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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

At a Session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office
in Jefferson City on the 16th
day of September, 1998.

Tom Scheibelhut, Business Manager,
on Behalf of O.C.A.W., AFL-CIO,
Gas Workers Local 5-6,

Complainant,

vs.

Laclede Gas Company,

Respondent.

Case No. GC-98-497

ORDER DIRECTING STAFF RESPONSE

On May 4, 1998, Tom Scheibelhut, Business Manager, on behalf of O.C.A.W., AFL-CIO, Gas Workers Local 5-6 (Complainant), filed a complaint against Laclede Gas Company (Laclede) alleging that Laclede has engaged in certain practices that may jeopardize the safety of its employees, its customers, and the public. On June 12, Laclede responded, essentially denying these allegations and moving the Commission to dismiss the complaint. Complainant did not respond to Laclede's June 12 filing.

As the basis for its complaint, Complainant states that a leak crew disconnected service to a customer in St. Louis in order to replace a corporation cock. The crew then twice air tested the service line at 90 pounds per square inch gauge (psig). The service line pressure dropped from 90 psig to 10 psig in less than five minutes on both tests.

Complainant alleges that, at that point, the leak crew determined that there was a leak on the service, and informed the night supervisor

of the results of the tests. The night supervisor ordered service reconnected, and the leak crew complied. Complainant does not allege any specific violations of the Commission's gas safety rules.

In its answer, Laclede admits much of the factual background in the complaint, but denies the allegation that the service line was leaking. Laclede also points out that a complete leak survey of the entire area surrounding the service line was conducted after the corporation cock was replaced, and no traces of gas were detected. Laclede contends that when the entirety of the circumstances surrounding the incident are examined, Laclede's actions not only did not compromise the safety of its employees or the public, but even demonstrate an exceptional commitment to its public safety obligations.

The Commission will direct its Staff to respond to the Complaint and the Answer and Motion to Dismiss. The Staff should address the questions of whether any violation of law, rule, or order of the Commission was violated, whether safety was compromised, and whether pursuant to legal requirements, Staff believes that Laclede acted properly under the circumstances.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission shall file a response to the Complaint and Answer and Motion to Dismiss filed no later than October 29, 1998.

2. That this order shall become effective on September 29, 1998.

BY THE COMMISSION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dale Hardy Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

(S E A L)

Crompton, Murray, Schemenauer and Drainer, CC., concur.
Lumpe, Ch., absent.

Mills, Deputy Chief Regulatory Law Judge