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12 In the Matter of Union Electric)
13 Company, d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority)
14 to File Tariffs Increasing Rates for) Case No. GR-2003-0517
15 Gas Service Provided to Customers in)
16 the Company's Missouri Service Area.)
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23 REPORTED BY:
24 KELLENE K. FEDDERSEN, CSR, RPR, CCR
25 ASSOCIATED COURT REPORTERS

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

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

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

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

20 I am Ron Pridgin. I'm the Regulatory Law
21 Judge for the Missouri Public Service Commission assigned to
22 preside over this evening's hearing. With me this evening
23 on my far right is Commissioner Simmons, and on his left is
24 Commissioner Murray; also Staff Counsel, Lera Shemwell, and
25 from the Office of the Public Counsel, Doug Micheel.

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

6 In addition to this hearing, a trial-type
7 evidentiary hearing will be held beginning on January 2nd,
8 2004, and reconvening beginning January 12th, 2004, starting
9 at 9 a.m. here at the Commission's offices at the Hotel
10 Governor in Jefferson City, Missouri.

11 That hearing is a public hearing, and the
12 company will have the burden at that hearing of showing that
13 the proposed rate increase is just and reasonable. The
14 parties will present their witnesses for and against the
15 rate increase at that time.

16 The purpose of this hearing is to hear from
17 you on the subject of the proposed rate increase. The
18 company will not present witnesses tonight and will not
19 answer questions. This is your chance to testify, and your
20 remarks will be made a part of the official record of this
21 case.

22 I will call the name of each witness who has
23 signed up to speak. I will call you in the order in which
24 you signed up. When your name is called, please come
25 forward and stand here at the podium. Please spell your

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1 name for the court reporter so she can put it in the record
2 correctly. I will ask a few preliminary questions, such as
3 your name and address, and you can then make your statement.
4 There then may be some clarifying questions from counsel,
5 from the Commissioners or from myself. Please do not leave
6 the witness area until you're excused.

7 There may be someone who wishes to testify but
8 because of religious beliefs cannot take an oath. If so,
9 please indicate that to me when you are asked to be sworn so
10 that you may be affirmed instead.

11 Does anyone have any questions about the
12 procedure?

13 (No response.)

14 Seeing none, we will then begin the public
15 hearing on Case No. GR-2003-0517, in the matter of Union
16 Electric Company, doing business as AmerenUE, for authority
17 to file tariffs increasing rates for gas service provided to
18 customers in the company's Missouri service area.

19 Will counsel make their entries of appearance,
20 please, beginning with Staff?

21 MS. SHEMWELL: Thank you. Lera Shemwell,
22 representing the Staff of the Missouri Public Service
23 Commission, Post Office Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri
24 65102.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Shemwell, thank you. On

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1 behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel, please?

2 MR. MICHEEL: Douglas E. Micheel appearing on
3 behalf of the Office of the Public Counsel, Post Office
4 Box 2200, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102-2200.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Micheel, thank you. On
6 behalf of AmerenUE, please?

7 MR. BYRNE: Yes, your Honor. I'm Tom Byrne
8 appearing on behalf of AmerenUE, 1901 Chouteau Avenue,
9 St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Byrne, thank you. Anyone
11 here on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources?

12 (No response.)

13 All right. No entry of appearance.

14 We will then proceed with the witnesses. I
15 see the first signed up is Terry Donner. Good evening, sir.
16 If you would please raise your right hand to be sworn.

17 (Witness sworn.)

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. If you
19 would, sir, please state your name for the record and spell
20 your last name.

21 MR. DONNER: My name is Terry Donner. Last
22 name is spelled D-o-n-n-e-r.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,
24 please, sir?

25 MR. DONNER: It's 1418 Wilcoxon Drive,

1 Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
3 AmerenUE?

4 MR. DONNER: Yes.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statement you
6 have for the Commission this evening?

7 MR. DONNER: Sure. I see in light of the
8 economy as we kind of are in today with other businesses
9 around in the nation and you see businesses laying off,
10 downsizing and things of that nature, I'd like to basically
11 just state in light of that, with businesses having to do
12 more with less and, you know, lower their operating costs, I
13 would just kind of, you know, I guess want to state, you
14 know, why should we as a consumer, when we're actually, you
15 know, some of us out here in the same predicament, some
16 people are losing jobs, some people are being downsized and
17 other things are out there, and businesses are expected to,
18 you know, basically operate within their budget, then why
19 are we looking to make this increase of 26 million in excess
20 for operating costs, which basically that's what it kind of
21 states that this increase is for.

22 So that's, I guess, really my comment that I
23 had.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Donner, thank
25 you. Let me see if we have any clarifying questions from

1 counsel. All right. I don't see any.

2 Commissioner Murray, any questions? All right.

3 Thank you. Commissioner Simmons?

4 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: No. Just say thank you

5 for your testimony. Appreciate it.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Donner, thank you very

7 much for your remarks and your time this evening. Thank

8 you, sir.

9 All right. I see as the next witness Solace

10 Simpson. I hope I pronounced that correctly.

11 MS. SIMPSON: Name is Solace, S-o-l-a-c-e,

12 Simpson, S-i-m-p-s-o-n.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If I could get you to raise

14 your right hand and be sworn.

15 MS. SIMPSON: I'd rather be affirmed.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I'll do that for

17 you.

18 (Witness sworn.)

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very

20 much, ma'am. Again, if you'd state your name for the record

21 and spell your last name, please.

22 MS. SIMPSON: Solace Simpson, S-i-m-p-s-o-n.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,

24 please?

25 MS. SIMPSON: 1734 Overlook Drive.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Is that here in Jefferson City?
2 MS. SIMPSON: Jefferson City.
3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
4 AmerenUE?
5 MS. SIMPSON: Yes.
6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statement
7 you'd like to make for the Commission?
8 MS. SIMPSON: Yes. I'm not a public speaker.
9 I'm with Grass Roots Organizing. They're mostly people that
10 are underprivileged. And we support zero increase in the
11 utility rates. It really, really hurts them. And we also
12 oppose 78 percent non-gas portion, too. Anyway, we do not
13 support any increase in the utilities.
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you very
15 much. Let me see if we have any clarifying questions first
16 from counsel. I don't see any. Commissioner Murray?
17 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions. Thank
18 you.
19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Commissioner
20 Simmons?
21 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Good evening,
22 Ms. Simpson. Did you say you're representing GRO?
23 MS. SIMPSON: Yes.
24 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Is that GRO Jefferson
25 City or Columbia?

1 MS. SIMPSON: Columbia.
2 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Thank you for your
3 testimony.
4 MS. SIMPSON: I live here.
5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much for your
6 time and for your remarks this evening.
7 MS. SIMPSON: Thank you.
8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. I see as the next
9 witness, is it Diane Hoogveld? I apologize if I got that
10 wrong.
11 Good evening. If you would, please raise your
12 right hand to be sworn.
13 (Witness sworn.)
14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. If you would,
15 please state your name for the record and spell your last
16 name.
17 MS. HOOGVELD: Diane Hoogveld. Last name
18 H-o-o-g-v-e-l-d.
19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And your address,
20 please?
21 MS. HOOGVELD: 1115 Cordell, Jefferson City,
22 65101.
23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a gas customer of
24 AmerenUE?
25 MS. HOOGVELD: Yes, sir.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you'd like to
2 make?

3 MS. HOOGVELD: Well, I am also here
4 representing GRO, which is a grass roots organization for
5 low-income families, and I'm here on behalf that I do not
6 support any increase.

7 It's very difficult -- I happen to be a single
8 parent of these two small children -- to try to make ends
9 meet with all of the responsibilities and still give them a
10 comfortable lifestyle. And so I'm very conscious of my
11 electric bill because it's very high. Even though I have a
12 tiny two-bedroom house, it's pretty high for us.

13 But I'm very cautious of setting the
14 thermostat right and 70 degrees when it's cold outside so
15 that -- and we just have to bundle up more. But if they
16 were to increase it, it just really puts a lot more of a
17 burden as far as the responsibilities that I have as far as
18 rent, car insurance, water bill. We don't have a phone. We
19 don't have cable. So we don't have a lot of luxuries like
20 that.

21 But I'm just very budget conscious of trying
22 to keep that as low as possible, and I don't know -- I'm
23 sure I speak for a lot of low-income families. So I wanted
24 to say that.

25 And this is Spencer, and this is Eden.

1 SPENCER HOOGVELD: I'm nine.

2 MS. HOGERTY: And that's that.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. Let me

4 see if we have any questions first, if you don't mind. Let

5 me see if we have any questions from counsel. I don't see

6 any. Commissioner Murray?

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Commissioner

9 Simmons?

10 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Ms. Hoogveld, let me

11 ask you a quick question. Your average gas bill, what would

12 that be or --

13 MS. HOOGVELD: It could be anywhere between

14 100 to 125 a month.

15 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: You say you have a

16 two-bedroom home?

17 MS. HOOGVELD: Right. It's less than -- I

18 think it's less than a thousand square feet. It's a

19 newly-built home, but everything is -- you know, I have

20 washer and dryer capabilities there. So everything is run

21 with that, yeah.

22 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Are you by chance on

23 any budget billing or anything like that?

24 MS. HOOGVELD: Well, sir, I am, but what

25 happens a lot of times is when you go get any kind of

1 assistance, if you go to the Samaritan Center or those
2 programs, then that prevents you from getting anything other
3 than that. So this month if I needed to get help, the next
4 month if I needed to make arrangements, I wouldn't be able
5 to do that. So to answer that question, no.

6 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: Thank you for your
7 testimony, and thank you for bringing Spencer and Eden.

8 MS. HOOGVELD: Thank you.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, ma'am.
10 Appreciate your time this evening.

11 All right. I don't see any other witnesses
12 signed up. Is there anyone else who wishes to testify this
13 evening?

14 (No response.)

15 All right. Seeing no other witnesses. Let
16 me, before I forget, inform the parties, I do have a letter
17 that was left for me, and I will enter that as Exhibit
18 No. 1. It is a letter from Andrea Burns from Grass Roots
19 Organization. Again, it is a one-page letter. I only have
20 the original. I will be glad to supply copies for counsel
21 either this evening or tomorrow. Again, that is Exhibit
22 No. 1.

23 All right. No further witnesses, I assume.
24 Let me see if we have any concluding remarks. Commissioner
25 Murray, anything you would like to say in conclusion?

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, other than to thank
2 you for being here.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
4 Commissioner Simmons?

5 COMMISSIONER SIMMONS: I will, too, say thank
6 you for being here. You could have been anywhere tonight,
7 but you chose to be here and let your voices be heard. As
8 it was stated earlier, this Commission has not made a
9 decision, and we will look at those remarks as they have
10 been presented. The other Commissioners will have an
11 opportunity to look at the remarks and the transcripts.

12 And so as it was said by Commissioner Murray,
13 on behalf of the Public Service Commission, we thank you and
14 we appreciate your attendance.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I also would like to thank
16 everyone who attended tonight and particularly those who
17 testified.

18 If there is nothing further from the parties?
19 Hearing nothing further, that concludes this hearing. We
20 are off the record.

21 WHEREUPON, the public hearing was concluded.
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