

1 STATE OF MISSOURI
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
3 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
4
5 Local Public Hearing
6 September 21, 2017
7
8 Mid Continent Public Library
9 North Independence Branch
10 Community 1 and 2
11 317 W. 24 Highway
12 Independence, Missouri 64050

13 VOLUME 4

14 In the Matter of Laclede Gas)
15 Company's Request to Increase)
16 Its Revenues for Gas Service) File No. GR-2017-0215
17) File No. GR-2017-0216
18 In the Matter of Laclede Gas)
19 Company d/b/a Missouri Gas)
20 Energy's Request to Increase)
21 Its Revenues for Gas Service)

22 RONALD D. PRIDGIN, Presiding
23 DEPUTY CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE
24 WILLIAM P. KENNEY
25 COMMISSIONER

26 REPORTED BY:
27 Angela R. Corkill, CSR, CCR

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

2 (Hearing commenced at 1:18 p.m.)

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Good afternoon. We
4 are on the record. This is the local public hearing
5 in Independence, Missouri, on Case Nos. GR-2017-0215
6 and 0216. I'm Ron Pridgin, I'm one of the judges at
7 the commission.

8 Because of the time, I am going to
9 dispense with a lot of opening statements and I'm
10 going to immediately get to your testimony here in
11 just a moment. First, before we do that, I do have
12 Commissioner Kenney with me. Commissioner, do you
13 have an opening statement to make?

14 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: First, a couple
15 comments. First, I'd like to welcome all of you
16 here. I appreciate you coming today. This is just
17 one segment of what we do as a commission. I'm one
18 of five public service commissioners. The other four
19 will have an opportunity to read your testimony and
20 we make a determination of what the rates will be
21 after the hearing. And anything we do affects me
22 because I'm a Spire customer. I've lived in Lee's
23 Summit for the last 30-some-odd years. Again, it's a
24 pleasure to see you.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right, thank you.

1 As you obviously know, we've had the
2 question-and-answer session and we're now going to
3 hear testimony here in just a moment. I have a list
4 of witnesses and I'll call you in the order in which
5 you've signed up and when I'm through the list,
6 before we're done I will ask if anybody else wants to
7 testify.

8 The judge that's handling this case
9 had issued an order earlier limiting testimony to
10 five minutes. I've got a stopwatch up here and I
11 will be up here trying to get your attention. If any
12 of you are a football fan, I'm going to give you a
13 two-minute warning. I'll let you know with two
14 minutes, with one minute, with none.

15 Again, if you didn't sign up, when we
16 get through the list, I will ask if anyone else wants
17 to testify before we get done. I understand we might
18 have one or two state representatives here. Are
19 there representatives who want to introduce
20 themselves, be recognized?

21 MR. KIDD: Gentlemen, thank you very
22 much. My name is Representative Bill Kidd from the
23 20th District which encompasses half of Sugar Creek
24 all the way to Buckner. And if you look at the
25 demographic data of this district generally, you'll

1 find that this district, as you can see in the
2 audience today, fixed income and working middle
3 class.

4 So when you talk about a rate increase
5 of \$5 a month, that may not mean much to anybody, but
6 when you're on a fixed income and you've got drugs
7 and medication and all sorts of doctors' things and
8 everything else going on, that \$5 means a lot.
9 Especially in the wintertime when it's not just \$5.
10 Now we're talking about 15, \$20, maybe \$30.

11 Maybe you live in an older house. I
12 don't know if you've seen a lot of the housing around
13 here. There's not a lot of insulation in them. We
14 opened up my house this year because I had hail
15 damage and guess what, I had an inch of insulation in
16 my house.

17 In the winter that 64 cubic feet of
18 gas is going to expand dramatically to the point,
19 Gentlemen, that this is more than just a simple
20 \$5-a-month rate increase. It's not only the gas
21 company that's doing this, KCP&L, water, everybody is
22 going up and up and up. Quite frankly, I'd love to
23 earn 12 percent of my money, but I don't get that
24 opportunity. I don't have a fixed way to do this.

25 So I would implore the commission to

1 say -- it's \$36 million? I bet it's less than that.
2 Gentlemen, they can find that money somewhere else, I
3 guarantee you. Don't do this to the people of this
4 district. Don't do this to the people of this state.
5 Stop it now.

6 Sometimes everybody should stand up
7 and say enough is enough and what you're creating is
8 an environment where we're all going to stand up and
9 say enough is enough. I guarantee you you don't want
10 us in the legislature to come down and legislate
11 this, but we will. And I don't mean that as a
12 threat, I just know how it works. When these people
13 get mad and they start calling my office and I get
14 all the phone calls, I don't like getting yelled at.

15 When you hear my passion, it's because
16 I support these people. I don't support companies, I
17 support people. They're the ones that vote for me,
18 not companies, so don't do this. Say enough is
19 enough. Do your job as the public service commission
20 which I think you do extremely well. I'm not
21 complaining; however, I am going to be looking at
22 enabling language to give you some other tools this
23 year to support the people of this state.

24 Now, I understand this company pays a
25 lot of money in taxes, but so do these people and

1 they earn that right. Don't do this to them. So I
2 stand opposed to this. I appreciate you listening to
3 us this day. I'd ask that you take seriously what
4 these people are going to say to you today and I
5 doubt if you're going to find a real person in this
6 room than somebody for the company who's going to
7 want this rate increase. Gentlemen, thank you very
8 much.

9 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Representative,
10 I would like to say thank you very much for your
11 service in the community. Appreciate it.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Representative,
13 thank you. Is there another representative that
14 needs to be recognized before we begin with
15 testimony? All right. I'll start reading names.
16 When I do so, I'll ask you to please come up to the
17 podium. You have a microphone like this one. Please
18 pick it up and speak into it.

19 I will ask you a quick preliminary
20 question. I just want you to give me your name and I
21 want you to spell it for the court reporter so she
22 can get it recorded properly. And then I'll say,
23 Okay, do you have a statement for the commission, and
24 that's when I'm going to start your five minutes.

25 Again, if you'll please kind of look

1 at me once in a while and I'll try to give you an
2 idea when you have two minutes, one minute, zero.
3 And if you're going much past the five minutes, I'm
4 going to try to politely ask you to wrap it up so we
5 can move on to the next witness.

6 The first witness I have signed up is
7 Lawrence Bradley. If you'll come forward.

8 MR. BRADLEY: I will abstain. I had a
9 conversation with Mr. Pendergast and I was satisfied
10 by our conversation.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. I
12 appreciate it. Next witness will be Irene Ramey.

13 MS. RAMEY: I can't get around very
14 good.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Let me just ask you to
16 raise your right hand to be sworn, Ms. Ramey, if
17 you're able to do so.

18 MS. RAMEY: I don't know how to work
19 these things.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: You're doing just
21 fine, just hold it right there. Before you start,
22 can I get you sworn in?

23 MS. RAMEY: Everything is going up.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Ramey, I'm trying
25 to swear you in so you can give your testimony. Can

1 you raise your right hand?

2 Do you swear that the testimony you
3 are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth,
4 and nothing but the truth?

5 MS. RAMEY: That's my left hand.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: That's perfectly fine.
7 Do you have a statement for the commission?

8 MS. RAMEY: Well, people that are on a
9 fixed income, they're taxed for everything. Property
10 tax goes up every year. I've paid my gas bill, base
11 charge was \$26.72. I use \$8 worth of gas. Doesn't
12 that spell anything for you?

13 You go to the hospital, you pay \$300 a
14 day out of your pocket for the first seven days and
15 that's \$3,500, so it don't -- you can't be sick. You
16 can't live on this, so they should drop things
17 instead of going up. I agree to everything that the
18 gentleman said in front of me. Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
20 ma'am.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
22 The next witness is Nomi Henry. I hope I pronounced
23 that correctly. If you'll raise your right hand to
24 be sworn, please.

25 Do you swear that the evidence you're

1 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
2 nothing but the truth so help you God?

3 MS. HENRY: Yes.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Would you
5 please state and spell your name for the court
6 reporter?

7 MS. HENRY: Nomi, N-O-M-I, Henry,
8 H-E-N-R-Y.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry if I
10 mispronounced your name. Do you have a statement for
11 the commission, ma'am?

12 MS. HENRY: Mine is quite similar to
13 the lady. It's nice to be here today.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you.

15 MS. HENRY: I am pleased to be in this
16 presence of this group. I am concerned, as the lady
17 before me, being on a fixed income and I have worked
18 64 years of my life. I retired at 74, I'm now 86,
19 and it is a fixed income that is disturbing to me. I
20 have Social Security and that's it.

21 When the raises go up on gas, lights
22 and water, it affects my personal income as it does
23 all others that are in this. But I know every
24 company has to make money, I understand that. But
25 sometimes we overextend in our job of trying to keep

1 money for the company. I understand that.

2 But I do wish to say that when people
3 are on a fixed income, it is quite hard. Even though
4 I worked so many years, there's not that much from
5 Social Security. So I just want to thank you to
6 reconsider what everyone is saying that we do have a
7 problem financially, not just with me, but probably
8 everyone in this room. So I thank you and I
9 appreciate it.

10 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
11 Ms. Henry.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you so much.
13 The next witness is Mabel Shapiro. If you'll raise
14 your right hand to be sworn, please.

15 Do you swear the evidence you are
16 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
17 nothing but the truth so help you God?

18 MS. SHAPIRO: Yes.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would, please
20 use the microphone and state and spell your name for
21 the court reporter.

22 MS. SHAPIRO: Mabel, M-A-B-E-L,
23 Shapiro, S-H-A-P-I-R-O.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Do you have a
25 statement for the commission?

1 MS. SHAPIRO: It would be almost the
2 same thing as the other people have said. Yes, I'm
3 retired, fixed income.

4 The law changes all the time because.
5 When I retired when I was 65 and a half, I didn't
6 know that the law had changed that you could not get
7 your full Social Security at 65. They changed it to
8 65 and a half and then later on they changed it to 66
9 and I hear they're going to change it to 67. So I
10 thought, Oh, my gosh, I missed out on 10 percent of
11 my regular Social Security just because I retired six
12 months early. Well, I didn't know that.

13 And now this year I remember they took
14 some money out of my Social Security and turned
15 around and added it to my health insurance. So I'm
16 hoping that you guys won't raise it. But then,
17 again, we have no control over this. It happens.

18 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
19 Ms. Shapiro.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you for your
21 comments. The next witness, I hope I pronounce this
22 correctly, Bob Inman. I'd like to get you to use the
23 microphone and if you're able to raise your right
24 hand to be sworn.

25 Do you swear the evidence you're about

1 to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
2 nothing but the truth.

3 MR. INMAN: I do.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you'll state and
5 spell your name for the court reporter.

6 MR. INMAN: Robert Inman, I-N-M-A-N.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Do you have a
8 statement for the commission?

9 MR. INMAN: Yes. I have recently
10 retired. I retired in April of last year, so I'm a
11 new retiree unlike a lot of people here who have been
12 retired a long time. I retired after 26 years with
13 the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
14 and I thought, Oh, good, I'm going to be doing okay.

15 However, Missouri, in a lot of studies
16 done, is 49th out of 50th in state pay, so we don't
17 get really great pensions, and then I'm on Social
18 Security. I've now discovered what a lot of people
19 are discovering on Social Security. I got a raise
20 this year too and all but \$2 of the raise went to
21 Medicare. So when they raise, they don't rate but 1
22 percent or so and our Missouri pensions go up like
23 less than 2 percent a year a lot of times or some
24 don't go up that.

25 We are hurting. Retirees on fixed

1 incomes are hurting. I'm a little better off than
2 some because I have a little bit of pension too, but
3 rates keep going up like they say on all different
4 utilities and food and healthcare.

5 Before I worked for the State of
6 Missouri, I was in business. I was partner in
7 business for 14 years. We had a store at the Crown
8 Center and store at Oak Park Mall. We were lucky if
9 we could get a one, two, 3 percent return on our
10 business.

11 When rents went up or supplies for our
12 business went up, anything like that, that was a cost
13 of doing business. We couldn't pass that on to our
14 customers every time we turned around. We had to
15 absorb that cost and figure out a way to save money
16 so that we could still stay in business.

17 So it really angers me when we see
18 these big corporations coming to us making 12 percent
19 net return and then wanting more money out of the
20 pockets of we retired people. A lot of it,
21 especially this rate increase says it's about cost of
22 doing business. Let some of your investors -- you're
23 investment owned, you're not publicly owned, let your
24 investors absorb that cost.

25 I can understand a 2 or 3 percent

1 increase, but this is ridiculous what you're
2 expecting poor retired people to pay and you're
3 getting 12 percent on net return. I'm extremely
4 opposed to this. I don't think it's fair to older
5 people and certainly not fair to family people and
6 other people either, but it's particularly not fair
7 to the retired people.

8 And \$44,000 is ridiculous for
9 assistance. What was the total that Mr. Kidd said
10 you were making, 3.4 million or billion or something
11 like that dollar profit? With that kind of money you
12 can certainly afford to help out retired people with
13 a higher thing.

14 Also, I think that the legislature
15 should look at rates for retired folks and stuff and
16 step rates. I know the lobbyists in Jeff City are
17 opposed to that, but it really would help retired
18 people if you working people and then commercial
19 people could have a different rate from retired
20 people. So I thank you today and I am opposed to
21 that rate.

22 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
23 Mr. Inman. I might comment on that. I appreciate
24 you bringing that up. We do in many rate cases, we
25 do try to have some low income assistance. Now that

1 you've brought that up, I'm sure that will be part of
2 our discussion during this case also. Also the
3 office of public counsel does a good job fighting for
4 the community, so thank you for bringing that up.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, Mr. Inman.
6 Next witness is Stephen Summers. If you'll raise
7 your right hand to be sworn, please.

8 Do you swear the evidence you're about
9 to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
10 nothing but the truth so help you God?

11 MR. SUMMERS: I do.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. If
13 you would, please state and spell your name for the
14 court reporter.

15 MR. SUMMERS: Stephen Summers,
16 S-T-E-P-H-E-N, S-U-M-M-E-R-S.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Do you have a
18 statement for the commission, sir?

19 MR. SUMMERS: Yes, I do. I strongly
20 oppose this rate increase and this is the reason why.
21 I'm a local real estate investor with an office here
22 in Independence. Many of my customers as well as
23 would be your customers for the gas company, many of
24 them cannot afford the gas. Many of my customers do
25 not have gas turned on in their home. They heat

1 their home by other means.

2 Many of my customers are middle class
3 working people, low income families. A lot of them
4 are on fixed incomes. They cannot afford to see an
5 increase which could cause even more of them not to
6 be able to afford to have gas on in their home.

7 One of the things sweeping this state
8 in the last couple of years brought on by many city
9 council people and mayors is the deal to put interior
10 inspections on in rental homes and one of the
11 requirements is that all the utilities have to be on
12 in that home to pass inspection. If the utilities
13 are not on, the house is deemed unlivable. The
14 people have to move. Where are they going to go?

15 That is my reason why I oppose this
16 rate increase. Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
18 Mr. Summers.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Summers, thank
20 you. The next witness, I hope I'm pronouncing this
21 right, is Dale Clodi. If you'll raise your right
22 hand to be sworn, please.

23 Do you swear the evidence you are
24 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
25 nothing but the truth so help you God?

1 MR. CLODI: I do.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. If
3 you would, please state and spell your name for the
4 court reporter.

5 MR. CLODI: Dale, D-A-L-E, Clodi,
6 C-L-O-D-I.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And what is your
8 statement, sir?

9 MR. CLODI: My statement is that I
10 love natural gas. My 401(k) has several natural gas
11 pipelines in it. I do oppose this increase, however,
12 basically looking at the definition of investments,
13 reading the last line according to Spire, The
14 proposed increase is needed to recover ongoing
15 investments to upgrade technology for easier customer
16 service and continued modernization of
17 infrastructure.

18 I think the term investment has lost
19 its meaning over the years. Investment used to mean
20 that it was something that you do to save or make
21 money. Investments are now being used by governments
22 to ask for a tax increase basically. I think that's
23 more similar to what this is than what a true
24 investment is.

25 The company will recover the costs of

1 an investment and that will ultimately go to their
2 bottom line. They're asking for an increase to cover
3 the cost of the investment going in and then accrue
4 the benefits of the investment down the road as well.
5 So it's a double win for Spire.

6 And that's basically my statement. I
7 think that it should be looked at. I don't have a
8 problem making money. I want them staying in
9 business, like I said, I love natural gas, but I do
10 think the rate hike request is inappropriate at this
11 time. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
13 Mr. Clodi.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. The
15 next witness is Colleen Lamoreaus. I hope I'm
16 pronouncing that correctly. Could I have you raise
17 your right hand to be sworn, please?

18 Do you swear the evidence you are
19 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
20 nothing but the truth so help you God?

21 MS. LAMOREAUS: I do.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would, please
23 state and spell your name for the court reporter.

24 MS. LAMOREAUS: Colleen,
25 C-O-L-L-E-E-N, Lamoreaus, L-A-M-O-R-E-A-U-S.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I apologize for
2 mispronouncing your name.

3 MS. LAMOREAUS: That's okay.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Do you have a
5 statement for the commission?

6 MS. LAMOREAUS: Yes. Like many of the
7 people here, I'm on a fixed income. I got struck
8 down with dystonia which my life won't get any
9 better, but I only make \$755 a month. I have a house
10 payment. I have a child to take care of. I can't
11 afford my medicine every month. I skip every other
12 month because I can't afford it. I have \$7 left in
13 my account.

14 I don't agree with this at all. I'm
15 asking you guys, I'm begging you guys not to let this
16 go through because if it does, I will shut off all my
17 utilities. I will put in a wood burning. I have oil
18 lamps. I don't need it. I will turn everything off
19 because I can't afford it. I'm asking you not just
20 for me, but for everybody who cannot afford this
21 increase please don't pass it. Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
23 Ms. Lamoreaus.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
25 Joe Athenas, I hope I'm pronouncing that name

1 correctly, the next witness. Can I trouble you to
2 raise your right hand to be sworn, please?

3 Do you swear the evidence you are
4 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
5 nothing but the truth so help you God?

6 MR. ATHENAS: Yes.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. If you
8 would, please, state and spell your name for the
9 court reporter.

10 MR. ATHENAS: Joseph Athenas,
11 J-O-S-E-P-H, A-T-H-E-N-A-S.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Could I trouble you to
13 use the microphone, please, so everyone can hear you?
14 All right. What is your statement, sir?

15 MR. ATHENAS: I think we had a
16 discussion earlier, I don't know if you were in the
17 room, about the company and its earnings per share at
18 3.4889, but some of the things they didn't include
19 when I was asking about CEO's salaries, the increase
20 in dividend affects cash flow so that they can't buy
21 something else with it because they're passing it
22 out, but it is how they attract stockholders.

23 It's went from a low in the past 52
24 weeks of \$59.54 to \$78 for a high. Yesterday it was
25 74.45, but it's owned and held by institutions, 77

1 percent hedge funds, mutual funds, etcetera, but
2 their put-call ratio for the past 30 days is zero.
3 Nobody wants to bet against them.

4 And their short interest, which can go
5 up to six months, is up 1 percent. Their enterprise
6 value, that's everything including share of the
7 price, is six billion, not millions. Someone said
8 multimillion dollar corporation. Their market
9 capitalization is 3.8 billion. I know that small cap
10 because it's less than 12 billion.

11 When you're making this much profit
12 earnings per share and you've had more than 20
13 percent growth rate on your stock, somehow they can
14 afford this \$34 million out of their own pocket.

15 I guess I don't have the same problem
16 as a lot of folks back here, that gal was talking
17 about \$700 a month, but this rate increase isn't
18 right based on that. And then when we get into
19 Dollar Help, that's also a problem with -- somebody
20 has to pay it and guess who that's going to be,
21 everybody else if they have to pass it out to the
22 individuals.

23 There's a reason why they can afford
24 the \$34 million and there's a reason why several
25 can't afford the \$5 increase. I'm against the

1 increase. You guys are going to have to make up your
2 mind and I'll quit doing the bad jokes.

3 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you very
4 much, sir.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
6 The next witness is Krystall Rainville. I'll have
7 you raise your right hand to be sworn, please.

8 Do you swear the evidence you are
9 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
10 nothing but the truth so help you God?

11 MS. RAINVILLE: Yes.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would, please
13 state and spell your name for the court reporter.

14 MS. RAINVILLE: Krystall,
15 K-R-Y-S-T-A-L-L, Rainville, R-A-I-N-V-I-L-L-E.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: What is your statement
17 for the commission?

18 MS. RAINVILLE: I would like to oppose
19 this increase. I feel like you guys are asking the
20 customer to pay for your cost of doing business which
21 doesn't seem justified. Any other business just has
22 to work it out. How that gentleman was saying back
23 there, you guys have enough money, you can do it.
24 We're all working. We're all retired. I know you're
25 working too, but I guarantee you're making more money

1 than us. And the investors. So that's all, I
2 oppose. Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Jackie
5 Fairbanks. Jackie Fairbanks, if you could raise your
6 right hand to be sworn, please.

7 Do you swear the evidence you are
8 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
9 nothing but the truth so help you God?

10 MS. FAIRBANKS: Yes.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. If you
12 would, please use the microphone and state and spell
13 your name for the court reporter.

14 MS. FAIRBANKS: Jackie, J-A-C-K-I-E,
15 Fairbanks, F-A-I-R-B-A-N-K-S.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And what is your
17 statement, ma'am?

18 MS. FAIRBANKS: I am in opposition of
19 the rate increase. Number one, Missouri Gas Energy,
20 or Laclede Gas is what it's now called, does have a
21 monopoly. We don't have any other choice. We have
22 one vendor and no other unless we go to total
23 electric or solar or LP gas.

24 The rate increase is greater than the
25 cost of living. During the past four years the cost

1 of living has not gone up that much. I know that
2 computer programming can be beneficial to any company
3 and normally when that happens, they bring computers
4 in and they lay off people. So computers replace
5 people and if they're replacing -- I know our water
6 department has replaced their meters so that they can
7 electronically read from the street rather than
8 having people who go out and read meters, so I'm sure
9 the gas company can do the same thing.

10 I don't want to fund the name change
11 and several people have mentioned that they're on
12 fixed income. I think that anyone that's gainfully
13 employed and on a fixed income, so it's not just the
14 seniors, it's not just the people on public
15 assistance, it's everybody that's working for another
16 employer is actually on a fixed income.

17 I think that the landlord reversion
18 rates are too high because the last rate increase
19 that they had, which I didn't come to, it increased
20 it to where it's like 40 or \$45 anytime a tenant
21 moves. That's the fee that I have to pay. That's
22 basically what I think and I think that the rate
23 increase should not be allowed.

24 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
25 Ms. Fairbanks.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right,
2 Ms. Fairbanks, thank you. The next and I think the
3 last witness on this sign-up sheet right now is
4 Heather Maxon. I see your right hand is raised.

5 Do you swear that the evidence you are
6 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
7 nothing but the truth so help you God?

8 MS. MAXON: Yes.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. If you
10 would please use the microphone and state and spell
11 your name for the court reporter.

12 MS. MAXON: Heather, H-E-A-T-H-E-R,
13 Maxon, M-A-X-O-N.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: What is your
15 statement, ma'am?

16 MS. MAXON: My statement is I oppose
17 this increase. I live in public housing, so, yes, I
18 do get assistance. I work six days a week. I work
19 my butt off, so I don't get an actual utility
20 assistance check like some people do that don't work.
21 I work six days a week and let me tell you what, it's
22 everything I can do just to pay the bills I do have.

23 I pay full amount of all of my
24 utilities. There is some money taken off my rent for
25 the utility, whatever it's called here. I'm working

1 and you all want to increase rates and when are we
2 going to get a living wage to be able to pay these
3 dang rates? Seriously, I work my butt off just to be
4 able to pay my bills. I can't take my kids anywhere.
5 We barely get to go to a movie. I pay utilities,
6 feed my kids, that's it, work. That's all I have.
7 Thank you. I hope you don't pass this.

8 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. That is
10 the last witness who has signed up. Before we close,
11 is there anyone else who wishes to testify? Yes,
12 sir, come forward. If you'll raise your right hand
13 to be sworn, please.

14 Do you swear that the evidence you are
15 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
16 nothing but the truth so help you God?

17 MR. LAND: Yes.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. If
19 you would, please use the microphone and state and
20 spell your name for the court reporter.

21 MR. LAND: My name is Garland Land,
22 G-A-R-L-A-N-D, last name is Land, L-A-N-D.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: What is your
24 statement, sir?

25 MR. LAND: I'm fortunate that I can

1 afford this rate increase. However, I am a board
2 member of Community Services League and I meet every
3 week with low income people who are like the
4 residents here. I understand their stories. I hear
5 it all the time.

6 I have a couple suggestions. I
7 believe in the process that you'll be examining what
8 is an appropriate rate, but I think we also need to
9 look at the people who are going to be affected by
10 this rate increase, whatever it might be, which are
11 the people represented in this room today. I think
12 there are two ways you can do that.

13 One is what has already been proposed,
14 which is to decrease the service charge, the customer
15 charge. I suggest that you decrease the service
16 charge even more even if you adjust the overall rates
17 in some way because the service charge is what
18 affects low income people the most. So reducing it
19 from the \$25 which is being proposed to \$20, bring it
20 down even further to 15 or 10, and that will impact
21 even greater low income people.

22 I looked at my bill this last month.
23 Fifty percent of my bill was on the service charge.
24 I think the service charge is what we ought to be
25 looking at because that's what is impacting the low

1 income users and low use users.

2 The second idea for you to consider is
3 this whole idea of providing assistance to low income
4 people. In Independence we have what's called the
5 IRAP program and in that program -- this is for our
6 power and light company. We actually pay 50 percent
7 of the bill for low income people, elderly people and
8 people who are on disability and that money then runs
9 basically during the summer months up until fall
10 until the money runs out. So that helps them during
11 the high cost peak periods of the year for
12 electricity.

13 If we have a similar program for gas
14 utilization, so during the winter months and the fall
15 months when utilization is the highest, then that can
16 smooth out the overall bill.

17 And that \$40,000, that's just abysmal.
18 They can afford a lot more. Even though they are a
19 profit-making company, they can afford a lot more to
20 providing assistance to lower income people. Thank
21 you.

22 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you, sir.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Land, thank you.

24 Before we close, anyone else wishing to testify? If
25 you'll raise your right hand to be sworn, please.

1 Do you swear the evidence you are
2 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
3 nothing but the truth so help you God?

4 MS. ELLIS: Yes.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you'll please take
6 the microphone and state and spell your name for the
7 court reporter.

8 MS. ELLIS: Kathy Ellis, K-A-T-H-Y,
9 E-L-L-I-S.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: What's your statement?

11 MS. ELLIS: Currently I'm recently
12 retired and as I mentioned earlier, I also installed
13 a new AC and furnace in my system and both bills,
14 electricity, City of Independence, and Missouri Gas
15 Energy has raised which is a victory to the
16 efficiency of the new system and this rate should be
17 denied. And also the City of Independence needs to
18 also lower their cost too. That's it.

19 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you very
20 much, ma'am.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much.
22 Anyone else? Yes, ma'am, come forward. If you'll
23 raise your right hand to be sworn?

24 Do you swear the evidence you are
25 about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and

1 nothing but the truth so help you God?

2 MS. ROSE: Yes.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you'll please take
4 the microphone and state and spell your name for the
5 court reporter.

6 MS. ROSE: My name is Denise,
7 D-E-N-I-S-E, last name Rose, R-O-S-E.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And what is your
9 statement?

10 MS. ROSE: My statement is I don't
11 know if you gentlemen were here in the beginning of
12 the meeting and got to hear some of the questions and
13 stuff, but I know they said it wasn't documented, I
14 wish it had been documented because it was a lot of
15 feedback on the situation here. The gentleman was
16 speaking about the \$40,000 that they get into the
17 needy people in the winter time. I agree with him
18 completely about that. That's very low.

19 Also I mentioned earlier about the
20 state because of the low income when people need
21 help, the state is also cutting back. They're
22 cutting back on things. There's not money out there,
23 so they keep cutting back. So that's my statement
24 here is I don't agree with the increase and they need
25 to take a lot of things into perspective here about

1 the situation. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Thank you,
3 Ms. Rose.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Ms. Rose, thank you.
5 All right. Anyone else? Seeing no volunteers.
6 Commissioner Kenney, do you have a closing statement?

7 COMMISSIONER KENNEY: Just a couple
8 things. I want to thank you for those of you who
9 testified.

10 Those of us that are commissioners,
11 it's a judicial spot, so we're not allowed to be in
12 the room when you are asking questions because we
13 won't be influenced. We go to a hearing and you'll
14 have expert testimony on both sides and a lot of
15 times these are all worked out. And just because a
16 company asks for a certain amount, I've never seen a
17 company get that amount. Usually there's
18 negotiation.

19 We do take a lot of things into
20 account, but regarding the low income assistance,
21 that is something since I've been on the commission
22 under five years we've been pushing more and more
23 for. I appreciate your comments today and the
24 commissioners will read your testimony and become a
25 part of the case. So thank you very much for showing

1 up.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I certainly want to
3 thank everyone for showing up this afternoon, for
4 asking questions, for testifying, for giving your
5 comments, being a part of the process. We will have
6 a similar hearing this evening in St. Joe and we'll
7 be having hearings throughout MGE's service territory
8 and we'll be able to hear comments from other
9 customers.

10 Mr. Pendergast?

11 MR. PENDERGAST: Yes, your Honor. I
12 just wanted to correct for the record because I'm the
13 one that gave our customers the following
14 information. During the Q and A period we talked
15 about what our contribution was to Dollar Help. The
16 number I gave was before we acquired MGE. We make a
17 contribution that's well in excess across Missouri of
18 \$100,000 now. And that's, of course, just the
19 contributions we make to Dollar Help and it doesn't
20 include the other charitable contributions which are
21 in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to other
22 causes. So I just wanted to correct that for the
23 record since it got repeated.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Pendergast, thank
25 you.

1 And obviously you're free and
2 encouraged to ask more questions after this hearing
3 is over. We have people here from the company, from
4 the commission staff, from the office of the public
5 counsel. They'll be happy to meet with you after the
6 hearing and answer any questions you have. And that
7 will conclude this afternoon hearing in GR-2017-0215
8 and 0216. Thank you very much. We're off the
9 record.

10 (Hearing concluded at 2:00 p.m.)

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15
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19
20
21
22
23
24
25

	I N D E X	
2	WITNESS:	PAGE:
3	Representative Bill Kidd	88
4	Irene Ramey	92
5	Nomi Henry	94
6	Mabel Shapiro	95
7	Bob Inman	97
8	Stephen Summers	100
9	Dale Clodi	102
10	Colleen Lamoreaus	104
11	Joe Athenas	105
12	Krystall Rainville	107
13	Jackie Fairbanks	108
14	Heather Maxon	110
15	Garland Land	111
16	Kathy Ellis	114
17	Denise Rose	115

18
19 E X H I B I T S

20 (None.)

21
22
23
24
25

1
2
3
4
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7
8
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Angela R. Corkill, a Certified Court Reporter, do hereby certify:

That said proceedings were taken down by me in shorthand at the time and place hereinbefore stated and was thereafter reduced to writing under my direction;

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Angela R. Corkill

CSR No. 1387, CCR No. 961

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

A	<p>appropriate 112:8</p> <p>April 97:10</p> <p>asking 103:2 104:15,19 105:19 107:19 116:12 117:4</p> <p>asks 116:16</p> <p>Aslin 86:2</p> <p>assistance 99:9 99:25 109:15 110:18,20 113:3,20 116:20</p> <p>Assistant 86:3</p> <p>Athenas 104:25 105:6,10,10,15 119:11</p> <p>attention 88:11</p> <p>attorney 120:9 120:10</p> <p>attract 105:22</p> <p>audience 89:2</p>	<p>bill 88:22 93:10 112:22,23 113:7,16 119:3</p> <p>billion 99:10 106:7,9,10</p> <p>bills 110:22 111:4 114:13</p> <p>bit 98:2</p> <p>board 112:1</p> <p>Bob 96:22 119:7</p> <p>bottom 103:2</p> <p>Box 85:17 86:8</p> <p>Bradley 92:7,8</p> <p>Branch 84:8</p> <p>bring 109:3 112:19</p> <p>bringing 99:24 100:4</p> <p>brought 100:1 101:8</p> <p>Buckner 88:24</p> <p>Building 85:16 86:7</p> <p>burning 104:17</p> <p>business 98:6,7 98:10,12,13,16 98:22 103:9 107:20,21</p> <p>butt 110:19 111:3</p> <p>buy 105:20</p>	<p>106:9</p> <p>care 104:10</p> <p>case 87:5 88:8 100:2 116:25</p> <p>cases 99:24</p> <p>cash 105:20</p> <p>Casi 86:2</p> <p>cause 101:5</p> <p>causes 117:22</p> <p>CCR 84:25 86:15,16 120:17</p> <p>Center 98:8</p> <p>CEO's 105:19</p> <p>certain 116:16</p> <p>certainly 99:5 99:12 117:2</p> <p>Certified 120:2</p> <p>certify 120:3</p> <p>change 96:9 109:10</p> <p>changed 96:6,7 96:8</p> <p>changes 96:4</p> <p>charge 93:11 112:14,15,16 112:17,23,24</p> <p>charitable 117:20</p> <p>check 110:20</p> <p>CHIEF 84:22</p> <p>child 104:10</p> <p>choice 108:21</p> <p>city 85:18 86:9 86:18 99:16 101:8 114:14 114:17</p> <p>class 89:3 101:2</p> <p>Clodi 101:21 102:1,5,5,9 103:13 119:9</p> <p>close 111:10 113:24</p> <p>closing 116:6</p> <p>Colleen 103:15 103:24 119:10</p>	<p>come 90:10 91:16 92:7 109:19 111:12 114:22</p> <p>coming 87:16 98:18</p> <p>commenced 87:2</p> <p>comment 99:23</p> <p>comments 87:15 96:21 116:23 117:5,8</p> <p>commercial 99:18</p> <p>commission 84:2 86:1,6 87:7,17 89:25 90:19 91:23 93:7 94:11 95:25 97:8 100:18 104:5 107:17 116:21 118:4</p> <p>Commissioner 84:23 87:12,12 87:14 91:9 93:19 95:10 96:18 99:22 101:17 103:12 104:22 107:3 108:3 109:24 111:8 113:22 114:19 116:2,6 116:7</p> <p>commissioners 87:18 116:10 116:24</p> <p>community 84:9 91:11 100:4 112:2</p> <p>companies 90:16,18</p> <p>company 84:18 89:21 90:24 91:6 94:24 95:1 100:23</p>
B	<p>B 119:19</p> <p>back 106:16 107:22 115:21 115:22,23</p> <p>bad 107:2</p> <p>barely 111:5</p> <p>base 93:10</p> <p>based 106:18</p> <p>basically 102:12 102:22 103:6 109:22 113:9</p> <p>begging 104:15</p> <p>beginning 115:11</p> <p>believe 112:7</p> <p>beneficial 109:2</p> <p>benefits 103:4</p> <p>bet 90:1 106:3</p> <p>better 98:1 104:9</p> <p>big 98:18</p>	<p align="center">C</p> <p>C 85:1,4 87:1 120:1,1</p> <p>C-L-O-D-I 102:6</p> <p>C-O-L-L-E-E-N 103:25</p> <p>call 88:4</p> <p>called 108:20 110:25 113:4</p> <p>calling 90:13</p> <p>calls 90:14</p> <p>cap 106:9</p> <p>capitalization</p>		

MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

102:25 105:17 109:2,9 113:6 113:19 116:16 116:17 118:3 Company's 84:14 complaining 90:21 completely 115:18 computer 109:2 computers 109:3,4 concerned 94:16 conclude 118:7 concluded 118:10 consider 113:2 Continent 84:8 continued 102:16 contribution 117:15,17 contributions 117:19,20 control 96:17 conversation 92:9,10 Corkill 84:25 86:15 120:2,16 corporation 106:8 corporations 98:18 correct 117:12 117:22 correctly 93:23 96:22 103:16 105:1 cost 98:12,15,21 98:24 103:3 107:20 108:25 108:25 113:11 114:18 costs 102:25 council 101:9	counsel 85:10,12 85:15 86:3 100:3 118:5 120:9,10 couple 87:14 101:8 112:6 116:7 course 117:18 court 86:15 91:21 94:5 95:21 97:5 100:14 102:4 103:23 105:9 107:13 108:13 110:11 111:20 114:7 115:5 120:2 cover 103:2 creating 90:7 Creek 88:23 Crown 98:7 CSR 84:25 86:15,16 120:17 cubic 89:17 Currently 114:11 customer 87:22 102:15 107:20 112:14 customers 98:14 100:22,23,24 101:2 117:9,13 cutting 115:21 115:22,23	dang 111:3 data 88:25 day 91:3 93:14 days 93:14 106:2 110:18 110:21 deal 101:9 decrease 112:14 112:15 deemed 101:13 definition 102:12 demographic 88:25 denied 114:17 Denise 115:6 119:17 department 85:14 86:5 97:13 109:6 DEPUTY 84:22 determination 87:20 Development 85:14 86:5 different 98:3 99:19 direction 120:7 disability 113:8 discovered 97:18 discovering 97:19 discussion 100:2 105:16 dispense 87:9 district 88:23,25 89:1 90:4 disturbing 94:19 dividend 105:20 doctors' 89:7 documented 115:13,14 doing 89:21 92:20 97:14	98:13,22 107:2 107:20 dollar 99:11 106:8,19 117:15,19 dollars 117:21 double 103:5 doubt 91:5 dramatically 89:18 drop 93:16 drugs 89:6 dystonia 104:8	enabling 90:22 encompasses 88:23 encouraged 118:2 Energy 108:19 114:15 Energy's 84:19 enterprise 106:5 environment 90:8 especially 89:9 98:21 estate 100:21 etcetera 106:1 evening 117:6 everybody 89:21 90:6 104:20 106:21 109:15 evidence 93:25 95:15 96:25 100:8 101:23 103:18 105:3 107:8 108:7 110:5 111:14 114:1,24 examining 112:7 excess 117:17 expand 89:18 expecting 99:2 expert 116:14 extremely 90:20 99:3
	<hr/> D <hr/> D 84:22 87:1 119:1 D-A-L-E 102:5 D-E-N-I-S-E 115:7 d/b/a 84:18 Dale 101:21 102:5 119:9 damage 89:15		<hr/> E <hr/> E 85:1,1 87:1,1 119:1,19 120:1 120:1 E-L-L-I-S 114:9 earlier 88:9 105:16 114:12 115:19 early 96:12 earn 89:23 91:1 earnings 105:17 106:12 easier 102:15 Economic 85:14 86:5 efficiency 114:16 either 99:6 elderly 113:7 electric 108:23 electricity 113:12 114:14 electronically 109:7 Ellis 114:4,8,8 114:11 119:16 employed 109:13 employee 120:8 120:10 employer 109:16	<hr/> F <hr/> F 120:1 F-A-I-R-B-A-... 108:15 fair 99:4,5,6 Fairbanks 108:5 108:5,10,14,15 108:18 109:25 110:2 119:13 fall 113:9,14 families 101:3 family 99:5

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

fan 88:12	further 112:20	103:20 105:5	hail 89:14	hereinbefore
fee 109:21		107:10 108:9	half 88:23 96:5	120:5
feed 111:6	G	110:7 111:16	96:8	high 105:24
feedback 115:15	G 87:1	114:3 115:1	hand 92:16 93:1	109:18 113:11
feel 107:19	G-A-R-L-A-N...	goes 93:10	93:5,23 95:14	higher 99:13
feet 89:17	111:22	going 87:8,10	96:24 100:7	highest 113:15
Fifty 112:23	gainfully 109:12	88:2,12 89:8	101:22 103:17	Highway 84:9
fighting 100:3	gal 106:16	89:18,22 90:8	105:2 107:7	hike 103:10
figure 98:15	Garland 111:21	90:21 91:4,5,6	108:6 110:4	hold 92:21
File 84:15,16	119:15	91:24 92:3,4	111:12 113:25	home 100:25
financially 95:7	gas 84:13,15,17	92:23 93:17	114:23	101:1,6,12
120:11	84:18,20 89:18	96:9 97:14	handling 88:8	homes 101:10
find 89:1 90:2	89:20 93:10,11	98:3 101:14	happens 96:17	Honor 117:11
91:5	94:21 100:23	103:3 106:20	109:3	hope 93:22
fine 92:21 93:6	100:24,25	107:1 111:2	happy 118:5	96:21 101:20
first 87:11,14,15	101:6 102:10	112:9	hard 95:3	103:15 104:25
92:6 93:14	102:10 103:9	good 87:3 92:14	health 96:15	111:7
five 87:18 88:10	108:19,20,23	97:14 100:3	97:13	hoping 96:16
91:24 92:3	109:9 113:13	gosh 96:10	healthcare 98:4	hospital 93:13
116:22	114:14	governments	hear 88:3 90:15	house 89:11,14
fixed 89:2,6,24	generally 88:25	102:21	96:9 105:13	89:16 101:13
93:9 94:17,19	gentleman 93:18	Governor 85:16	112:4 115:12	104:9
95:3 96:3	107:22 115:15	86:7	117:8	housing 89:12
97:25 101:4	gentlemen 88:21	GR-2017-0215	hearing 84:5	110:17
104:7 109:12	89:19 90:2	84:15 87:5	87:2,4,21	hundreds
109:13,16	91:7 115:11	118:7	116:13 117:6	117:21
flow 105:20	getting 90:14	GR-2017-0216	118:2,6,7,10	hurting 97:25
folks 99:15	99:3	84:16	hearings 117:7	98:1
106:16	give 88:12 90:22	great 97:17	heat 100:25	
following	91:20 92:1,25	greater 108:24	Heather 110:4	I
117:13	93:3 94:1	112:21	110:12 119:14	I-N-M-A-N 97:6
food 98:4	95:16 97:1	group 94:16	hedge 106:1	idea 92:2 113:2
football 88:12	100:9 101:24	growth 106:13	held 105:25	113:3
fortunate	103:19 105:4	guarantee 90:3	help 94:2 95:17	immediately
111:25	107:9 108:8	90:9 107:25	99:12,17	87:10
forward 92:7	110:6 111:15	guess 89:15	100:10 101:25	impact 112:20
111:12 114:22	114:2,25	106:15,20	103:20 105:5	impacting
four 87:18	giving 117:4	guys 96:16	106:19 107:10	112:25
108:25	go 93:13 94:21	104:15,15	108:9 110:7	implore 89:25
frankly 89:22	97:22,24	107:1,19,23	111:16 114:3	inappropriate
free 118:1	101:14 103:1		115:1,21	103:10
front 93:18	104:16 106:4	H	117:15,19	inch 89:15
full 96:7 110:23	108:22 109:8	H 119:19	helps 113:10	include 105:18
fund 109:10	111:5 116:13	H-E-A-T-H-E...	Henry 93:22	117:20
funds 106:1,1	God 94:2 95:17	110:12	94:3,7,7,12,15	including 106:6
furnace 114:13	100:10 101:25	H-E-N-R-Y 94:8	95:11 119:5	income 89:2,6

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

93:9 94:17,19 94:22 95:3 96:3 99:25 101:3 104:7 109:12,13,16 112:3,18,21 113:1,3,7,20 115:20 116:20 incomes 98:1 101:4 increase 84:14 84:19 89:4,20 91:7 98:21 99:1 100:20 101:5,16 102:11,14,22 103:2 104:21 105:19 106:17 106:25 107:1 107:19 108:19 108:24 109:18 109:23 110:17 111:1 112:1,10 115:24 increased 109:19 Independence 84:8,10 87:5 100:22 113:4 114:14,17 individuals 106:22 influenced 116:13 information 117:14 infrastructure 102:17 Inman 96:22 97:3,6,6,9 99:23 100:5 119:7 inspection 101:12 inspections 101:10	installed 114:12 institutions 105:25 insulation 89:13 89:15 insurance 96:15 interest 106:4 interested 120:11 interior 101:9 introduce 88:19 investment 98:23 102:18 102:19,24 103:1,3,4 investments 102:12,15,21 investor 100:21 investors 98:22 98:24 108:1 IRAP 113:5 Irene 92:12 119:4 issued 88:9	94:14 95:12,19 95:24 96:20 97:4,7 100:5 100:12,17 101:19 102:2,7 103:14,22 104:1,4,24 105:7,12 107:5 107:12,16 108:4,11,16 110:1,9,14 111:9,18,23 113:23 114:5 114:10,21 115:3,8 116:4 117:2,24 judges 87:6 judicial 116:11 justified 107:21	know 88:1,13 89:12 90:12 92:18 94:23 96:6,12 99:16 105:16 106:9 107:24 109:1,5 115:11,13 Krystall 107:6 107:14 119:12	little 98:1,2 live 89:11 93:16 110:17 lived 87:22 living 108:25 109:1 111:2 lobbyists 99:16 local 84:5 87:4 100:21 Locust 86:17 long 97:12 look 88:24 91:25 99:15 112:9 looked 103:7 112:22 looking 90:21 102:12 112:25 lost 102:18 lot 87:9 89:8,12 89:13 90:25 97:11,15,18,23 98:20 101:3 106:16 113:18 113:19 115:14 115:25 116:14 116:19 Louis 85:7 love 89:22 102:10 103:9 low 99:25 101:3 105:23 112:3 112:18,21,25 113:1,3,7 115:18,20 116:20 lower 113:20 114:18 LP 108:23 lucky 98:8	
	J	K	L		
	J-A-C-K-I-E 108:14 J-O-S-E-P-H 105:11 Jackie 108:4,5 108:14 119:13 Jeff 99:16 Jefferson 85:18 86:9 job 90:19 94:25 100:3 Joe 104:25 117:6 119:11 jokes 107:2 Joseph 105:10 judge 84:22 87:3 87:25 88:8 91:12 92:11,15 92:20,24 93:6 93:21 94:4,9	K-A-T-H-Y 114:8 K-R-Y-S-T-A-... 107:15 Kansas 86:16,18 Kathy 114:8 119:16 KCP&L 89:21 keep 94:25 98:3 115:23 Kenney 84:23 87:12,14 91:9 93:19 95:10 96:18 99:22 101:17 103:12 104:22 107:3 108:3 109:24 111:8 113:22 114:19 116:2,6 116:7 Kidd 88:21,22 99:9 119:3 kids 111:4,6 kind 91:25 99:11	L-A-M-O-R-E... 103:25 L-A-N-D 111:22 Laclede 84:13 84:17 108:20 lady 94:13,16 Lamoreaus 103:15,21,24 103:25 104:3,6 104:23 119:10 lamps 104:18 Land 111:17,21 111:21,22,25 113:23 119:15 landlord 109:17 language 90:22 law 84:22 96:4,6 Lawrence 92:7 lay 109:4 League 112:2 Lee's 87:22 left 93:5 104:12 legislate 90:10 legislature 90:10 99:14 Library 84:8 life 94:18 104:8 light 113:6 lights 94:21 limiting 88:9 line 102:13 103:2 list 88:3,5,16 listening 91:2 Litigation 86:17	L	M
	M-A-B-E-L 95:22 M-A-X-O-N 110:13 ma'am 93:20				

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

94:11 108:17 110:15 114:20 114:22 Mabel 95:13,22 119:6 mad 90:13 Madison 85:17 86:8 making 98:18 99:10 103:8 106:11 107:25 Mall 98:8 market 85:6 106:8 Matter 84:13,17 Maxon 110:4,8 110:12,13,16 119:14 mayors 101:9 mean 89:5 90:11 102:19 meaning 102:19 means 89:8 101:1 Medicare 97:21 medication 89:7 medicine 104:11 meet 112:2 118:5 meeting 115:12 member 112:2 mentioned 109:11 114:12 115:19 meters 109:6,8 MGE 117:16 MGE's 117:7 Michael 85:4 microphone 91:17 95:20 96:23 105:13 108:12 110:10 111:19 114:6 115:4 Mid 84:8 middle 89:2	101:2 Midwest 86:17 million 90:1 99:10 106:14 106:24 millions 106:7 mind 107:2 Mine 94:12 minute 88:14 92:2 minutes 88:10 88:14 91:24 92:2,3 mispronounced 94:10 mispronounci... 104:2 missed 96:10 Missouri 84:1 84:10,18 85:7 85:13,18 86:1 86:4,9,16,18 87:5 97:13,15 97:22 98:6 108:19 114:14 117:17 modernization 102:16 moment 87:11 88:3 money 89:23 90:2,25 94:24 95:1 96:14 98:15,19 99:11 102:21 103:8 107:23,25 110:24 113:8 113:10 115:22 monopoly 108:21 month 89:5 104:9,11,12 106:17 112:22 months 96:12 106:5 113:9,14 113:15	move 92:5 101:14 moves 109:21 movie 111:5 multimillion 106:8 mutual 106:1 <hr/> N <hr/> N 85:1 87:1 119:1 N-O-M-I 94:7 name 88:22 91:20 94:5,10 95:20 97:5 100:13 102:3 103:23 104:2 104:25 105:8 107:13 108:13 109:10 110:11 111:20,21,22 114:6 115:4,6 115:7 names 91:15 natural 102:10 102:10 103:9 need 104:18 112:8 115:20 115:24 needed 102:14 needs 91:14 114:17 needy 115:17 negotiation 116:18 net 98:19 99:3 never 116:16 new 97:11 114:13,16 nice 94:13 Nomi 93:22 94:7 119:5 normally 109:3 North 84:8 Nos 87:5 number 108:19	117:16 <hr/> O <hr/> O 87:1 Oak 98:8 obviously 88:1 118:1 office 85:10,15 85:16 86:7 90:13 100:3,21 118:4 Oh 96:10 97:14 oil 104:17 okay 91:23 97:14 104:3 older 89:11 99:4 once 92:1 ones 90:17 ongoing 102:14 opened 89:14 opening 87:9,13 opportunity 87:19 89:24 oppose 100:20 101:15 102:11 107:18 108:2 110:16 opposed 91:2 99:4,17,20 opposition 108:18 order 88:4,9 ought 112:24 overall 112:16 113:16 overextend 94:25 owned 98:23,23 105:25 <hr/> P <hr/> P 84:23 85:1,1 87:1 p.m 87:2 118:10 P.O 85:17 86:8 PAGE 119:2 paid 93:10	Park 98:8 part 100:1 116:25 117:5 particularly 99:6 parties 120:9 partner 98:6 pass 98:13 101:12 104:21 106:21 111:7 passing 105:21 passion 90:15 pay 93:13 97:16 99:2 106:20 107:20 109:21 110:22,23 111:2,4,5 113:6 payment 104:10 pays 90:24 peak 113:11 Pendergast 85:4 92:9 117:10,11 117:24 pension 98:2 pensions 97:17 97:22 people 90:3,4,12 90:16,17,23,25 91:4 93:8 95:2 96:2 97:11,18 98:20 99:2,5,5 99:6,7,12,18 99:18,19,20 101:3,9,14 104:7 109:4,5 109:8,11,14 110:20 112:3,9 112:11,18,21 113:4,7,7,8,20 115:17,20 118:3 percent 89:23 96:10 97:22,23 98:9,18,25 99:3 106:1,5
---	---	---	---	---

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

<p>106:13 112:23 113:6 perfectly 93:6 period 117:14 periods 113:11 person 91:5 personal 94:22 perspective 115:25 phone 90:14 pick 91:18 pipelines 102:11 place 120:5 please 91:16,17 91:25 93:24 94:5 95:14,19 100:7,13 101:22 102:3 103:17,22 104:21 105:2,8 105:13 107:7 107:12 108:6 108:12 110:10 111:13,19 113:25 114:5 115:3 pleased 94:15 pleasure 87:24 pocket 93:14 106:14 pockets 98:20 podium 91:17 point 89:18 politely 92:4 poor 99:2 power 113:6 preliminary 91:19 presence 94:16 Presiding 84:22 price 106:7 Pridgin 84:22 87:3,6,25 91:12 92:11,15 92:20,24 93:6 93:21 94:4,9</p>	<p>94:14 95:12,19 95:24 96:20 97:4,7 100:5 100:12,17 101:19 102:2,7 103:14,22 104:1,4,24 105:7,12 107:5 107:12,16 108:4,11,16 110:1,9,14 111:9,18,23 113:23 114:5 114:10,21 115:3,8 116:4 117:2,24 probably 95:7 problem 95:7 103:8 106:15 106:19 proceedings 84:3 120:4 process 112:7 117:5 profit 99:11 106:11 profit-making 113:19 program 113:5 113:5,13 programming 109:2 pronounce 96:21 pronounced 93:22 pronouncing 101:20 103:16 104:25 properly 91:22 Property 93:9 proposed 102:14 112:13,19 providing 113:3 113:20 public 84:2,5,8</p>	<p>85:10,12,15 86:1,6 87:4,18 90:19 100:3 109:14 110:17 118:4 publicly 98:23 pushing 116:22 put 101:9 104:17 put-call 106:2</p> <hr/> <p>Q</p> <p>question 91:20 question-and-... 88:2 questions 115:12 116:12 117:4 118:2,6 quick 91:19 quit 107:2 quite 89:22 94:12 95:3</p> <hr/> <p>R</p> <p>R 84:25 85:1 86:15 87:1 120:1,2,16 R-A-I-N-V-I-... 107:15 R-O-S-E 115:7 Rainville 107:6 107:11,14,15 107:18 119:12 raise 92:16 93:1 93:23 95:13 96:16,23 97:19 97:20,21 100:6 101:21 103:16 105:2 107:7 108:5 111:12 113:25 114:23 raised 110:4 114:15 raises 94:21 Ramey 92:12,13 92:16,18,23,24 93:5,8 119:4</p>	<p>rate 89:4,20 91:7 97:21 98:21 99:19,21 99:24 100:20 101:16 103:10 106:13,17 108:19,24 109:18,22 112:1,8,10 114:16 rates 87:20 98:3 99:15,16 109:18 111:1,3 112:16 ratio 106:2 read 87:19 109:7,8 116:24 reading 91:15 102:13 real 91:5 100:21 really 97:17 98:17 99:17 reason 100:20 101:15 106:23 106:24 recognized 88:20 91:14 reconsider 95:6 record 87:4 117:12,23 118:9 recorded 91:22 recover 102:14 102:25 reduced 120:6 reducing 112:18 regarding 116:20 regular 96:11 REGULATO... 84:22 relative 120:8 120:10 remember 96:13 rent 110:24 rental 101:10</p>	<p>rents 98:11 repeated 117:23 replace 109:4 replaced 109:6 replacing 109:5 REPORTED 84:24 reporter 86:15 91:21 94:6 95:21 97:5 100:14 102:4 103:23 105:9 107:13 108:13 110:11 111:20 114:7 115:5 120:3 representative 88:22 91:9,12 91:13 119:3 representatives 88:18,19 represented 112:11 request 84:14,19 103:10 requirements 101:11 residents 112:4 retired 94:18 96:3,5,11 97:10,10,12,12 98:20 99:2,7 99:12,15,17,19 107:24 114:12 retiree 97:11 Retirees 97:25 return 98:9,19 99:3 Revenues 84:15 84:20 reversion 109:17 ridiculous 99:1 99:8 right 87:25 91:1 91:15 92:16,21</p>
--	--	---	--	--

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

93:1,23 95:14 96:23 100:7 101:21,21 103:17 105:2 105:14 106:18 107:7 108:6 110:1,3,4 111:12 113:25 114:23 116:5 road 103:4 Robert 97:6 Ron 87:6 RONALD 84:22 room 91:6 95:8 105:17 112:11 116:12 Rose 115:2,6,7 115:10 116:3,4 119:17 runs 113:8,10 Ryan 85:11	seen 89:12 116:16 segment 87:17 Senior 85:12 97:13 seniors 109:14 September 84:6 seriously 91:3 111:3 service 84:2,15 84:20 86:1,6 87:18 90:19 91:11 102:16 112:14,15,17 112:23,24 117:7 Services 86:17 97:13 112:2 session 88:2 seven 93:14 Shapiro 95:13 95:18,22,23 96:1,19 119:6 share 105:17 106:6,12 sheet 110:3 short 106:4 shorthand 120:5 showing 116:25 117:3 shut 104:16 sick 93:15 sides 116:14 sign 88:15 sign-up 110:3 signed 88:5 92:6 111:10 similar 94:12 102:23 113:13 117:6 simple 89:19 sir 92:11 100:12 100:18 102:2,8 103:14 105:14 107:4 111:12 111:18,24	113:22 situation 115:15 116:1 six 96:11 106:5,7 110:18,21 skip 104:11 small 106:9 Smith 85:11 smooth 113:16 Social 94:20 95:5 96:7,11 96:14 97:17,19 solar 108:23 somebody 91:6 106:19 sorry 94:9 sorts 89:7 speak 91:18 speaking 115:16 spell 91:21 93:12 94:5 95:20 97:5 100:13 102:3 103:23 105:8 107:13 108:12 110:10 111:20 114:6 115:4 Spire 85:3,5 87:22 102:13 103:5 spot 116:11 St 85:7 117:6 staff 86:3 118:4 stand 90:6,8 91:2 start 90:13 91:15,24 92:21 state 84:1 85:13 86:4 88:18 90:4,23 94:5 95:20 97:4,16 98:5 100:13 101:7 102:3 103:23 105:8 107:13 108:12 110:10 111:19	114:6 115:4,20 115:21 stated 120:6 statement 87:13 91:23 93:7 94:10 95:25 97:8 100:18 102:8,9 103:6 104:5 105:14 107:16 108:17 110:15,16 111:24 114:10 115:9,10,23 116:6 statements 87:9 stay 98:16 staying 103:8 step 99:16 Stephen 100:6 100:15 119:8 stock 106:13 stockholders 105:22 Stop 90:5 stopwatch 88:10 store 98:7,8 stories 112:4 street 85:6,17 86:8,17 109:7 strongly 100:19 struck 104:7 studies 97:15 stuff 99:15 115:13 Sugar 88:23 suggest 112:15 suggestions 112:6 Suite 85:16 86:7 summer 113:9 Summers 100:6 100:11,15,15 100:19 101:18 101:19 119:8 Summit 87:23 supplies 98:11	support 90:16 90:16,17,23 sure 100:1 109:8 swear 92:25 93:2,25 95:15 96:25 100:8 101:23 103:18 105:3 107:8 108:7 110:5 111:14 114:1 114:24 sweeping 101:7 sworn 92:16,22 93:24 95:14 96:24 100:7 101:22 103:17 105:2 107:7 108:6 111:13 113:25 114:23 system 114:13 114:16
S				T
S 85:1 87:1 119:19 S-H-A-P-I-R-O 95:23 S-T-E-P-H-E-N 100:16 S-U-M-M-E-... 100:16 salaries 105:19 satisfied 92:9 save 98:15 102:20 saying 95:6 107:22 says 98:21 second 113:2 Security 94:20 95:5 96:7,11 96:14 97:18,19 see 87:24 89:1 98:17 101:4 110:4 Seeing 116:5				T 119:19 120:1,1 take 91:3 104:10 111:4 114:5 115:3,25 116:19 taken 110:24 120:4 talk 89:4 talked 117:14 talking 89:10 106:16 tax 93:10 102:22 taxed 93:9 taxes 90:25 technology 102:15 tell 110:21 tenant 109:20 term 102:18 territory 117:7 testified 116:9 testify 88:7,17 111:11 113:24

MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

testifying 117:4	103:11 112:5	98:25 112:4	we'll 117:6,8	wrap 92:4
testimony 87:10	115:17 120:5	unlivable	we're 88:2,6	writing 120:6
87:19 88:3,9	times 97:23	101:13	89:10 90:8	<hr/>
91:15 92:25	116:15	upgrade 102:15	107:24,24	X
93:2 116:14,24	today 87:16 89:2	use 93:11 95:20	116:11 118:8	<hr/>
thank 87:25	91:4 94:13	96:22 105:13	we've 88:1	X 119:1,19
88:21 91:7,10	99:20 112:11	108:12 110:10	116:22	<hr/>
91:13 92:11	116:23	111:19 113:1	week 110:18,21	Y
93:18,19,21	tools 90:22	users 113:1,1	112:3	year 89:14 90:23
94:4,14 95:5,8	total 99:9	Usually 116:17	weeks 105:24	93:10 96:13
95:10,12 96:18	108:22	utilities 98:4	welcome 87:15	97:10,20,23
96:20 99:20,22	TRANSCRIPT	101:11,12	went 97:20	113:11
100:4,5,12	84:3	104:17 110:24	98:11,12	years 87:23
101:16,17,19	trouble 105:1,12	111:5	105:23	94:18 95:4
102:2 103:11	true 102:23	utility 110:19,25	WILLIAM	97:12 98:7
103:12,14	truth 93:3,3,4	utilization	84:23	101:8 102:19
104:21,22,24	94:1,1,2 95:16	113:14,15	win 103:5	108:25 116:22
105:7 107:3,5	95:16,17 97:1	<hr/>	winter 89:17	yelled 90:14
108:2,3,4,11	97:1,2 100:9,9	V	113:14 115:17	Yesterday
109:24 110:2,9	100:10 101:24	value 106:6	wintertime 89:9	105:24
111:7,8,9,18	101:24,25	vendor 108:22	wish 95:2	<hr/>
113:20,22,23	103:19,19,20	victory 114:15	115:14	Z
114:19,21	105:4,4,5	VOLUME	wishes 111:11	<hr/>
116:1,2,4,8,25	107:9,9,10	84:11	wishing 113:24	0
117:3,24 118:8	108:8,8,9	volunteers 116:5	witness 92:5,6	<hr/>
thing 96:2 99:13	110:6,6,7	vote 90:17	92:12 93:22	0216 87:6 118:8
109:9	111:15,15,16	<hr/>	95:13 96:21	<hr/>
things 89:7	114:2,2,3,25	W	100:6 101:20	1
92:19 93:16	114:25 115:1	W 84:9	103:15 105:1	<hr/>
101:7 105:18	try 92:1,4 99:25	wage 111:2	107:6 110:3	1 84:9 97:21
115:22,25	trying 88:11	want 88:19 90:9	111:10 119:2	106:5
116:8,19	92:24 94:25	91:7,20,21	witnesses 88:4	1-800-280-DE...
think 90:20 99:4	turn 104:18	95:5 103:8	wood 104:17	86:19
99:14 102:18	turned 96:14	109:10 111:1	work 92:18	1:18 87:2
102:22 103:7	98:14 100:25	116:8 117:2	107:22 110:18	10 96:10 112:20
103:10 105:15	two 88:13,18	wanted 117:12	110:18,20,21	100 119:8
109:12,17,22	92:2 98:9	117:22	111:3,6	100,000 117:18
109:22 110:2	112:12	wanting 98:19	worked 94:17	102 119:9
112:8,11,24	two-minute	wants 88:6,16	95:4 98:5	104 119:10
thought 96:10	88:13	106:3	116:15	105 119:11
97:14	<hr/>	warning 88:13	working 89:2	107 119:12
thousands	U	wasn't 115:13	99:18 101:3	108 119:13
117:21	ultimately 103:1	water 89:21	107:24,25	110 119:14
threat 90:12	understand	94:22 109:5	109:15 110:25	111 119:15
time 87:8 96:4	88:17 90:24	way 88:24 89:24	works 90:12	114 119:16
97:12 98:14	94:24 95:1	98:15 112:17	worth 93:11	115 119:17
		ways 112:12		12 89:23 98:18
				99:3 106:10
				1387 86:16

MIDWEST LITIGATION SERVICES

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 9/21/2017

120:17	5 89:5,8,9			
14 98:7	106:25			
15 89:10 112:20	5-a-month 89:20			
1608 86:17	50 113:6			
	50th 97:16			
<hr/>	52 105:23			
2	59.54 105:24			
2 84:9 97:20,23				
98:25	<hr/>			
2:00 118:10	6			
20 89:10 106:12	63101 85:7			
112:19	64 89:17 94:18			
200 85:17 86:8	64050 84:10			
2017 84:6	64108 86:18			
20th 88:23	65 96:5,7,8			
21 84:6	650 85:16			
2230 85:17	65102 85:18			
24 84:9	86:9			
25 112:19	66 96:8			
26 97:12	67 96:9			
26.72 93:11				
	<hr/>			
3	7			
3 98:9,25	7 104:12			
3,500 93:15	700 85:6 106:17			
3.4 99:10	74 94:18			
3.4889 105:18	74.45 105:25			
3.8 106:9	755 104:9			
30 89:10 106:2	77 105:25			
30-some-odd	78 105:24			
87:23				
300 93:13	<hr/>			
317 84:9	8			
34 106:14,24	8 93:11			
36 90:1	800 86:7			
360 86:8	816-221-1160			
	86:18			
<hr/>	86 94:18			
4	88 119:3			
4 84:11				
40 109:20	<hr/>			
40,000 113:17	9			
115:16	92 119:4			
401(k) 102:10	94 119:5			
44,000 99:8	95 119:6			
45 109:20	961 86:16			
49th 97:16	120:17			
	97 119:7			
<hr/>				
5				