you --
24 MS. SCHEWE: That happens often.
25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Could you give your address

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1 for the record, please?

2 MS. SCHEWE: I have two.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

4 MS. SCHEWE: But you use 508 West Highway 54,
5 Vandalia, Missouri 63382; and I use Post Office Box 1.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. And are you a gas
7 customer of AmerenUE?

8 MS. SCHEWE: Yes. My family has been a gas
9 company (sic) -- well, as long as AmerenUE -- the gas
10 was installed in this particular house sometime in the
11 '50s, and it's been the same family name all that time.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any -- any statements you'd
13 like to make for the Commission?

14 MS. SCHEWE: Well, yes. But because numbers
15 are confusing spoken, I'll give you that (indicating).
16 And what it is is a copy of my bills since April the
17 3rd to October the 1st of this year.

18 My point is to question the quality of service
19 that I have received in that period of time. If you'll
20 notice, I'm overdressed for this, but the temperature
21 in my house is 51 degrees. And it's been that way
22 whenever the ambient temperature outside falls that low
23 and below. And that is because I am trying to
24 establish what a normal figure would -- of usage would
25 be in my house using just three pipes.

1 Now, if you look at the first bill, you'll see
2 that there was a meter change, and that meter change
3 occurred on the 17th of April of 2003. You'll see that
4 the bill says that there was 32 units of gas used up to
5 the time of the meter change, and there was an estimate
6 reading of 29 thereafter.

7 Now, when I got that bill, it was considerably
8 higher than I was used to. But what was catching my
9 attention was the usage. It was an unreal figure. I
10 paid the bill.

11 The next month it's a little bit less by way
12 of usage. And I thought, well, maybe we're getting
13 someplace, but it's still an estimate. And I thought
14 it's a new meter. It's -- there is not that much
15 shrubbery around. I can read it. Why can't this meter
16 be read?

17 An estimate continues on down until you get to
18 July. And by then I have written several times saying,
19 why are you estimating this? I'm never afforded a
20 reply. Finally in July I'm sent a postcard. Read your
21 meter and send it to us.

22 Well, I can read the meter. That was no
23 problem, so I sent it in. But what blew my mind was
24 that the reading that I read was even worse than what
25 their estimates were. And that's when I wanted to find

1 out why.

2 And AmerenUE was offering me no help when I
3 complained that the meter was defective. I elicited
4 the help of the heating contractor that had not had
5 anything to do with the installation, but was the one
6 that I could depend on.

7 And I said, shut off all meters. I'm going to
8 leave them off long enough to know whether there is a
9 leak or whether I am getting a zero reading. That
10 makes sense, doesn't it? It would have made a heck of
11 a lot more sense if I had been able to start that in
12 May or June instead of having to wait until August.

13 At any rate, I take two weeks to establish a
14 zero reading. The reading when I started it on the
15 15th, was the same as when I read it on the 29th of
16 August. Okay. Let's try one time. And when we looked
17 at the pilot on the furnace, I am not kidding you, it
18 was 12 inches long (indicating). Like a blow torch.

19 It had been lit by an AmerenUE employee, who
20 is the one that changed the meter and complained
21 bitterly because it wasn't his job. He was having to
22 do it when somebody else was off.

23 I had been called two days before -- perhaps
24 three days before the 17th and asked when I would be
25 home, because it would be necessary to light the pilots

1 after the meter was changed.

2 And I picked the day of the week -- and
3 there's only one -- when there is a possibility of
4 two people being in that house so that if I wasn't
5 there, the housekeeper could let the man in.

6 It was an unpleasant day. It was drizzly. It
7 wasn't raining. It just was a drizzly, unpleasant day.
8 When he was finished putting in the meter, he came up
9 to my front door complaining every step that this
10 wasn't his job. And he wanted to come in my house, and
11 go through the entire length of the hall down the
12 steps. He never once offered to wipe his shoes, which
13 were muddy. And I resent it.

14 And I said, go around back and go down the
15 cellar steps. And perhaps that was where we fell apart
16 right quick. At any rate, I don't believe he was
17 justified in lighting a pilot that is 12 inches high.
18 It only had to be high enough to heat the thermocouple
19 (indicating).

20 Why? There was no point in doing this. The
21 unfortunate thing was I trusted him. I figured he was
22 a technician. He knew what he was doing. I don't know
23 whether he is also a sadist. But when I saw that
24 pilot, I was tempted to think so.

25 And it also lead me to think that the pilots

1 on the other two pieces of equipment were the same way.
2 Unfortunately when he had put the guards down in front
3 of the lights, he jammed them on so tight that I
4 couldn't get them off to see the pilot.

5 It wasn't until I asked the heating contractor
6 in my town to come and get them off that anything was
7 done. That didn't strike me as being qualified help.
8 Unfortunately I don't have his name, because I would be
9 glad to give it to you.

10 Now, this still didn't satisfy what kind of
11 usage it should have been if it was done properly. So
12 starting on the 15th of August all the pilots went off
13 for two weeks. Then we went into a period of one pilot
14 on just to keep the thermocouple. That went on for a
15 couple of weeks.

16 Then we lighted one of the water heaters. I
17 have two water heaters, because one is under the
18 bathrooms, one is under the kitchen. It was designed
19 to do laundry. I do no laundry in the house. I don't.
20 I don't entertain. I have neither borders nor roomers
21 besides my cats, and most of them are outside.

22 Okay. We've gone along on this. I am finally
23 to within three days of one total month of three pilots
24 on. My bill is now delinquent.

25 But I would like to call your attention to the

1 last three bills that are on this page. Go back three
2 and you'll see these are for August the 5th to
3 September the 4th -- 30 days. Look over at the usage.
4 64. This is in a hot month of summer. Minimum usage.

5 The three years before, that usage was between
6 10 and 18, and I am being told that it's 64. Only
7 10 days of that are with these blow-torch pilots going.
8 Then for another 14 days there's been no pilots on.
9 But it says it's an estimated bill.

10 Now, move on down to the next one. This says
11 it's a corrected bill. It's for the same dates -- the
12 same number of days. And it's saying it's 20.

13 It's 20 and you owe us \$27.58. I'm not
14 talking about the tax. I may not talk about the tax;
15 on the other hand I may. And I paid it under protest.

16 And then notice the last bill says it's from
17 the 5th of August to the 1st of October. And, yes, you
18 only used 17 units in 57 days, not 20 units in 30 days,
19 but pay us \$6.63 more.

20 I have tried since I rece-- I have not paid
21 this bill. I have written and I have called. And
22 everything that anybody has said about the 800 number
23 is true. It's almost impossible to get through.
24 Totally impossible to get any satisfaction.

25 A friend of mine gave me the name and the

1 telephone number of a man here in the Mexico office and
2 says, now, it's not an 800 number. I said, that's all
3 right. I'll pay for this call. I get him. Oh, I
4 can't do anything for you. I'm in construction.

5 And I said, very well. If you're in
6 construction, tell me why it took from the 17th of
7 April until the 29th of September for anyone to tell me
8 what was wrong, and I had to have estimated bills.

9 Because on the 29th of September without any
10 prior notice a Schlumberger-Cemo (phonetic sp.) truck
11 pulled up in front of my house. A man came to my door,
12 rang the bell. I was in bed to stay warm, although it
13 was approximately noon when he came.

14 And I said, well, what do you want? He said,
15 I have to synchronize the meter. And I said, well, why
16 weren't you here when it was installed? Well, I don't
17 work for AmerenUE. I work for Schlumberger. And I'm
18 beginning to think I'm really getting the run around.

19 At any rate, he says, I -- I have to take this
20 part off and I have to run a magnet over it and
21 synchronize it so you -- it can be read in the office.
22 And I said, before you take that off, you tell me what
23 you're reading on the meter.

24 It was interesting to me, because I read from
25 left to right, and he was reading from right to left.

1 And he pointed out why. I find it interesting. I'm
2 practicing reading from right to left now. But it was
3 all right. We came out with the same figure, the 3009,
4 which you see on that last bill.

5 So I have worked on from there still with
6 my -- how much should I really have been using in the
7 summertime if the pilots had been properly lit. I
8 don't know how many meters that man has put in in
9 Vandalia. I don't know whether he's done the same
10 thing to other people, but I call that abuse -- abuse
11 of utilities, abuse of my equipment.

12 I hope that the arch that lights my burners
13 will work when I turn them on. But to think that for
14 four months they were carbonized leads me to worry.

15 Now, so much for the billing. I got no
16 satisfaction whatsoever other than saying, how can you
17 bill 20 units in August? Did a rate increase go into
18 effect September the 1st? Oh, no, no rate increase
19 went into effect September 1st.

20 That was from another woman in the Mexico
21 office who said, I can't really help you. All the
22 billing is done in St. Louis. And I'm really afraid to
23 say anything, but I -- I can tell you that no rate
24 increase went into effect September 1st.

25 I have no way of figuring out why I owe \$6.63

1 more for 17 units than I did the month before for
2 20 units. And I think I'm entitled to. And I have
3 asked for it by letter with details as I have given
4 you -- indications of what the problem was of the
5 argument why couldn't you tell me why you were
6 estimating?

7 I was never accorded that answer either. And
8 I don't think it was fair. I've heard that -- comments
9 from people, it's not fair. Okay. I'm saying it. I'm
10 giving one particular person, that's me, but I feel
11 very confident that it happened to other people in
12 Vandalia and haven't been found out.

13 And I am complaining about the service. Do I
14 think it's worth 78 percent? No way.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
16 much. Let me see if we have any -- any clarifying
17 questions from -- from counsel.

18 Mr. Duffy?

19 MR. DUFFY: I'd just like to have Mr. Loesch
20 and Mr. Luetkemeyer just kind of raise their hand, and
21 I would invite you to talk with them. They're both
22 management and operations personnel based here. Those
23 two men right over there, ma'am (indicating).

24 Would you please talk with them and see if you
25 can get any satisfaction about the problem that you

1 just described?

2 MS. SCHEWE: I would be happy to.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Schewe, thank you very
5 much for taking your time to drive over here tonight.
6 And -- and you -- you --

7 MS. SCHEWE: You have no idea --

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: We appreciate being able to
9 hear your story.

10 MS. SCHEWE: -- how much trouble.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: I cannot even imagine.

12 MS. SCHEWE: Today I had -- I had an
13 appointment in St. Louis -- a medical appointment. In
14 the parking lot of the medical office I tripped over
15 the speed bump, which just tells you how fast I was
16 going trying to get everything in.

17 And I spent four hours in the emergency room
18 of the hospital trying to find out if I'd done any
19 damage. I kept saying, I can't stay here any longer.
20 I've got to get to that Public Service Commission
21 meeting.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Well, we appreciate the
23 fact that you're here. I hope that you're okay. Did
24 they say -- well, you don't have to tell us.

25 MS. SCHEWE: Thanks to an ice pack I don't

1 have the egg on my head that I had at 10:30 this
2 morning.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right.

4 MS. SCHEWE: But I can't move my right hand
5 otherwise you would have got more papers out of this.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?

7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: No questions.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you -- thank you so much
9 for your testimony and your time this evening. Thank
10 you.

11 (Ms. Elenore Schewe was excused.)

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next witness
13 Eldon Mellott. I hope I'm pronouncing that name
14 correctly.

15 MR. MELLOTT: Mellott.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mellott. I'm sorry.

17 MR. MELLOTT: It's closer than a lot of people
18 get.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. If you would,
20 please raise your right hand to be sworn.

21 (Mr. Eldon Mellott was sworn.)

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir. If
23 you would, please state your name for the record and
24 spell your last name for the court reporter.

25 MR. MELLOTT: Eldon Mellott, M-E-L-L-O-T-T.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And, Mr. Mellott, your
2 address, please?

3 MR. MELLOTT: 718 East Jackson, Mexico.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
5 AmerenUE?

6 MR. MELLOTT: Yeah. Yes, sir.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you'd like to
8 make for the Commission?

9 MR. MELLOTT: Well, I -- I'm -- I'm just an
10 old farmer boy. I don't understand big business.
11 Never have and probably never will.

12 But when I was asking questions earlier, the
13 guy said, well, they didn't get raises. Well, I -- I
14 can go along with that if they're -- you know, they're
15 that far in debt.

16 But then he says he -- they're not making any
17 profit off the gas. But the customers are paying all
18 the maintenance and the repairs and the -- you know,
19 where are they making their money?

20 If they're not making any profit off of this
21 gas and -- and the residential customers are paying for
22 the -- the new pipes and everything when they come and
23 put them in -- and then they don't know whether they're
24 making any profit or not.

25 Now, something just don't jive here with me.

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1 I mean -- and when they put these new lines in, they
2 contracted this all out to some company that does all
3 of this -- pushing all of this pipe underneath the
4 ground and they tore up sewer lines, water lines, your
5 front yards.

6 And then the company that was doing it were
7 responsible for making the repairs of anything that
8 they tore up. So AmerenUE wasn't out any extra money
9 to make repairs.

10 And then on top of it my
11 ex-stepdaddy-in-law -- their gas bill went to \$11 a
12 month. It'd never been that low. Well, they contacted
13 them two or three times.

14 Then one day they just came out and changed
15 the meter and said, well, the meter was bad and sent
16 them this humongous bill. They estimated how much
17 the -- the -- the bill was, and they notified them and
18 it's their meter.

19 They're responsible for the repairs and they
20 wouldn't do anything about it, and then they come out
21 and said, well, you owe this much. So I -- I'm a
22 little confused on this 25 percent raise all of a
23 sudden.

24 They said that these mains were, what,
25 70 years old? Well, they've had to know for several

1 years they was gonna have to replace them. And all of
2 a sudden they replaced them and -- and dropped the
3 whole bill on to the customers.

4 Because of -- like I said, the average raise
5 around here was 2 percent, if they got a raise. I'm
6 living on \$552 a month SSI. And I'm on budgeted
7 billing.

8 I started out at 91, and then they jumped it
9 to 127. And they come in and winterized my home and
10 got me a new furnace, and they dropped it down to
11 9-- 97. Now it's back to 99 -- or \$98 a month.

12 But then you have to go out here and pay it
13 and give somebody a dollar to pay them or -- or mail it
14 to St. Louis. And when you pick up the phone, you end
15 up pushing all the buttons and miss half of the
16 recordings anyway.

17 So, you know, like I said, to me they've got a
18 lot of gall saying they want a 25 percent raise with
19 the way the economy is and -- and the customers.
20 Granted they -- they've got to be making some money for
21 their shareholders.

22 But somewhere they've got to -- it looks like
23 they ought to have to bite part of the bullet of -- of
24 the repairs and everything. I'd like to be in some
25 kind of business where I was selling something, and

1 whoever I sold the stuff to paid for all the repairs,
2 maintenance, upkeep, wages.

3 To me they're not putting out anything, except
4 this gas they're buying that they ain't making no money
5 on. I can't -- it -- it don't make sense to me. I
6 ain't the sharpest knife in the drawer, I understand
7 that.

8 But it's just like I said, a farmer goes and
9 buys a new combine, he can't raise his corn prices a
10 dollar a bushel to pay for that combine. And when they
11 put in that nuclear plant, they tried to raise the
12 prices to get us to pay for it before they ever turned
13 the first shovel of dirt.

14 And then their cost overruns were so bad, they
15 couldn't build the second and third one. And it was a
16 job plus -- a cost plus job. They had a big auction
17 down there selling -- well, we bought a shed that was
18 eight foot wide, twelve foot long, paneled, fully
19 insulated, windows and wired for an air conditioner.
20 It was an office to be pulled out on the job site for
21 \$50. Now, if that ain't a waste of money.

22 And then the -- and then when they put these
23 new meters in -- now, the AmerenUE guys come out and
24 put the new meters in -- connected the meters up and
25 run the pipe from the main to the house.

1 Well, they put the regulators in backwards.
2 When they -- and I didn't have no gas pressure. I
3 called them. I said, I don't have any gas pressure
4 now. The guy come out and he couldn't -- he could just
5 barely get his fingers in there to turn the pressure up
6 a little bit, because the old one when it used to come
7 on, it would come on and it'd go woof. Now you can't
8 even hear it if you've got your hand in it, you know.

9 But all of these regulators were put in
10 backwards. They can't even adjust them. That's
11 about -- about the extent of what I've got to complain
12 about, I guess, mostly.

13 But then my neighbors is one of them --
14 Ms. Weiss -- their meter went bad, they notified them,
15 and they hit them with a high bill, and said, well,
16 you've got to pay it.

17 But that meter belongs to them and I'd think
18 the responsibility for that meter should be theirs. If
19 it goes bad, it ought to be on them, especially when
20 you notify them.

21 And my ex-stepdaddy-in-law did. He -- you
22 know. Because their bill was -- I think it was about
23 \$11 a month. Well, if you don't burn nothing, it costs
24 you \$9 a month, you know, if everything is shut off.

25 And they went, oh, three or four months or

1 more. And they come out there just one day and changed
2 the meter, and said your meter is bad and sent them big
3 estimated bill. They estimated what -- so they're --
4 they're charging for something they can't even prove
5 that they used it.

6 And that's about all I can --

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir. Let
8 me see if we have any -- any clarifying questions
9 from -- from counsel. I don't see any.

10 Commissioner Gaw?

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you, Mr. Mellott.

12 MR. MELLOTT: Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: We appreciate it.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much for your
15 time and your testimony this evening.

16 (Mr. Eldon Mellott was excused.)

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as the next witness
18 and -- and I -- I'm not sure if I can get the -- I
19 think the first name is Richard. I could be wrong.
20 And I'm sorry your last name, please, sir?

21 MR. DARNEY: Darney.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
23 much, sir. If you would please come forward to be
24 sworn.

25 If you're able, and I understand if you're

1 unable, if you can raise your right hand to be sworn.
2 (Mr. Richard Darney was sworn.)
3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
4 If you would, please state your name for the
5 record and spell your last name for the court reporter.
6 MR. DARNEY: Richard Darney, D-A-R-N-E-Y.
7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please, sir?
8 MR. DARNEY: 421 West Warren Street.
9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in Mexico?
10 MR. DARNEY: Yes.
11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
12 AmerenUE?
13 MR. DARNEY: Yes, I am.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you, sir.
15 Any statements you have for the Commission?
16 MR. DARNEY: I'm sure you've heard a lot and
17 you'll probably hear it more. I don't have much to
18 say. It's just that I'm on Social Security disability
19 100 percent. I can't work.
20 You know, if this -- if I was working, you
21 know, I could work maybe a couple of extra hours a
22 month to make up for it, but I can't. And so -- you
23 know, I pay \$77 a month on budget. That's about \$40
24 more than what my actual bill is, so I can't afford no
25 more hike on the gas bill.

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1 That's all I've got.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Mr. Darney, thank you.

3 Let me -- let me make sure we don't have any -- any

4 questions from counsel?

5 (No response.)

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner?

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Thank you, Mr. Darney.

8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Thank you for waiting.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Darney, thank you very

10 much for your time and your testimony.

11 (Mr. Richard Darney was excused.)

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I see as -- as the last

13 witness that I have signed up, Representative Hobbs.

14 And did I understand that you -- did you wish to

15 testify, sir, or --

16 MR. HOBBS: Just briefly.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Absolutely. Absolutely. If

18 you'd like to come forward, sir.

19 Can I swear you in, sir?

20 MR. HOBBS: You sure may.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Would you raise your right

22 hand to be sworn?

23 (Mr. Steve Hobbs was sworn.)

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, Mr. Hobbs.

25 If you would, please state your name for the

1 record and spell your last name.

2 MR. HOBBS: I'm State Representative Steve
3 Hobbs from the 21st District, H-O-B-B-S.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right, sir. And your
5 address if you care to state it?

6 MR. HOBBS: 26638 Highway KK, Mexico.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
8 AmerenUE?

9 MR. HOBBS: No, sir, I'm not.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Do you represent
11 constituents who are gas customers?

12 MR. HOBBS: Yes, sir, I do.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

14 MR. HOBBS: I have many here tonight.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you'd like to
16 make, sir?

17 MR. HOBBS: Yeah, I would. I -- first of all,
18 I'd like to thank you all for coming here tonight. I
19 think you've heard a lot of important testimony from
20 people who are -- people who are concerned about
21 problems we have going on in our area.

22 I also want to thank the folks from
23 AmerenUE that are here tonight. It's -- I -- I know
24 how you feel. I spent the whole morning in a room with
25 about 35 superintendents from all the schools from my

1 district. So, Ron, you -- you know, you feel my pain.

2 I would like to echo the thoughts that some of
3 the people that have been here today. AmerenUE has
4 been a good partner in our community, and has been very
5 active our community. And I want to thank them for
6 that involvement.

7 We have had some depressing times here in
8 Mexico. We've seen a lot of businesses leave, and we
9 have a lot of folks that are without jobs now. And so
10 any time we talk about increases in rates in essential
11 services, it's difficult to stomach.

12 And I ask you to take that into consideration.
13 I ask you to take all of the testimony here today in
14 consideration. I think you can tell from what you've
15 heard here tonight that the folks from the
16 21st District in the Mexico area are very concerned
17 about fairness. They understand about making a profit,
18 and they understand about -- it takes money to operate.

19 They also understand about how difficult it is
20 for some of them at this time in their lives. And I
21 hope you take all of the testimony here tonight into
22 consideration when you're hearing the rest of your
23 testimony around the state.

24 Part of the reasoning, I believe, that this
25 issue is hitting so close to home is because here in

1 Mexico we've gone through a similar situation with
2 Missouri Water, the -- the water company that we have
3 here.

4 And it's been expressed to me numerous times
5 that they did not feel it was fair that our rates were
6 raised for our water usage here in Mexico for
7 improvements in other cities.

8 And when I talk about fairness, people here
9 want to pay their fair share. They don't want to pay
10 for somebody else. And that brings part of that into
11 play.

12 I ask as you make your decisions to take into
13 consideration the economics of our area, the needs of
14 our people, fairness to all involved.

15 And I want to thank you for your time here
16 tonight. Thanks, gentlemen.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Representative, thank you.
18 Let me make sure we don't have any questions first from
19 counsel.

20 (No response.)

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm seeing none.

22 Commissioner Gaw?

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: No. Representative, thank
24 you very much for -- for being here all evening. I
25 know that's -- you're very busy and that -- that means

1 a lot to everybody here, I know.

2 But thank you and we appreciate your
3 testimony.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?

5 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You're brave on
6 two accounts. No. 1, for coming to this meeting, and a
7 applaud you for that; and, 2, actually getting up there
8 and taking an oath. So you've got a politician under
9 oath.

10 MR. HOBBS: You know, I almost said that it's
11 the best of my ability, but as a former representative,
12 you understand my pain.

13 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I understand.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you -- Representative,
15 thank you very much for your testimony and your time.

16 (Mr. Steve Hobbs was excused.)

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I -- I see that Representative
18 Hobbs was -- was the last witness who signed up. Is
19 there anyone else who wishes to testify this evening?

20 Yes, ma'am?

21 MS. COULIBALY: I'm sorry.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's quite all right.

23 MS. COULIBALY: I'm from Columbia, Missouri --

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's quite all right.

25 MS. COULIBALY: -- and I wasn't aware that

1 this was the place.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's quite all right. If I
3 could just trouble you to sign in real quickly.

4 And -- and while she's signing in, let me just
5 identify -- I think I failed to identify for the record
6 Exhibit No. 3. It's a one-page photocopy of bills from
7 Elenore Schewe -- if I'm pronouncing her name
8 correctly -- I believe from April of 2003 to October of
9 2003.

10 (EXHIBIT NO. 3 WAS MARKED FOR IDENTIFICATION.)

11 Again, that's the only copy, and copies are
12 available to counsel if they'd like to see those.

13 THE REPORTER: Judge, can I change my paper
14 real quick?

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Absolutely. Please -- please
16 tell me when you're ready.

17 (A recess was taken.)

18 THE REPORTER: I'm ready, Judge.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you. We're
20 back on the record.

21 If I could get you to raise your right hand,
22 ma'am, and please be sworn.

23 (Ms. Anna Coulibaly was sworn.)

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.

25 If you would, please state your name for the

1 record and spell your last name for the court reporter.

2 MS. COULIBALY: My name is Anna Coulibaly.

3 It's spelled C-O-U-L-I-B, as in boy, A-L-Y. Coulibaly.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you. And --

5 MS. COULIBALY: And I'm from Columbia,
6 Missouri.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Thank you.

8 And are you a gas customer of AmerenUE?

9 MS. COULIBALY: Yes, I am.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statements
11 you'd like to make to the Commission?

12 MS. COULIBALY: Yes. Let me first just give
13 you a quick background in spite of the way I sound,
14 I've been in Missouri -- I came to Missouri in 1971 and
15 have had our house since 1987.

16 I also have a disability background -- rather
17 severe such. In 1981 I had a near-death experience and
18 it -- and a severe head injury. I was on total dis--
19 disability. I am a candidate for total spinal fusion
20 from top to bottom, and I've had severe rheumatoid
21 arthritis since I was a teenager. It's a painful
22 combination.

23 And when it's cold, getting up in the morning
24 it's much worse. It takes me at least three to
25 four hours to get up every morning. It is very

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1 difficult to maintain a job, and at this time I have
2 only temporary jobs.

3 My -- the main work is contracting work
4 primarily for the State and et cetera. They are
5 struggling. My second work which I have folded totally
6 September 1, and, you know, because of what legislation
7 or can guess.

8 But I have had a major struggle trying to
9 maintain the gas in the house. I should say my husband
10 of 10 years is forced to over-- be overseas. He
11 committed the crime of getting a Ph.D., So he had to
12 leave me.

13 And my other family is in Sweden. My -- my
14 mother is 87, and I don't dare to take her here. She
15 would not get the care she got there or the support she
16 gets there.

17 My -- really what I can only say is -- is like
18 a bad dream started about a year and a half ago. I
19 was, of course, on the -- what do you call it -- the
20 budget billing.

21 During the summer in June or July or so about
22 a year and a half ago I got the disconnection notice.
23 Now, I have gotten disconnection notices before, so I
24 know that they can only send two, but they didn't.

25 By the way, I had called them after the first

1 and acknowledged it and et cetera, et cetera, because
2 it was a long time since and I couldn't understand what
3 it was. I didn't know I was behind.

4 And this was in the middle of the hot summer,
5 so I just forgot until I got disconnected. Now, that
6 in spite of at -- you know, our telephone conversation,
7 I had again referred to my disability. And I had done
8 that several times before, which they refused to take
9 notice of.

10 Not only that, I had to pay the reconnection.
11 I had to pay -- they insisted on a new down payment.
12 I've had that house since 1987. And the -- I've got no
13 reasonable explanation for why I had to pay \$400 more
14 or what was it -- I think it was \$400. I'd have to
15 double check that.

16 And I have been paying for a long time. And
17 again, I have -- when you get these bills back, it
18 doesn't say how much they have received. It never
19 says -- I've never seen -- I've lived on
20 three continents, and I've never seen a utility or
21 public service organization that leaves the account
22 without telling how much they received and when.

23 It -- it's absolutely unfathomable. This is
24 the last example of it. Oh, by the way, they took me
25 off the budget billing, of course. So they do that to

1 the people who need it most. It stands to very good
2 reason.

3 And besides -- now the last time and the time
4 before when they had tried to have these forgiveness
5 periods, well, as soon as I heard it, I ran there. In
6 fact, I went off work early to get to the agency that
7 they said. They had closed early.

8 So I was there the next morning. Then they
9 told me, no, we gave it to the next agency, so I went
10 there, who told me, oh, that money is already gone.
11 That was at the first moment I heard about it. It
12 wasn't that they had notified me myself, I heard it
13 over the radio.

14 And it is my contention that the system of
15 forgiveness that they are now doing is worse
16 than casino play. It is by design unequal and unjust
17 and depends on who knows who.

18 And I sincerely hope that that is changed and
19 reformed. And I also hope to have -- see an accounting
20 that tells what they received and that they are
21 periodically stating how much they have in escrow for
22 you or whatever they call it, and that they are
23 positive in trying to provide the payments that you can
24 do ahead of time.

25 And I would like to show you this last time

1 on -- on the August 17th. I paid -- I had a bill of
2 \$70.35. I paid \$170.35. Now, most of the agents
3 refuse to even take an overpayment if you try to budget
4 yourself. But because I was afraid of the coming rate
5 hikes, I tried to pay in advance.

6 Still no accounting on how much they received.
7 Here I get something that says credit 33.31, un--
8 unapplied credit, 35.42. Where the rest went, I don't
9 know. And I don't have it photocopied, but if you come
10 to Columbia, Missouri tomorrow --

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay.

12 MS. COULIBALY: -- you're welcome to get the
13 photocopy.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Now, it's -- it's -- it's up
15 to you, ma'am, if you want the Commission to -- we
16 don't have a copy machine here, at least not which I'm
17 aware, but you can --

18 MS. COULIBALY: But you can note that --

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's fine.

20 MS. COULIBALY: -- you have seen it and -- and
21 you can read it for the record.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's fine. We can sure --
23 and you've testified about it, and that's perfectly
24 fine.

25 Okay. Any -- any other comments you have,

1 ma'am?

2 MS. CAINE: I can make a copy.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that -- is that something

4 you'd like entered into the record, ma'am?

5 MS. COULIBALY: Please. Would you?

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I think they can make a copy

7 for you. Great.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: You want your check also?

9 MS. COULIBALY: Yeah.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I don't know if you

12 want to leave that with us.

13 MS. COULIBALY: No. Well, you can't squeeze

14 blood out of a turnip.

15 But also I -- I also direct that if we are not

16 allowed to be on budget billing, that at least people

17 are allowed to pay in advance. And it is very

18 difficult for a lot of people trying to interact.

19 I tried to write to the Commission and to get

20 even the name of Commissioners' names who I should

21 address it to you rather than to whom it may concern,

22 which is not the way I usually write letters.

23 I went to the website. I went to the library.

24 I couldn't get the information. I could -- I didn't

25 get the names either when I tried of where and how to

1 address it to whom to direct it to.

2 But to summarize it, I think there's that an
3 accounting reform, as has been stated in other
4 testimonies, is something that should be done. And it
5 should also be told what reading they have so that it
6 is verifiable by the individuals.

7 What they're reading and what reading they
8 have, that should be on every bill. It should be
9 accounted for how much they received and when. And
10 when it comes to the forgiveness program, it should be
11 done by a formula who takes into account things like
12 disability, children, whatever -- temperature and also
13 what efforts have been done -- have been done to make
14 payments. And everybody should be informed at the same
15 time and in good time to make -- to apply for it.

16 And -- and they have diminished services
17 everywhere so that it is very difficult to get
18 information, to get contacts, to get anything and yet
19 they want higher rate.

20 Last year, by the way, we were in meetings
21 organized with the Commissioners and with our first
22 councilwoman in Columbia, Missouri. We were then
23 promised decreases and we never saw them. What
24 happened to them?

25 But a lot of people are suffering and there

1 should actually be an ombudsman, and apparently there
2 is a form over to the Commission. I couldn't even get
3 that out of AmerenUE, okay.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Coulibaly, thank you very
5 much for your testimony. Let me double check and see
6 if we have any questions from -- from first -- either
7 from counsel, Ms. --

8 MS. SHEMWELL: I --

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Shemwell, are there any
10 questions?

11 MS. SHEMWELL: I just wanted to mention that
12 the Commission's 800 number and some information facts
13 back there on the table. We do have a consumer
14 services department.

15 MS. COULIBALY: I have tried to talk to them.
16 But again, the people there are enlisting a paycheck.
17 They are not really very knowledgeable, and least of
18 all don't think -- they don't think that they have to
19 help me particularly. I mean they get paid anyway.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Duffy, any questions?

21 MR. DUFFY: No, sir.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Ms. Coulibaly, how --

24 MS. COULIBALY: Mrs.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Mrs. Excuse me. How

1 often -- when did you try calling the Commission's 800
2 number?

3 MS. COULIBALY: I think it was AmerenUE's, and
4 I did not get the Commissioners'.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

6 MS. COULIBALY: I tried -- I tried to get
7 the -- I finally found the address on the web through
8 the library, but I could not get the name of the
9 Commissioner who to address it to.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: So -- so you haven't
11 actually spoken to the consumer --

12 MS. COULIBALY: No, sir.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- division within the
14 Missouri Public Service Commission?

15 MS. COULIBALY: I believe not.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

17 MS. COULIBALY: I did speak to them only at
18 the meeting with the first councilwoman. I know her so
19 well, but the -- she's from Columbia, Missouri.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. That's all right.
21 That's okay. But I -- I just wanted to -- to -- to
22 see --

23 MS. COULIBALY: Again, to demonstrate my
24 memory.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- who you had spoken to.

1 Well, mine is -- well, okay.

2 So let me ask you this --

3 MS. COULIBALY: Sure.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- when you went to the --

5 to the Missouri Public Service Commission, did you go

6 to that website -- the Missouri Public Service --

7 MS. COULIBALY: Yes, I did.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- Commission website?

9 And you had difficulty finding the

10 Commissioners' names on there?

11 MS. COULIBALY: The people on the board were

12 there; the Commissioner's name was not.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: The Comm-- oh, okay. I

14 want -- I want to check into that. That's the reason

15 I'm asking, yes.

16 MS. COULIBALY: Yeah. And it doesn't say

17 what the procedure is either for complaints or anything

18 else --

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right.

20 MS. COULIBALY: -- at the website, which there

21 should be an instruction and who it should be directed

22 to and et cetera.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right. We'll -- we'll

24 double check on that --

25 MS. COULIBALY: Yeah.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- but we do have -- and,
2 Commissioner Clayton, go ahead.

3 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Yeah. I was gonna say,
4 Warren, would you raise your hand? This -- the --
5 there's the phone numbers and the way of -- what you
6 are asking for, he will direct you to. There's
7 information back there.

8 MS. COULIBALY: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: So -- so you --

10 MS. COULIBALY: I -- I find it very, very
11 peculiar, though, that you cannot maintain an office in
12 a town as big as Columbia, you know.

13 It was possible to dictate the poor when we
14 were 40,000 or 50,000 people. And all of a sudden, I
15 realize that work force today is more expensive. But I
16 think that it would solve a lot of problems if you
17 could do things hands-on both for you and for us.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: I don't think I have any
19 more questions. I think that's all I have.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right.

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thanks.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Coulibaly, thank you very
23 much for your time this evening and for your testimony.

24 (Ms. Anna Coulibaly was excused.)

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I don't see any further

1 witnesses signed up. Is there anyone else who wishes
2 to testify?

3 (No response.)

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Seeing no further
5 witnesses, let me briefly give the -- the Commissioners
6 a chance to see if there's anything else they would
7 like to -- to say.

8 Commissioner Gaw?

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: I just -- just want to
10 thank everyone for -- for being here and for your
11 information and it will be considered. And we -- we
12 really appreciate you staying for the -- for the
13 evening with us.

14 And it -- it's always helpful for us to hear
15 your perspective. Thank you all very much.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton?

17 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I would just say thank
18 you also. And on behalf of the entire Commission, we
19 have other Commissioners in other cities doing this
20 very same thing in other communities -- taking
21 testimony and listening to what people have to say.

22 I would add that tonight's event has been
23 vastly different from last night. We were in
24 Wentzville and had two people who testified. So this
25 has been much more enlightening, and I appreciate

1 everyone being here.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Sir?

3 MR. WILBERS: I have a -- a matter if it's --
4 if it's appropriate to bring up I would like to address
5 to the Commission.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is -- is this testimony about
7 the Ameren?

8 MR. WILBERS: But it's not about the AmerenUE.
9 It's about Southwestern Bell.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. I'll tell you what, we
11 can -- we can take care of that off the record, and we
12 can find out what your concerns are and sure try to
13 help you. But I appreciate your -- your being here and
14 we'll sure try to help you.

15 Again, I -- I would also like to echo the --
16 the Commissioners' comments and thank everyone for your
17 attendance.

18 That concludes the on-the-record portion.
19 This hearing is concluded and we are off the record.

20 WHEREUPON, the local public hearing at Mexico,
21 Missouri was concluded.

22

23

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