

1 STATE OF MISSOURI
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

3 _____
4 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

5 Public Hearing
6 August 21, 2000
7 Wentzville, Missouri
8 Volume 1

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9 In the Matter of Union Electric Company)
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File)
10 Tariffs Increasing Rates for Gas) #GR-2000-512
Service Provided to Customers in the)
11 Company's Missouri Service Area)

12 _____
13 BILL HOPKINS, Presiding,
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE
14 SHEILA LUMPE, Chair,
CONNIE MURRAY
15 M. DIANNE DRAINER, Vice Chair (Not Present)
ROBERT G. SCHEMENAUER (Not Present)
16 KELVIN L. SIMMONS (Not Present)

17 COMMISSIONERS

18 _____

19

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22

23 REPORTED BY: Eileen J. Bell,
Concannon & Jaeger Reporters

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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of Union Electric Company)
d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File)
Tariffs Increasing Rates for Gas)#GR-2000-512
Service Provided to Customers in the)
Company's Missouri Service Area)

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the above-entitled

matter came on for hearing at the Wentzville City Hall
Council Chambers, 310 West Pearce Boulevard, Wentzville,
Missouri, on the 21st day of August, A.D., 2000,
commencing at 6:30 p.m. in the evening of that day,
pursuant to the issuance of due notice to all parties in
interest, and the following is a transcript of the record
of proceedings had during the course of said hearing.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

4

Cliff Snodgrass, Sr. Counsel, representing the
interest of the staff of the Missouri Public Service
Commission.

6

Mike Dandino, with the office of the Public
Counsel.

7

Ron Evans and Tom Byrne, Attorneys representing
AmerenUE.

8

Ron Zeller, Vice President of UE Customer Service
Department.

9

Craig Nelson, Vice President of UE Corporate
Planning Department.

10

Bob Smith, UE Wentzville District Manager.

11

Rich Kovac, UE Manager of Rate Engineering
Department.

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2 TRANSCRIPT_OF_PROCEEDINGS

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Ladies and Gentlemen: If I
4 could have your attention we will begin this hearing. And
5 I will ask the court reporter to go on the record, please.
6 If anybody would like to testify, that's what we came here
7 for. And we'll be glad to have somebody testify. If you
8 would like to testify we would like you to testify and we
9 can have you sign up here. You can't speak from the floor
10 unless you are sworn in, come forward and testify.

11 We are in the City of Wentzville, St. Charles
12 County, August 21st, 2000 in Wentzville City Hall. My
13 name is Bill Hopkins. I'm the appointed Senior Regulatory
14 Law Judge for the Missouri Public Service Commission. And
15 I will be the Presiding Officer this evening in the matter
16 of Union Electric, d/b/a AmerenUE for Authority to File
17 Tariffs Increasing Rates for Gas Service Provided to
18 Customers in the Missouri in the Company's Missouri
19 Service area. Case No. GR-2000-512.

20 This case began on February 18, 2000 when
21 Union Electric Company d/b/a AmerenUE submitted to the
22 Missouri Public Service Commission Tariffs requesting
23 increased rates for natural gas service provided to
24 customers in the Missouri service area of the Company.
25 The proposed tariffs bear a requested effective date of

1 April 2, 2000. The proposed tariffs are designed to
2 produce an annual increase of approximately 14 percent in
3 the Company's natural gas revenues. That is about \$12
4 million annually.

5 First, let me thank the City of Wentzville
6 for the use of this facility. And I will note that the
7 views expressed here are not necessarily those of the City
8 of Wentzville. In addition, we would like to thank the
9 staff of the Public Service Commission and the Public
10 Counsel and the people from AmerenUE for showing up here
11 tonight and their assistance.

12 Let me introduce to you the Commissioners who
13 are present here this evening to hear your testimony, if
14 we could get somebody to testify. On my left is Chair
15 Sheila Lumpe. She is the Presiding Commissioner of the
16 Missouri Public Service Commission. Here on my right is
17 Commissioner Connie Murray. She's also on the Missouri
18 Public Service Commission.

19 And if I could, please, have the Attorneys
20 enter their appearance for the record, and generally
21 introduce themselves, if you haven't already, to the
22 public. Start with you. Have you filled out these?

23 MR. SNODGRASS: No, we haven't, Judge.

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Go ahead, Mr. Snodgrass, and
25 we'll let you all fill these out, too. Thank you.

1 MR. SNODGRASS: I guess I'll start with the
2 introduction. Good evening, everybody. My name is Cliff
3 Snodgrass. I'm Senior Counsel representing the interest
4 of the staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission
5 this evening. Thank you.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Mr. Dandino?

7 MR. DANDINO: My name is Mike Dandino. I'm
8 with the office of the Public Counsel. We represent the
9 public, the consumers in this case. And just as a
10 sideline, I would urge anyone here, if you're interested
11 enough to come to this meeting, please come forward and
12 testify. It helps us do our job representing you.

13 MR. EVANS: My name is Ron Evans. I'm the
14 Attorney representing AmerenUE. This is Tom Byrne. He's
15 also an Attorney representing AmerenUE. I would also
16 mention at this time there are several representatives
17 from the Company here tonight. Just mentioning a few,
18 this is Ron Zeller, he's the Vice President of our
19 Customer Service Department; Craig Nelson, he's the Vice
20 President of our Corporate Planning Department, whose
21 responsibility it is for rate matters. This is Bob Smith
22 our Wentzville District Manager. And Rich Kovac in the
23 back by the window is the Manager of our Rate Engineering
24 Department.

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Thank you very

1 much. Let me just briefly explain to you the agency. The
2 Missouri Public Service Commission is the State agency
3 which regulates the investors on the utility companies in
4 Missouri to ensure that the rates are just and reasonable;
5 that the quality of service is satisfactory; and that
6 safety practices are employed in their operations, while
7 at the time ensuring the utility companies a reasonable
8 rate of return to their shareholders.

9 The Missouri Public Service Commission is made
10 up of five Commissioners who are employed by the Governor
11 and confirmed by the Senate to hear and decide cases
12 regarding the public utility issues regulated as indicated
13 earlier.

14 The current Commissioners are Chair Sheila
15 Lumpe, who I've already introduced; Vice Chair Dianne
16 Drainer; Connie Murray, who I've already introduced;
17 Robert Schemenauer; and Kelvin Simmons. The
18 Commissioners, including those who are not currently
19 present, will have the opportunity to read all the
20 witnesses' testimony and remarks.

21 The Missouri Public Service Commission
22 employs a staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,
23 financial analysis, and other specialists in the field of
24 utility regulation and relies upon their expertise, along
25 with other expert testimony and consumer testimony. These

1 people here that introduced themselves earlier, I think
2 the only one we had from the staff that interviewed
3 himself was Mr. Snodgrass, but you may have met some of
4 the staff during the earlier presentation, they represent
5 the PSC staff and the office of General Counsel. You also
6 met the Attorney for the Office of General Counsel. And
7 Mr. Dandino is from that office -- Public Counsel. I'm
8 sorry, Mr. Snodgrass is from General Counsel; Mr. Dandino
9 is Public Counsel. Thank you. And the Public Counsel is
10 separate from the PSC, and they represent the public's
11 interests specifically before the Public Service
12 Commission.

13 The purpose of this hearing, we all came here
14 tonight to listen to the views of the rate payers, the
15 citizens of St. Charles County and Wentzville,
16 specifically. To take evidence by way of your statement
17 or testimony or any written statements or documents that
18 you may wish to provide to the Missouri PSC regarding
19 AmerenUE's application for a rate increase.

20 We will take your comments from this evening,
21 along with the other public hearings and follow-up with a
22 review and a report which will be issued, including any
23 issues which you may raise with us tonight relating to
24 this proposed rate increase.

25 Now, I'm going to ask the Commissioners, if

1 any one of them would like to have an opening statement.

2 Chair Lumpe?

3 OPENING STATEMENT

4 BY CHAIR LUMPE:

5 Very briefly, we do appreciate your coming
6 out. We are here to hear your testimony and to hear your
7 thoughts. Also, you see the other representatives that
8 are here, and it gives you an opportunity to speak to
9 them. If you have individual issues or problems you have
10 been wishing to speak to them about, they're here also. I
11 think that one of the reasons we started the prehearing
12 was because frequently people came and they had more
13 questions than comments.

14 And so we thought it would be helpful to let
15 people be able to ask their questions and perhaps get
16 those answered. And then they could make their comments
17 based on that information that they had been given. And
18 we found that that has worked very well. So we appreciate
19 those of you who came early who maybe had questions and of
20 course afterwards, when we conclude this, if you have
21 further questions I know our staff stays around and so
22 does the Company, and would be happy to answer other
23 questions if you might have any for them then. So we do
24 appreciate your taking the time to come out. And we do
25 hope you'll share your comments with us. Thank you.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much, Chair
2 Lumpe. Commissioner Murray?

3 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't really have
4 much to add to that. I do hope that you got the
5 information that you were seeking by coming early and
6 having time to get a few of your questions answered. And
7 if you do have an opinion that you would like to share
8 with us we are certainly here to do that tonight. And we
9 would appreciate your doing so. Thank you.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: General Counsel, do you wish
11 to make an opening statement?

12 MR. SNODGRASS: Not at this time, Judge, I
13 don't believe so, but we're here to answer any questions
14 anybody might have for us.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Mr. Dandino, for Public
16 Counsel?

17 MR. DANDINO: Yes, Your Honor. Just once
18 again, this Commission is here to see what the rate payers
19 think about this proposal. If you think it's reasonable,
20 unreasonable, fair, or unfair, what does it mean to you?
21 What does it mean to you in paying your gas bills this
22 winter? That's what they're here to hear. If no one
23 comes forward to say, just giving them your opinion about
24 this proposal, you know, they're going to have a blank
25 record to show the other Commissioner. They'll say:

1 Well, nobody made a comment. That's why I think it's very
2 important that you come up here, even if you come up here
3 and say: I don't like it. Is important for them to hear
4 from you because that is one element in this. They can
5 look at the accountant's records. They can look at the
6 engineer records. They can look at what all the lawyers'
7 arguments they want, but this Commission also has a record
8 of looking at what the rate payers say about it,
9 especially if they say whether it's fair, reasonable, and
10 affordable rates. Thank you.

11 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. AmerenUE, any
12 opening statements.

13 MR. EVANS: Only that we appreciate the
14 opportunity to be here tonight. And we're here to hear
15 your concerns and we brought a number of people to answer
16 any questions that you might have.

17 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir. Now, is
18 there anyone here who would like to testify?

19 *****

20 CLEVELANDA HARWOOD,
21 Of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the truth,
22 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, deposes and
23 says on behalf of the Public Service Commission, as
24 follows:

25 TESTIMONY

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please state and
2 spell your name for the court reporter?

3 THE WITNESS: Clevelanda Harwood,
4 C-l-e-v-e-l-a-n-d-a, H-a-r-w-o-o-d.

5 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am. You may be
6 seated. Just go right ahead and tell us whatever you want
7 to.

8 THE WITNESS: Well, I personally don't think
9 that this rate increase is very fair. There are a lot of
10 citizens in the City of Wentzville and the surrounding
11 area that are on fixed incomes. My mother was one of
12 them. This card came addressed to my mother who has been
13 deceased for six weeks. Apparently AmerenUE also has
14 problems getting their records straight because this card
15 came to a deceased person.

16 At the time we transferred her bill to my
17 husband and I, because we also own the property, we
18 received a final bill that was estimated. I called and
19 questioned that and was told: I have no idea why the bill
20 was estimated. So I find it very difficult to feel that
21 this rate increase is correct. I mean, they're not
22 getting their records straight. And how do we know, if
23 they can't get simple accounting records straight, how do
24 we really know that this rate is justified? I'm not on a
25 fixed income, but, like I said, my mother was. And I know

1 there are a lot of people in my neighborhood in this City
2 that are. An increase of 14 percent when you're living on
3 \$600 or \$700 a month is a lot of money.

4 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Thank you very much.
5 I'm going to see if any of the Commissioners would like to
6 ask you some questions. Chair Lumpe?

7 CHAIR LUMPE: No. I have no questions. I
8 just appreciate you're coming to testify.

9 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Murray?

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: First of all, I'm sorry
12 for the loss of your mother. Secondly, I would like to
13 ask if you have spoken to anyone from the Company to try
14 to get some clarification about the bill?

15 THE WITNESS: Yes, I did. When we got her
16 final bill I paid it. It wasn't until we got the first
17 bill, the new bill under my husband's and my name was for
18 \$8.00 that was sent that I questioned it. And they're
19 like: Well, those are the readings. In the meantime, I
20 went back and I looked at her final bill. And on that
21 final bill it said: Estimated bill. And it also has the
22 words "final" on it. That's when I called the 800 number.
23 There were two different people there that evening,
24 customer service people, and their response was: We have
25 no idea why this bill was estimated. We have the actual

1 readings. So they did redo the bill. They did get the
2 bill corrected. But if this had happened to someone else,
3 you know, and the bill was not transferred to someone.
4 What if it had been you and you had gotten this bill, you
5 may never have realized that this bill was outlandish and
6 questioned it.

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you. That's all
8 the questions I have.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. General Counsel,
10 any questions?

11 MR. SNODGRASS: I don't believe so. Judge,
12 for the record, we would tell you, ma'am, that we do have
13 a Consumer Services Division with the staff of the Public
14 Service Commission for these kind of inquiries and/or
15 complaints. And we would encourage you to use that
16 avenue, ma'am.

17 THE WITNESS: All right.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Public Counsel?

19 MR. DANDINO: Yes, Your Honor. Ms. Harwood.
20 Thank you very much for coming forward testifying on
21 behalf of, not only our office, but I think of all the
22 rate payers in this area. I think your comments were very
23 enlightening for this Commission. I did want to also say
24 to you that there is an opportunity, I think the head of
25 AmerenUE's Customer Service Department is here tonight.

1 It would be a very good opportunity to talk directly to
2 the top person and try to get this thing resolved here
3 tonight before you leave.

4 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

5 MR. DANDINO: That's all I have. Thank you.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir. Anyone from
7 the utility?

8 MR. EVANS: I'm also very sore for your loss.
9 If we had the account address where you had the problem
10 that would help us determine if there still is a problem
11 there or a place we could get back to.

12 THE WITNESS: Right. You're more than
13 welcome to have it. That's why I brought this particular
14 card with me. Thank you.

15 MR. SNODGRASS: Ma'am, here's our Consumer
16 Services Division number.

17 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am. We
18 certainly appreciate your testimony.

19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Randy Calwell:

21 MR. CALWELL: I signed the wrong list. I'm
22 not speaking. I'm just a partial observer here.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: Mary Bradley

24 *****

25 MARY BRADLEY,

1 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the truth,
2 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, deposes and
3 says on behalf of the Public Service Commission:

4 TESTIMONY

5 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please be seated and state
6 and spell your name for the court reporter.

7 THE WITNESS: Mary, M-a-r-y, Bradley,
8 B-r-a-d-l-e-y.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Go right ahead.

10 THE WITNESS: Well, last summer I had been
11 getting my bills and it would say sometimes estimated on
12 my bills for electric and sometimes it would say actual.
13 I think it was in May I had gotten a bill for actual
14 readings. It said I should get back \$124 and something,
15 and so they would take it off over the next two bills. So
16 they did. So then in a couple, three months I got a bill
17 for \$286 that I owed them that was in error.

18 Well, I called the number. I got no
19 satisfaction whatsoever. They told me, they said: Well,
20 somebody will come out and read it. And I never got in
21 touch -- I mean, nobody ever got in touch with me or
22 responded or anything. And then I got another bill from
23 them for the same amount. So I finally just ended up
24 paying it because I couldn't get any satisfaction from
25 them talking over the telephone.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Did you owe that amount?

2 THE WITNESS: I guess I did. I paid it.

3 They said I did. The one bill said actual and I should

4 get back \$127, which they did take it off my next bill.

5 But then I get other one that says I owe \$286 or something

6 like that. It was very confusing. So I told them: I

7 want them to read the actual each time so I know what's

8 going on. So from then on it says actual on it.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much.

10 CHAIR LUMPE: And have you seen someone come

11 out and actually read it?

12 THE WITNESS: No.

13 CHAIR LUMPE: But it is saying actual on the

14 bill?

15 THE WITNESS: Yes.

16 CHAIR LUMPE: And you did request you want no

17 more estimated bills?

18 THE WITNESS: No, I don't.

19 CHAIR LUMPE: Again, as Mr. Snodgrass said,

20 we do have a Consumer Affairs Department and an 800 number

21 and quite frequently they are able to help.

22 THE WITNESS: I didn't know that.

23 CHAIR LUMPE: We can give you a card tonight

24 and you can be aware of it for the future. We hope there

25 wouldn't be a future, but thank you for coming and

1 testifying.

2 THE WITNESS: I don't either.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Murray?

4 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't have any

5 questions. Thank you.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Snodgrass?

7 MR. SNODGRASS: Yes, ma'am, just briefly, the

8 staff wanted me to ask you a couple of basic questions,

9 perhaps they can help you resolve the situation to your

10 satisfaction. The first question was: Do you know,

11 ma'am, if you have an electronic meter at your billing

12 area?

13 THE WITNESS: For my electric I do, but I

14 don't know about the gas.

15 MR. SNODGRASS: What period of time did this

16 situation arise in, do you recall?

17 THE WITNESS: I think it started around the

18 first of the year and went up through to May.

19 MR. SNODGRASS: The first of 2000?

20 THE WITNESS: Uh-huh.

21 MR. SNODGRASS: All right. I would like to

22 give you a card here. It's our consumer inquiry complaint

23 number for the Public Service Commission. And we would

24 encourage you to use that number when you have these kind

25 of problems in the future.

1 THE WITNESS: But when I called that number
2 they just kept saying: Well, you owe it.

3 MR. SNODGRASS: I don't think you understand.
4 This is the Public Service Commission's number to help you
5 resolve it. This is not the number you have been calling.
6 I'm sorry, maybe I didn't introduce myself properly.
7 That's all I have.

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Public Counsel, do you have
9 any questions?

10 MR. DANDINO: Just briefly, Ms. Bradley. How
11 much does your gas bill usually run?

12 THE WITNESS: Well, right now it's running
13 around \$10-something a month. All I have is just a hot
14 water heater.

15 MR. DANDINO: So in the winter months it
16 doesn't change that much. You have electric heat?

17 THE WITNESS: No. I have gas heat.

18 MR. DANDINO: How much is it during the
19 winter months?

20 THE WITNESS: Oh, I would say about \$100 or
21 \$125.50, something like that. So this increase is going
22 to mean quite a bit for me, and I'm a widow.

23 MR. DANDINO: Are you on a fixed income?

24 THE WITNESS: Yes.

25 MR. DANDINO: Also, I did want to say to you

1 I think a UE Customer Service Representative is here. And
2 I strongly urge you tonight to talk with him because I
3 think that if you've got a \$286, just because they billed
4 it, doesn't mean you owe it.

5 THE WITNESS: Well, I know that but I didn't
6 want them to turn my lights and gas off.

7 MR. DANDINO: I think you have a remedy. And
8 if our office can be of assistance in this we would gladly
9 do it, but if you want to talk to AmerenUE people maybe
10 they can resolve it. I'll give you our card. Make sure
11 that you pay only what you are supposed to pay. Okay?

12 THE WITNESS: Okay.

13 MR. DANDINO: Thank you very much.

14 MR. SNODGRASS: Just for the record, Cliff
15 Snodgrass again. Just for clarification, if you would
16 like, ma'am, we would like to get your name and number.
17 We can investigate that for you if you would like. Would
18 you leave that with us before you leave?

19 THE WITNESS: Yes.

20 MR. SNODGRASS: All right. I appreciate it.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any more questions for UE
22 representatives.

23 MR. EVANS: I would like to tell Ms. Bradley
24 that she can talk to our Customer Service Representatives.
25 They're here tonight. We'll make sure that you were

1 billed probably. When the bill says actual readings, it
2 is actual readings and verify that. And if you give us
3 your address we'll pull your account number. We may not
4 have an answer tonight, but we can verify all that and get
5 back to you.

6 THE WITNESS: I went out to where the Company
7 used to be and there was nobody out there to talk to. And
8 I would have liked to have had somebody to talk to instead
9 of on the phone.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, Ms. Bradley. Now,
11 the next witness we have is Dennis Kramme.

12 *****

13 DENNIS KRAMME,
14 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the truth,
15 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, deposes and
16 says on behalf of the Public Service Commission, as
17 follows:

18 TESTIMONY

19 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please state and spell your
20 name for the court reporter.

21 THE WITNESS: Dennis Kramme, K-r-a-m-m-e, and
22 I'm here to represent Emmaus Homes, Incorporated in Warren
23 County. I have to admit that I was a little confused by
24 the card that I got in the mail. I thought this was
25 regarding my electric, and somebody just said this was gas

1 we're talking about. And I missed on here the 5:30 time,
2 so I missed the presentation. My concern tonight was
3 regarding, I thought the electric was going up 14 percent.
4 If that's not the case, I guess it's not quite as big an
5 issue as that.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Who is this that you
7 represent, sir?

8 THE WITNESS: The Emmaus Home is a home for
9 developmentally disabled adults. There are 112 people in
10 a campus setting in Southern Warren County. Our average
11 electric bill is about \$81,500 a year. So 14 percent
12 would be a substantial cost to us, which at this time we
13 can't afford. So if it's electric that we're talking
14 about, please don't do it. As far as gas, I'm not sure we
15 even have gas. I'm a new administrator, I haven't seen a
16 gas bill yet. And I'm not sure why we got a card. I
17 think we use propane.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions?

19 CHAIR LUMPE: I'm glad that you are relieved.

20 THE WITNESS: I'm very relieved, yes, 14
21 percent of \$81,000 is a lot.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Murray?

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No questions. Thank
24 you.

25 THE WITNESS: Could I just ask why we would

1 have gotten a card if we don't have gas?

2 MR. EVANS: As I understand it the cards were
3 sent out to only gas customers and it should have only
4 gone to gas customers. So I guess you are probably a gas
5 customer.

6 THE WITNESS: All right. Anyway, we do get
7 excellent service from UE with our electric. I have to
8 say that.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Is there anyone else who
10 would like to testify? If there is no one else that would
11 like to testify --

12 THE WITNESS: Is there anything on the card
13 that said gas?

14 MR. EVANS: No. There really is not, but
15 there is a reference to --

16 (Thereupon, a short recess in the proceedings was
17 had.)

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Thank you. We're
19 back on the record. There was a discussion off the record
20 about the notice. We had a gentleman that was here under
21 the impression that it was an electric card. If there is
22 no other testimony from anyone, anybody else want to
23 testify? Well, we certainly appreciate all your interest.
24 Yes, ma'am, did you want to testify?

25 THE WITNESS: Please.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Come on up here.

2 *****

3 DORIS CLARK,

4 of lawful age, being first duly sworn to tell the truth,
5 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, deposes and
6 says on behalf of the Public Service Commission, as
7 follows:

8 TESTIMONY

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please be seated
10 and spell and state your name for the court reporter.

11 THE WITNESS: My name is Doris Clark,
12 C-l-a-r-k.

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. Go ahead.

14 THE WITNESS: Okay. Probably like many, I am
15 a single, self-supporting, and live pretty well on a fixed
16 income other than a lot of volunteering and helping a lady
17 83 years old. And other than that, I would be living off
18 of approximately \$400 and some a month. And I do not -- I
19 have never understood -- I have had people -- is this just
20 gas or may I tie in other electric; or I'm not free to do
21 that.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Well, this is just a hearing
23 on the gas increase. And so a statement about electricity
24 would be irrelevant -- I mean, we can't do anything pro or
25 con.

1 THE WITNESS: Well, I had received one of the
2 cards. I am a gas user apparently here in the City of
3 Wentzville. And from what I'm understanding, this would
4 take my bill up another \$10. Am I understanding this
5 correctly? Which is a hardship on me with the combination
6 of my gas and electric, which they just turned around and
7 raised. Now, you understand I am not in my house five
8 days a week. I have never been able to understand. I
9 have had meters put on things. I have done the whole bit.
10 Nobody can understand where my electric is going or
11 anything else. But as far as where my -- I am average in
12 like \$84 with a combination here and no one in the house
13 but like Saturdays and Sundays and evenings. And to me
14 this is just totally, utterly ridiculous. Another \$10
15 stuck on this is a problem to me with what I previously
16 told you as far as maintaining and trying to keep things
17 up for myself. And this is a difficult situation. And
18 where maybe \$10 don't mean a lot to some people, when it
19 comes to my monthly bills it means a lot to me.

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Thank are you
21 very much.

22 CHAIR LUMPE: I want to thank you for coming
23 and participating and testifying. We appreciate hearing
24 your comments.

25 THE WITNESS: Okay.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Murray?

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes. Is AmerenUE your
3 gas and electric provider?

4 THE WITNESS: Yes.

5 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: If you did have
6 anything that you wanted to say about the quality of
7 service for gas or electric we would certainly hear that
8 tonight. You were not wanting to complain about the
9 quality of service, were you?

10 THE WITNESS: No, I kind of help maintain --
11 help you all maintain the service around town. I'm one of
12 these people when the street lights are out it drives me
13 crazy and I never see them getting maintained. So I call
14 the Company and say: This light is on such and such. And
15 I have had a lot of promises throughout the City that they
16 are going to check with AmerenUE about setting up a pole
17 close to me where -- my neighborhood has become not too
18 great an area. And I am -- where I am situated, I'm in
19 the dark when I drive up. I am not comfortable with where
20 I live any more because I do not have the lighting I need.

21 And this has supposedly been looked into
22 years ago but it's never got off the ground. Nothing has
23 ever happened. Promises, promises, but nothing has ever
24 been fulfilled. And I am very uncomfortable coming home
25 at night. I have found my door ajar a couple of times. I

1 had to go to the Police Department because I was afraid to
2 go in. Just things that -- it is very dark on my street.
3 A light is around the corner from me and shines to the
4 corner, but when you come around that corner the next
5 light is pretty far down so I am not getting the benefit
6 of that. And in the back they have, like, knocked out the
7 light with rocks or whatever before. But I usually, when
8 something is out, I usually call the Company and ask them
9 if they'll please check it out. I don't think the light
10 up on Lynn and South Main has been done yet. And I called
11 them about two weeks ago.

12 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Do you ordinarily get a
13 pretty quick response when you call?

14 THE WITNESS: You mean, as far as on the
15 phone or as far as the maintenance?

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Who do you call and
17 report there is an outage somewhere?

18 THE WITNESS: Well, I have and I haven't -- I
19 mean, I know that's double talk, but I have at times and
20 then there are other times I have not.

21 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.

22 THE WITNESS: You're very welcome.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: General Counsel.

24 MR. SNODGRASS: Yes, ma'am. I'm Cliff
25 Snodgrass, I'm with the staff of the Missouri Public

1 Service Commission. And there are some pink cards over
2 there for consumer complaints. An 800 hot line. And if
3 there is anything that's within our jurisdiction that we
4 can look into for you, please feel free to call us. We
5 take these complaints and inquiries seriously. And we
6 will look into them for you. And I would encourage you to
7 pick up one of these cards. That's all I have.

8 THE WITNESS: I have a question, may I?

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: What's the question?

10 THE WITNESS: How often are the meters
11 actually checked to make sure that they are accurate?

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: You can talk to our Staff
13 Counselor, Mr. Snodgrass, and if we don't have someone
14 here who can answer that question tonight because I had
15 the same question, by the way. And I know that there are
16 people in the Public Service Commission that can answer
17 that question and they will be happy to answer it for you.
18 If we don't have one of those people here tonight --
19 you're talking about either gas or electric, we can help
20 you with either or both of them.

21 Also, AmerenUE has their technical people
22 here tonight, and they would be glad to explain to you
23 about how those meters work. That's a very good question
24 because I've asked the same thing myself. So we have
25 people that will either answer you here tonight, or you

1 can call and get a real human being at the Public Service
2 Commission, and we will be happy to answer that for you.
3 Okay?

4 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

5 JUDGE HOPKINS: It's a very good question.

6 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: UE?

8 MR. EVANS: This is not an electrical, we
9 would certainly like to help answer your question about
10 the lighting, as far as the other neighborhood question.
11 I would like to come see you afterwards.

12 THE WITNESS: Okay.

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Public Counsel?

14 MR. DANDINO: Ms. Clark, you talked about how
15 you were concerned that you were only in the house
16 Saturdays and Sundays and on the weekends. And yet, you
17 know, you are still concerned about the utility costs; is
18 that correct?

19 THE WITNESS: Right. That's correct.

20 MR. DANDINO: And I don't know if you are
21 aware but in the testimony that was filed in this case
22 that the customer service charges, the basic charge that
23 every residential customer is given, the Company is
24 proposing an increase from \$8.00 to \$14.00 a month.
25 What's your reaction to that?

1 THE WITNESS: I think it's too darn much.

2 MR. DANDINO: What does your gas bill usually
3 run during the summer -- let's say the winter?

4 THE WITNESS: Honestly, I didn't grab one of
5 those. I'm not sure at this point. I have the one I just
6 paid.

7 MR. DANDINO: Sure. How much is that?

8 THE WITNESS: Which, again, it's a combined
9 bill with electric and gas, but it's running like \$12.75 a
10 month. And I'm like that lady back there, I really have
11 nothing on it to make it \$12.75. I'm running a water
12 heater. And I don't know what else -- you know, why it
13 would be, you know, other than in the wintertime my
14 electric and stuff, and then the combination of the bill,
15 which is like \$84.00, which I'm really upset for the fact
16 that AmerenUE just got through saying: Well, Okay. To
17 make this come out we're raising you another \$1.00 or
18 whatever it was, \$2.00, whatever it was because I was
19 \$82.00 and they bumped me up another \$2.00. And I'm
20 thinking: Wow, wait a minute. I'm doing nothing
21 different. Nothing has changed. I still live in this
22 house by myself. I'm still here the same amount of time
23 as I was three years ago. What is going on here?

24 MR. DANDINO: Are you on a budget plan?

25 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

1 MR. DANDINO: So now you're saying
2 essentially in the winter you will be paying close to
3 \$84.00 a month?

4 THE WITNESS: Oh, I am. That's my budget
5 billing, period.

6 MR. DANDINO: Okay. So the increase and the
7 customer service charge would add another month's bill to
8 you for your \$72.00?

9 THE WITNESS: Okay.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Do you understand the
11 question?

12 THE WITNESS: I thought he was making a
13 statement.

14 MR. DANDINO: It should have been asked as a
15 question.

16 JUDGE HOPKINS: If she doesn't understand the
17 question, I don't. If you could reask the question.

18 MR. DANDINO: That's all right. I'll pass on
19 that. Thank you very much.

20 THE WITNESS: You're very welcome. May I be
21 excused?

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Yes, ma'am. We certainly
23 appreciate your coming.

24 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: Anyone else? Well, thank you

1 very much. We're going to close this local public hearing
2 tonight. And we certainly appreciate all the people who
3 came up to testify. That's what we came here to do. And
4 the Commission always wants me to emphasize that we have
5 not decided this case and the Commissioners that are not
6 here will read this testimony. We're having five
7 different hearings throughout the State. And they'll take
8 the information from all those hearings and the written
9 evidence, and then we're going to have another hearing in
10 Jefferson City. So we take all that evidence, and this in
11 no way has been decided. So we use the testimony we get
12 here tonight and at the other local public hearings. So
13 these are very important. And you people are very
14 important, and we really appreciate you speaking. Thank
15 you very much.

16 (Thereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 7:10
17 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2000.)

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1 STATE OF MISSOURI)
) SS
2 COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS)

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6 I, Eileen J. Bell, a Notary Public within and for
7 the State of Missouri, do certify that I acted as Official
8 Reporter at the time these proceedings transpired, that
9 these proceedings were reduced to shorthand by me on the
10 day, between the hours, at the place and in that behalf
11 first aforesaid, and later transcribed into typewritten
12 form, and that this and the foregoing pages are a true and
13 accurate transcript of the Missouri Public Service
14 Commission held at 310 West Pearce Boulevard, Wentzville,
15 Missouri on the 21st day of August, A.D., 2000, and said
16 hearing is now herewith returned to and filed with the
17 Missouri Public Service Commission.

18 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and
19 Seal this 25th day of August, A.D., 2000.

20 MY COMMISSION EXPIRES NOVEMBER 14, 2002.

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EILEEN J. BELL,
Notary Public, within and
for the State of Missouri

