

FILED

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF THE  
STATE OF MISSOURI

AUG 30 1999

Missouri Public  
Service Commission

John McCullough

(your name)

Complainant

vs.

ASSOCIATED NATURAL GAS  
A DIVISION OF ARKANSAS WESTERN  
GAS CO

(company name)

Case No. GC-2000-197

MAIN ST NEW & USED  
371 S. MAIN ST IRVINGTON MO 63650

Respondent.

COMPLAINT

Complainant resides at 508 KANSAS DR BISMARCK MO 58101 (3624)

1. Respondent, Associated Gas  
(company name)

of \_\_\_\_\_, is a public utility under the jurisdiction of

the Public Service Commission of the State of Missouri.

2. As the basis of this complaint, complainant states the following facts:

I received a bill for 13.70 from said co. Associated Gas after I had discontinued using gas for the winter for heating purposes. The only gas I use in this place is for heating. When I asked about this bill they said it was to help maintain the meters and the pipe lines and there over head costs. I can't see why we have to pay for gas that we are not using for them to pay there over head. The customers and residents use hot water tanks and stoves for cooking the food should be enough revenue to off set there costs of there over head as no one gives me money during our slow time to help cover my over head. They informed me if I disconnect the gas then I must pay 37.50 to reconnect plus 13.70 every month that I have the gas disconnected which I feel is wrong. I don't mind paying the 37.50 to reconnect but I don't see having to pay 13.70 for the months I don't use it, I pay my gas bill during the winter to heat my building which is extra large, sometimes as high as 196.00. I would appreciate any help that you could give me concerning this matter, as I feel this is not right to me or the public, as I am retired and do not have the money to obtain an attorney.

3. The complainant has taken the following steps to present this complaint to the respondent:

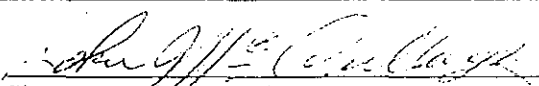
371 S. Main St.  
Ironton, MO 634

MAIN  
FL  
Across I.

Store  
(573) 546-1404

WHEREFORE, Complainant now requests the following relief:

Date

  
Signature of Complainant



Commissioners

SHEILA LUMPE  
Chair

HAROLD CRUMPTON

CONNIE MURRAY

ROBERT G. SCHEMENAUER

M. DIANNE DRAINER  
Vice Chair

## Missouri Public Service Commission

POST OFFICE BOX 360  
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65102  
573-751-3234  
573-751-1847 (Fax Number)  
<http://www.ecodev.state.mo.us/psc/>

GORDON L. PERSINGER  
Acting Executive Director  
Director, Research and Public Affairs

WESS A. HENDERSON  
Director, Utility Operations

ROBERT SCHALLENBERG  
Director, Utility Services

DONNA M. KOLILIS  
Director, Administration

DALE HARDY ROBERTS  
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

DANA K. JOYCE  
General Counsel

### Information Sheet Regarding Mediation of Commission Formal Complaint Cases

Mediation is process whereby the parties themselves work to resolve their dispute with the aid of a neutral third-party mediator. This process is sometimes referred to as "facilitated negotiation." The mediator's role is advisory and although the mediator may offer suggestions, the mediator has no authority to impose a solution nor will the mediator determine who "wins." Instead, the mediator simply works with both parties to facilitate communications and to attempt to enable the parties to reach an agreement which is mutually agreeable to both the complainant and the respondent.

The mediation process is explicitly a problem-solving one in which neither the parties nor the mediator are bound by the usual constraints such as the rules of evidence or the other formal procedures required in hearings before the Missouri Public Service Commission. Although many private mediators charge as much as \$250 per hour, the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Law has agreed to provide this service to parties who have formal complaints pending before the Public Service Commission at no charge. Not only is the service provided free of charge, but mediation is also less expensive than the formal complaint process because the assistance of an attorney is not necessary for mediation. In fact, the parties are encouraged not to bring an attorney to the mediation meeting.

The formal complaint process before the Commission invariably results in a determination by which there is a "winner" and a "loser" although the value of winning may well be offset by the cost of attorneys fees and the delays of protracted litigation. Mediation is not only a much quicker process but it also offers the unique opportunity for informal, direct communication between the two parties to the complaint and mediation is far more likely to result in a settlement which, because it was mutually agreed to, pleases both parties. This is traditionally referred to as "win-win" agreement.

The traditional mediator's role is to (1) help the participants understand the mediation process, (2) facilitate their ability to speak directly to each other, (3) maintain order, (4) clarify misunderstandings, (5) assist in identifying issues, (6) diffuse unrealistic expectations, (7) assist in translating one participant's perspective or proposal into a form that is more understandable and acceptable to the other participant, (8) assist the participants with the actual negotiation process, (9) occasionally a mediator may propose a possible solution, and (10) on rare occasions a mediator may encourage a participant to accept a particular solution. The mediator will not possess any specialized knowledge of the utility industry or of utility law.

In order for the Commission to refer a complaint case to mediation, the parties must both agree to mediate their conflict in good faith. The party filing the complaint must agree to appear and to make a good faith effort to mediate and the utility company against which the complaint has been filed must send a representative who has full authority to settle the complaint case. The essence of mediation stems from the fact that the participants are both genuinely interested in resolving the complaint.

Because mediation thrives in an atmosphere of free and open discussion, all settlement offers and other information which is revealed during mediation is shielded against subsequent disclosure in front of the Missouri Public Service Commission and is considered to be privileged information. The only information which must be disclosed to the Public Service Commission is (a) whether the case has been settled and (b) whether, irrespective of the outcome, the mediation effort was considered to be a worthwhile endeavor. The Commission will not ask what took place during the mediation.

If the dispute is settled at the mediation, the Commission will require a signed release from the complainant in order for the Commission to dismiss the formal complaint case.

If the dispute is not resolved through the mediation process, neither party will be prejudiced for having taken part in the mediation and, at that point, the formal complaint case will simply resume its normal course.

Date: January 25, 1999



---

Dale Hardy Roberts  
Secretary of the Commission