

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

Clyde Bradford,	)	
	)	
	Complainant,	)
v.	)	Case No. GC-2007-0382
	)	
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 Clyde Bradford (the “Customer” or “Mr. Bradford”). In support thereof, Laclede states as follows:

1. In his request for relief, Mr. Bradford seeks the Commission’s help explaining to Laclede that he does not steal gas, and obtaining a refund of the sum of \$1266.73 he paid to Laclede for gas service, plus interest on that sum.

2. In summary, Laclede responds that it does not accuse Mr. Bradford of stealing gas. In assessing the sum of \$1266.73 to Mr. Bradford, Laclede was simply billing Mr. Bradford for gas that he used, primarily in 2002, but that had not been billed or paid for. Mr. Bradford’s payment of this sum in 2006, albeit without interest, satisfied his obligation.

3. On October 5, 2001, Laclede visited Mr. Bradford’s home at 930 Elias (the “Property”), to discontinue service for nonpayment of delinquent charges. Laclede failed to gain access to its meter inside the Property, so service was disconnected outside at the curb box, known as a “curb cut.” On October 31, 2001, Laclede rendered a final

bill to Mr. Bradford, which included service to October 5, 2001, and stated the phrase “FINAL BILL.” Mr. Bradford paid the final bill in December 2001. As the account had been “finaled,” Laclede did not send further bills on Mr. Bradford’s account.

4. Laclede’s records show that gas continued to be used at the Property after October 5, 2001. Laclede is without information or belief to state whether its curb cut failed to stop the flow of gas or whether Mr. Bradford or someone else used self-help to restore gas service.

5. In January 2003, A Laclede Collection Department representative visited the Property, and again failed to gain access to its meter. The Laclede representative worked with the curb box, but was unsure if the gas had been effectively disconnected, so a request was made for a visit by a service technician from Laclede’s Diversion Department. A service technician visited the Property in March 2003, and was also unable to gain access to the inside meter, although he noted that the Property appeared to be occupied. The service technician found the gas to be off at the curb. Laclede’s records confirm that gas usage at the property ceased in January 2003.

6. In October 2006, Mr. Bradford apparently was in the process of selling the Property. Pursuant to a sale agreement, Mr. Bradford contacted Laclede to have the Company perform a home sale gas inspection. Laclede was then able to confirm that the unauthorized use after October 2001 was attributable to the Bradfords. Laclede rendered a bill to Mr. Bradford in the amount of \$1266.73 for the 1720 CCF (hundred cubic feet) used between October 5, 2001 and January 13, 2003. As stated above, Mr. Bradford paid the bill in full.

7. In the Complaint, Mr. Bradford states that he has lived at the Property from 1988 to 2006, and never rented it. Laclede notes that Mr. Bradford opened the gas account at the Property in June 1988. Laclede has no reason to doubt that Mr. Bradford occupied the Property between 1988 and 2003. Laclede is without information or belief to determine who occupied the home after March 2003.

8. Mr. Bradford states that he has been a loyal customer of Laclede Gas for 15 years. Since it appears that Mr. Bradford used gas at the Property from 1988 to 2003, Laclede would agree that Mr. Bradford has been responsible for gas service at the property for approximately 15 years. Laclede would note that it disconnected service briefly in 1990 (at the curb), and that it dispatched collection department personnel to the Property to either collect delinquent payments or disconnect service for nonpayment in 1993, 1995, 1996, 2000 and 2001.

9. Mr. Bradford states that he never stole gas and never will. While Laclede is without information or belief to respond, even if Mr. Bradford did not take any affirmative steps to restore disconnected gas service in October 2001, he clearly continued to receive and use gas without comment or payment after he had received the final bill sent in October 2001, paid the final bill in December 2001, and thereafter ceased being billed for gas service.

10. Laclede denies that Mr. Bradford asked that gas service be turned off at the Property over 5 years ago.

11. Laclede is without information or belief to respond to Mr. Bradford's allegation that he would not leave Laclede on bad terms without paying his final bill. On the one hand, Laclede would note that Mr. Bradford has currently paid the bills for both

authorized and unauthorized gas service at the Property. On the other hand, through his complaint, Mr. Bradford is seeking to recover the payment he made for unauthorized gas use, thus negating that payment.

12. Laclede denies Mr. Bradford's allegation in his letter of March 25, 2007, that he has not used Laclede's service for over five years. Laclede maintains that Mr. Bradford last used gas service at the Property in January 2003. Mr. Bradford lists his current address as 4534 St. Ferdinand, where gas service was initiated in the name of Brenda Bradford, believed to be the spouse of Mr. Bradford, on November 1, 2005, and disconnected at the customer's request on February 16, 2006.

13. Laclede denies that Mr. Bradford is entitled to either a return of his payment for unauthorized use of gas service, or interest on that sum.

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

Respectfully submitted,

**/s/ Rick Zucker**

Rick Zucker  
Assistant General Counsel  
Laclede Gas Company  
720 Olive Street, Room 1516  
St. Louis, MO 63101  
(314) 342-0533 Phone  
(314) 421-1979 Fax  
rzucker@lacledegas.com

**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 10th day of May, 2007 by United States mail, hand-delivery, email, or facsimile.

**/s/ Gerry Lynch**