

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI**

Brenda Kalemis,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No. GC-2007-0385
	)	
Laclede Gas Company,	)	
	)	
Respondent.	)	

**LACLEDE GAS COMPANY’S ANSWER**

**COMES NOW** Laclede Gas Company (“Laclede” or “Company”), pursuant to the Commission’s April 11, 2007 Notice of Complaint in the above captioned case, and submits its Answer to the Complaint filed against Laclede by Brenda Kalemis (the “Customer” or “Ms. Kalemis”). In support thereof, Laclede states as follows:

1. In her request for relief, Ms. Kalemis seeks to avoid a November 2006 billing adjustment that reconciled usage for a period when the meter at her home failed to register usage. Laclede responds that Ms. Kalemis should not be permitted to avoid the billing adjustment, as it was performed in accordance with Company tariffs that specifically address this situation.

2. On January 9, 2006, an automated meter reading (“AMR”) module was installed on Laclede’s meter at the customer’s home at 1446 Land O’ Lakes Drive in St. Louis County (the “Property”). Following the AMR installation, the module continued to send meter readings, but the readings were not advancing, indicating a problem with the AMR module and/or the meter itself.

3. In late February 2006, Laclede first issued a bill indicating zero usage for the current month. Laclede caused the AMR module to be replaced on March 31, 2006. However, this did not resolve the issue, so it appeared that a meter change was necessary.

4. On June 7, 2006, a Laclede representative left a message on the customer's answering machine that a meter change needed to be scheduled due to the meters' failure to register usage. Laclede received no response. On September 14, 2006, Laclede personnel left another telephone message and mailed a postcard to the customer. Finally, on October 19, 2006, Laclede was able to change the meter and rectify the measurement issue.

5. Meanwhile, beginning with the February 2006 bill and continuing until the meter was replaced, Ms. Kalemis received bills with charges of less than \$13 per month, based on zero usage, since the meter index was not advancing. Based on the zero use and the small amounts reflected on each month's billing statements, on the telephone messages and on the postcard, Ms. Kalemis knew or should have known that she was being underbilled.

6. In accordance with Rule 10A of its tariff, Laclede issued a billing adjustment in November 2006, covering the period December 20, 2005 to October 18, 2006. In the adjustment, Laclede credited prior billings during this period and charged for 673 ccf (hundred cubic feet), which was less than the amounts billed for the similar period in the two previous years. In connection with this November 2006 bill, Laclede also sent the customer a letter informing her of the charge for unmetered usage.

7. In answering the specific allegations in the complaint, Laclede denies the allegations made in paragraphs 2-1 and 2-2 of the complaint. As stated above, Ms. Kalemis had ample indications that her gas bills were understated and that there was a usage measurement issue that needed to be addressed.

8. Laclede denies the allegations made in paragraph 2-3 of the complaint. Laclede records show that it visited the Property in January 2006, March 2006, and October 2006, as recited above.

9. With respect to the allegations in paragraph 2-4 of the complaint, Laclede replaced the meter at the Property on October 19, 2006. Prior to completing the meter replacement, Laclede identified a problem with the customer's furnace, which was rectified. Laclede admits that it did discover the meter issue long before it issued the November 2006 billing adjustment. As stated above, Laclede first attempted to fix the AMR module, and then made multiple attempts to make arrangements with the customer to change the meter.

10. Laclede is without information or belief to respond to the allegations in paragraph 2-5 of the complaint.

11. Laclede denies the allegation in paragraph 2-6 of the complaint that bills received seemed to change with the seasons. The customer included the gas bills with her complaint. These bills clearly show each month's charge for gas service being in the neighborhood of \$13.

12. Laclede denies the allegations in paragraphs 3-1 and 3-3 of the complaint. Laclede notes that it received correspondence from the customer in December 2006, but does not show that it received a phone call from the customer at this time.

13. Laclede is without information or belief to respond to the allegations in paragraph 3-4 of the complaint regarding the customer's health situation.

14. Laclede is without information or belief to respond to the allegations in paragraph 3-5 of the complaint. Laclede does confirm that it has not required the

customer to pay the disputed balance at this time. However, beginning in December 2006, the customer appears to have unilaterally created and paid a budgeted amount, which amount is not sufficient to cover actual winter bills, but should be sufficient to cover her annual charges. Further, while the Company believes that this customer understands the billing adjustment for the period when the meter failed to register usage, Laclede is willing to, and will, contact the customer and answer the customer's questions regarding such adjustment. Finally, Laclede will offer the customer payments terms that permit the customer to pay the adjusted amount in installments over the same amount of time covered by the adjustment.

15. Regarding the customer's requested relief, Laclede denies that the customer should only be responsible for usage recorded after the meter issue was rectified. Rather, the customer should also be responsible for the amount of gas consumption estimated by Laclede, and under the payment terms set forth herein, all as provided for in the Company's tariffs.

WHEREFORE, Laclede respectfully requests that the Commission accept Laclede's Answer.

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Rick Zucker**

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**Certificate of Service**

The undersigned certifies that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Answer was served on the Complainant, the General Counsel of the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission, and the Office of Public Counsel on this 11th day of May, 2007 by United States mail, hand-delivery, email, or facsimile.

**/s/ Gerry Lynch**\_\_\_\_\_