Missouri Public

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Issue:

Witness: Arthur W. Rice

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Case No.: SR-2013-0321

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION REGULATORY REVIEW DIVISION

UTILITY SERVICES ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES

SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY

OF

ARTHUR W. RICE, PE

LINCOLN COUNTY SEWER & WATER, LLC

CASE NO. SR-2013-0321

Jefferson City, Missouri October 2013

Date 11-05-13 Reporter KF File No. SR -2013 - 6321

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1	SURREBUTTAL TESTIMONY
2	OF
3	ARTHUR W. RICE, PE
4	LINCOLN COUNTY SEWER & WATER, LLC
5	CASE NO. SR-2013-0321 and WR-2013-0322
6	Q. Please state your name and business address.
7	A. My name is Arthur W. Rice, and my business address is Missouri Public
8	Service Commission, P.O. Box 360, Jefferson City, MO 65102.
9	Q. What is your position with the Staff ("Staff") of the Missouri Public Service
10	Commission ("Commission")?
11	A. I am a Utility Regulatory Engineer I in the Engineering and Management
12	Services Unit of the Utility Services Unit.
13	BACKGROUND OF WITNESS
14	Q. Please describe your educational background and other qualifications.
15	A. I received a Bachelor's of Science in Chemical Engineering from the
16	University of Massachusetts in 1979. I am a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of
17	Missouri, license No 028012.
18	From 1998 to 2008, I worked as a self-employed business owner. I established
19	Arthur Rice Contracting LLC and developed a residential subdivision on 270 Acres in
20	Callaway County Missouri, obtained appropriate permits, installed infrastructure, (including
21	a sewer collection and treatment system), and built residential homes. Forty-one families
22	have moved into the development and joined the homeowners association which owns and
23	operates the sewer system.

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From 1979 to 1998, I was employed by Monsanto Company and then Air Products and Chemicals as an engineer and project manager in an industrial equipment manufacture and sales division. The processes revolved around manufacturing, installation and operation of gas separation equipment for oil refineries, chemical plants and natural gas processing.

From 1972 to 1977, I was employed by General Electric Company as a tool and die maker. The facility I worked at produced power, distribution and pole transformers, plus electrical switch gear, surge arrestors and electrical connectors.

From 1966 to 1972, I was trained and employed by the U.S. Navy as a nuclear propulsion plant operator, plant water chemist, and radiological controls specialist. I was qualified in submarines and served 3 ½ years on a nuclear submarine.

- Q. What has been the nature of your duties with the Commission?
- A. From April 2008 to present, my duties include providing expert witness testimony regarding the assessment and development of appropriate regulatory depreciation rates and accounting treatment of plant and equipment installed and/or contributed, retired, or transferred to water, sewer, electric and natural gas companies' regulatory operations.
 - Q. Have you previously filed testimony before this Commission?
- A. Yes. A list of cases in which I have filed testimony before this Commission is attached as Schedule AWR-1 to my Surrebuttal testimony.
- Q. With reference to Case No. SR-2013-0321 and WR-2013-0322, have you participated in Staff's audit of Lincoln County Sewer & Water, LLC ("Company" or "LCSW") concerning its request for a rate increase in this proceeding?
 - A. Yes.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY and STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- Q. What is the purpose of this testimony?
- A. The purpose of my testimony is to provide surrebuttal testimony to the rebuttal testimony of Office of the Public Counsel's ("Public Counsel") witness Mr. William Addo and to provide Staff's recommendation to the Commission regarding depreciation rates for LCSW. Staff's recommended depreciation rate schedules for Lincoln County Sewer & Water LLC are included with this testimony as schedules AWR-2 and AWR-3.

INTRODUCTION

- Q. In general, what rules are used by Staff as a basis for applying depreciation to regulated water and sewer utility plant accounts in Missouri?
- A. For water, the Code of State Regulations, 4 CSR 240-50.030 specifies the use of the Uniform System of Accounts (USOA) issued by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in 1973, as revised in 1976. For sewer, 4 CSR 240-61.020 specifies the use of the USOA issued by the NARUC in 1976.
- Q. What was the basis for the depreciation rates Staff used to date in the accounting schedules for this Company?
- A. Staff's standard depreciation rates schedules for small water and sewer companies.
- Q. How were Staff's standard depreciation schedules for small water and sewer companies derived?
- A. Staff's standard depreciation schedules were created decades ago by engineering experts in the Commission Staff Water and Sewer Unit. Depreciation rates from depreciation studies of large water and sewer companies in St. Louis, Kansas City, and St.

- Arthur W. Rice 1 Joseph areas were used as a basis and were subsequently modified over years of observations by Staff experienced in the operation and maintenance of small water and sewer companies. 2 3 Periodic reviews of these schedules are conducted by engineering experts from the 4 Engineering and Management Services Unit and the Water and Sewer Unit. The most recent 5 review was conducted in March of this year, with an emphasis on the net salvage component of the standard depreciation rates for each class of small water and sewer company. 6 7 SURREBUTTAL TO WILLIAM ADDO 8 Q. Has Staff conducted any additional review of its recommended depreciation 9 rates since Staff submitted its Direct Testimony in this case? 10 Α. Yes. Public Counsel took issue with the accumulated depreciation reserves 11 for water well submersible pumping equipment, as explained in William Addo's Rebuttal 12 Testimony, page 37. Staff conducted further review of the Company's reserves and 13 retirement history for all of the Company's plant accounts. Subsequent to this Staff 14 review, the recommended depreciation rate for water well submersible pumping equipment, 15 USOA account 325.1, has been reduced from the Staff standard depreciation rate of 10% to a rate of 6.6%. 16
 - Is this change from a 10% to a 6.6% depreciation rate for account 325.1 O. reflected in the Staff accounting schedules submitted as Direct or Rebuttal Testimony?
 - No. This surrebuttal testimony is the first time that this 6.6% depreciation rate A. for account 325.1 has been introduced into testimony.
 - Is this 6.6% depreciation rate for account 325.1 reflected in attached schedules Q. AWR-2 and AWR-3?
 - Yes. A.

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- Q. Do you agree with the definition of depreciation Mr. Addo cites on page 38 of his Rebuttal Testimony?

 A. Yes, it is the general broad definition cited by NARUC's USOA, which, as explained above, is specified for use by the Commission in 4 CSR 240-50.030 for water
 - explained above, is specified for use by the Commission in 4 CSR 240-50.030 for water utilities, and in 4 CSR-240-61.020 for sewer utilities. But this broad definition does not provide guidance as to the practice of computing a regulatory depreciation rate and applying depreciation expense as a component of customer rates.
 - Q. How are regulatory depreciation rates computed?
 - A. The basic formula for Missouri regulatory depreciation was defined by the Commission in a Report and Order issued March 10, 2005, for Empire District Electric Company in rate case No. ER-2004-0570. The Commission-defined depreciation rate equation and component definitions are consistent with the NARUC USOA definitions and are represented as follows:

Depreciation expense = (Depreciation Rate) * (Total Original Cost of Plant in Service)

The average service life (ASL) is the average number of years the <u>dollars</u> in the account are expected to remain in service. ASL is determined using past retirement history from the utility in question if sufficient history is available from that utility, or, if sufficient history is unavailable, from the retirement histories of utilities with similar operations. Net salvage, (also referred to as Salvage Value), is gross salvage minus cost of removal. Cost of Removal is the cost of demolishing, dismantling, tearing down or otherwise removing utility plant, including the cost of transportation and handling incidental thereto. Net salvage is also

determined using past retirement history from the utility in question if sufficient history is available from that utility, or if that history is unavailable, from the retirement histories of utilities with similar operations. Net salvage percentage is computed as follows:

Net Salvage = gross salvage - cost of removal

Net Salvage % = Net Salvage \$ * 100
Retirement \$

Gross salvage and cost of removal information is collected whenever plant and equipment is retired. This includes interim net salvage where equipment is replaced in an ongoing "living" utility system or terminal net salvage when an entire facility is removed from service and disposed of.

Under the above traditional depreciation rate equation, the depreciation rate is applied to the total plant account's original cost. Net salvage is thus applied to the total plant in service in a straight line method over the expected life of the dollars in service. Thus, if the expected cost of removal exceeds the expected gross salvage, (producing a negative net salvage), the amount that should be in the accumulated reserves at the end of the ASL will be greater than the original cost. Example: If net salvage is a negative 10%, then at the end of the average service life, the accumulated reserves should exceed the original cost by 10%. And yes, as the physical equipment approaches its average expected service life for an account, that account will contribute a negative rate base component to the computation of customer rates. It is in this manner that customers are compensated for accrued depreciation expense funds being held by the company for future use.

Q. Mr. Addo's testimony on page 39, lines 14 to 16, states that LCSW has fully recovered the cost of the submersible pump as of May 30, 2010. Does Staff agree with

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- Mr. Addo's statement that LCWS has fully recovered the cost of service for this one pump, or for this pumping equipment plant account?
 - No. In order to compute that May 30, 2010 date, Mr. Addo had to make two Α. incorrect assumptions regarding the depreciation rate of 10% currently ordered by the Commission for LCSW plant account 325.1. One incorrect assumption is that the 10% depreciation rate applies to only the Bennington water well. The reality is that the Company's total submersible pumping equipment plant account 325.1 also includes the Rockport well. Another incorrect assumption is that the net salvage component for account 325.1 is zero. The current ordered depreciation rate schedules for LCSW, recorded on June 8, 2012, in Case No. WA-2012-0018 and ordered in the Report and Order filed June 27, 2012, show the net salvage for all accounts as blanks. Assuming that these blanks are equivalent to a zero is incorrect. These "blanks," along with other cases showing blanks in rate schedules, are what prompted the review of Staff's small water and sewer Standard Depreciation Schedules in March of this year. The revised (current) Staff Standard Depreciation Schedules show net salvage and average service lives consistent with the depreciation rates listed on the schedules. For small water companies, the current Staff Standard Depreciation Schedule shows a negative 20% net salvage for account 325.1.
 - Q. What date does Staff compute as the point in time when LCSW's account 325.1, (all of LCSW's account 325.1 with a negative 20% net salvage), would be evaluated as having fully accrued depreciation reserves?
 - A. October of 2014.
 - Q. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's testimony claiming that LCSW has fully recovered its investment in submersible pumping equipment?

- A. No. Even without considering collection of cost of removal through depreciation expense, as of the end of the test year (12/31/12), the accrued depreciation for LCSW account 325.1 is 8% less than original cost.
- Q. What date does Staff compute as the point in time when LCSW's Bennington-only account 325.1 (with a negative 20% net salvage) would be evaluated as having fully accrued depreciation reserves?
 - A. In March of 2012.
- Q. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's testimony on page 40, line 1, that LCSW customers derive no compensation for the value of their money contributed as depreciation expense?
- A. No, Staff does not agree with Mr. Addo. Customers do get compensated. Depreciation expense is recorded and accumulated as contributions from the customers towards consumption of plant in service. Every dollar accumulated as depreciation that has not been consumed further reduces rate base, effectively giving the customer compensation equivalent to the Company's allowed Rate of Return. The Rate of Return for LCSW is approximately 7%, thus giving the customer approximately a 7% annual compensation for any over collection for current consumption, or reserve accumulation for future cost of removal.
- Q. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's testimony on page 40, line 12, that the depreciation rate for the Bennington submersible pump account should be set to zero?
- A. No, Staff does not agree with Mr. Addo, for two reasons. One reason is that depreciation rates are set for a company's plant consumption of dollars in service for specific accounts as defined by the USOA; they are not set for individual items such as one

- well. The second reason is that the depreciation rate assigned is an estimate of future expected consumption of dollars assigned to the account. Even if Staff just looked at the one well, Staff would not recommend to the Commission that the future expected ongoing retirement rate for this well is zero.
- Q. Why has Staff proposed lowering the depreciation rate from Staff's Standard rate of 10% to a rate of 6.6%?
- A. Staff's review of depreciation reserves shows that the depreciation rate in use for submersible pumping equipment has exceeded LCSW's actual consumption rate. This conclusion is based on Staff's review of the overall depreciation reserve accruals. A typical utility with a growing customer base that routinely replaces equipment to maintain safe and adequate service typically exhibits 30% to 70% total reserves to total plant, depending on the age of the company. Since Lincoln County is very young, with total plant surviving dollars averaging only about 8 years, reserves would be expected to be at the low end of this normal percentage range. At 12/31/12, Lincoln County Water exhibited a total company reserve accrual of 36%, with a submersible pumping equipment reserve accrual of 77%. Staff's conclusion is that LCSW's submersible pumping equipment account has been assigned a depreciation rate that exceeds the actual consumption rate. Staff estimated a revised depreciation rate for LCSW using the very limited number of data points available. The current retirement and net salvage rates observed for LCSW account 325.1 results in an observed depreciation rate of 6.6%.
- Q. For Bennington water, did Staff review other plant accounts for an under accrual that would offset the over accrual for the submersible pumping equipment?

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 the original cost corrected for net salvage. An account may be deemed to be greatly over accrued and still not be fully accrued.

Q. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's rebuttal testimony on page 39, lines 1

fully accrued refers to a condition where the accumulated reserves have reached or exceeded

- Q. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's rebuttal testimony on page 39, lines 1 and 2, that depreciation ends when the utility fully recovers the cost of the asset?
- A. No, Staff does not agree with Mr. Addo. With respect to regulatory depreciation for rate making purposes, the utility may not stop accruing depreciation for plant still in service simply because the accumulated depreciation reserve has reached an amount equivalent to the original cost for several reasons, including:
- a) Regulatory depreciation includes net salvage, thus the lifetime cost is often not equivalent to the original installed cost (as explained above for LCSW's submersible pumping equipment).
- b) Customer rates are set during a rate case with a revenue requirement including an amount for depreciation expense for total plant in service. Thus, the amount included in customers' bills for depreciation does not stop or reduce just because an account may experience reserve accumulation beyond fully accrued. The customer payments contributing to consumption of plant in service should continue to be recorded as depreciation expense until the next rate case where the amounts may be reviewed and appropriate adjustment made going forward.
- c) Only the Commission has the authority to change depreciation rates. Stopping depreciation on a plant account is equivalent to an unauthorized change of depreciation rate from the Commission-ordered rate to a rate of 0%. The Company does not have the

authority to change depreciation rates, either by an increase or decrease, without

2 Commission order.

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d) Finally, at some point in the future, the existing pump will need replacement, and

the new pump should accrue depreciation. The timing of equipment failures rarely, if ever,

coincides with a rate case such that a new depreciation rate is ordered at the exact time a new

piece of equipment is placed in service.

O. Does Staff agree with Mr. Addo's recommendation on page 42 of his rebuttal testimony that Staff alter the accumulated depreciation reserve for the Bennington

subdivision water well pumping account 325.1 by reducing reserves by \$11,356?

A. No. Staff does not agree with Mr. Addo's recommendation that the accrual of depreciation be stopped for the Bennington water account 325.1 at May 30, 2010. Customers have continued to pay, and the accrual should continue to reflect the contributions customers have provided. Mr. Addo does not address what would become of this \$11,356 difference. Simply reducing the reserves would hand the company owners \$11,356 of the rate payers' contributions to depreciation, with no compensation to the rate payers. This action would also increase rate base in the current rate case, resulting in an approximate increase of \$1,300 in revenue requirement.

SUMMARY

- Please summarize why Mr. Addo's depreciation rate and reserve modification Q. recommendations are inappropriate?
- Mr. Addo's recommendations have failed to take into account the cost of A. removal component of regulatory depreciation and that depreciation expense is recorded as customer contributions to plant in service. These contributions forever reduce rate base,

1	providing just and reasonable compensation to rate payers for any excess accumulation of
2	reserves above current consumption that may occur between rate cases, including
3	compensation for the accumulation of funds for future expected cost of removal.
4	Mr. Addo's recommendations fail to recognize that depreciation expense is a fixed,
5	imbedded component of customer rates and may only be addressed in the context of a rate
6	case as a modification going forward, and that all active, in-service plant accounts will
7	exhibit a future consumption rate greater that zero.
8	STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS
9	Q. What method of adjustment does Staff recommend to address the over-accrual
10	for submersible pumping equipment account 325.1?
11	A. Staff recommends a reduction in Lincoln County's depreciation rate for
12	account 325.1 from Staff's Standard 10% rate to a 6.6% depreciation rate.
13	Q. What depreciation rates does Staff recommend for all other Lincoln County
14	water and sewer plant accounts?
15	A. The Staff's standard depreciation rates for USOA size class C and D for water
16	and sewer, as shown in attached schedules AWR-2 and AWR-3.
17	Q. Does this end your testimony?
18	A. Yes.

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Application of Lincoln County Sewer and Water, LLC for Approval Of a Rate Increase) Case No. SR-2013-0321
AFFIDAVIT OF ARTHUR	R W. RICE, PE
STATE OF MISSOURI) ss. COUNTY OF COLE)	
Arthur W. Rice, PE, of lawful age, on his oath preparation of the foregoing Surrebuttal Testimony in	question and answer form, consisting of the answers in the foregoing Surrebuttal of the matters set forth in such answers;
	Arthur W. Rice, PE
Subscribed and sworn to before me this	day of October, 2013.
D. SUZIE MANKIN Notary Public - Notary Seal State of Missouri Commissioned for Cole County My Commission Expires: December 12, 2016 Commission Number: 12412070	Jusullanken Nobery Public

CASE PARTICIPATION of Arthur W. Rice

Case/Tracking Number	Company Name - Issue
SR-2008-0388	WPC Sewer, Depreciation Review
SR-2008-0389	West 16Th Street, Depreciation Review
WA-2008-0403	Seges Mobile Home Park, Depreciation Assignment
WR-2009-0098	Raytown Water Company, Depreciation Review
SR-2009-0144	Cannon Home Assoc. Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0145	Peaceful Valley Service Co., Depreciation Review
SR-2009-0146	Peaceful Valley Service Co., Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0218	Terre Du Lac Utilities Corp., Depreciation Review
SR-2009-0219	Terre Du Lac Utilities Corp., Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0227	Lakeland Heights Water, Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0228	Wispering Hills Water, Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0229	Oakbrier Water Company, Depreciation Review
SR-2009-0226	R. D. Sewer Company, Depreciation Review
GA-2009-0264	Missouri Gas Utilities, Depreciation Assignment
WA-2009-0316	Highway H Utilities, Depreciation Assignment
SA-2009-0317	Highway H Utilities, Depreciation Assignment
SA-2009-0319	Mid Mo Sanitiation LLC, Depreciation Assignment
SR-2009-0298	Port Perry Service Company, Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0299	Port Perry Service Company, Depreciation Review
SA-2009-0401	Seges Mobile Home Park, Depreciation Assignment
SR-2009-0392	Highway H Utilities, Depreciation Review
WR2009-0393	Highway H Utilities, Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0418	Gladlo Water and Sewer, Depreciation Review
SR-2009-0419	Gladlo Water and Sewer, Depreciation Review
WR-2009-0395	Noel Water Co., Depreciation Review
ER-2010-0036	AmerenUE, Staff Expert for Depreciation
SR-2010-0095	Mid Mo Sanitiation LLC, Depreciation Review
WR-2010-0139	Valley Woods Water Company, Depreciation Review
SR-2010-0140	Valley Woods Water Co., Depreciation Review
WA-2010-0281	Holtgrewe Farms Water, Depreciation Assignment
SA-2010-0282	Holtgrewe Farms Sewer, Depreciation Assignment
WR-2010-0304	Raytown Water Company, Depreciation Review
WR-2010-0309	Middlefork Water, Depreciation Review
ER-2010-0355	KCP&L - Staff Expert for Depreciation
ER-2010-0356	KCP&L - GMO, Staff Expert for Depreciation
WR-2011-0337	Missouri American Water - Staff Expert For Depreciation
SR-2011-0338	Missouri American Water - Staff Expert For Depreciation
EO-2912-0340	KCP&L - Depreciation Authority Order
EO-2912-0354	KCP&L - Transmission Line Sale
SA-2012-0362	Emerald Pointe CCN -Staff Expert for Depreciation
WR-2012-0405	Raytown Water Company, Staff Expert for Depreciation
ER-2012-0174	KCP&L - Staff Expert for Depreciation
ER-2012-0175	KCP&L GMO - Staff Expert for Depreciation
WR-2013-0259	Gladio - Staff Expert for Depreciation
SR-2013-0258	Gladio - Staff Expert for Depreciation
WR-2013-0326	Woodland Manor - Staff Expert for Depreciation
SR-2013-0435	Rouge Creek Utilities - Staff Expert for Depreciation
WR-2013-0436	Rouge Creek Utilities - Staff Expert for Depreciation
WO-2013-0403	Tri-State Utilities sale to MAWC - Staff Expert for Depreciation

OF

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ARTHUR W. RICE, PE

Lincoln County Sewer & Water. LLC SCHEDULE of DEPRECIATION RATES (WATER) WR-2013-0322 NARUC USOA **AVERAĞE** ACCOUNT DEPRECIATION **SERVICE LIFE** NUMBER **ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION** RATE (YEARS) **NET SALVAGE** -10% 311 Structures and Improvements 2.5% 44 Source of Supply 314 Wells & Springs 2.0% 55 **Pumping Plant** 325.1 Submersible Pumping Equipment 6.6% -6% Water Treatment Equipment 331 2.5% 44 -10% Structures & Improvements 35 332 Water Treatment Equipment 2.9% 0% Transmission and Distribution 342 Distribution Reservoirs & Standpipes 2.5% 42 -5% Transmission and Distribution Mains 50 343 2.0% 0% 345 Customer Services 2.5% 40 0% 346 Meters 10.0% 10 0% 2.5% 40 347 Meter Installations (Meter pits) 0% **General Plant** 372 Office Furniture and Equipment 5.0% 20 0% 372.1 Office Electronic & Computer Equip. 20.0% 5 0% Other General Equipment 13 13% 379 6.7% (tools, shop equip., backhoes, trenchers, etc.)

Version, 9/25/2013. The above are standard small company depreciation rates modified by Staff's review of the Company's operation and records, onsite visits, and discussion with company representatives.

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OF

ARTHUR W. RICE, PE

Lincoln County Sewer & Water, LLC SCHEDULE of DEPRECIATION RATES (SEWER)								

NARUC	77							
USOA ACCOUNT NUMBER	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	DEPRECIATION RATE	AVERAGE SERVICE LIFE (YEARS)	NET SALVAGI				
311	Structures and Improvements	2.5%	44	-10%				
And the second second second second	Collection Plant	7. 7. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.	A . He and EAST manufacturing to the	1				
352.1	Collection Sewers (Force)	2.0%	50	0%				
352.2	Collection Sewers (Gravity)	2.0%	50	0%				
354	Services	2.0%	50	0%				
Martine of Strategy and Strateg	Treatment & Disposal Plant							
373	Treatment & Disposal Facilities	5.0%	22	-10%				
	General Plant		New 1 No. 111 V minutes 211 1150 minutes A. 111 111111					
391	Office Furniture and Equipment	5.0%	20	0%				
391.1	Office Electronic & Computer Equip.	20.0%	5	0%				
393	Other General Equipment (tools, shop equip., backhoes, trenchers, etc.)	10.0%	8.7	13%				

Version, 8/28/2013. The above are Staff's standard small company depreciation rates.