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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARING

August 31, 2000
Mexico, Missouri
Volume 6

In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a AmerenUE for)
Authority to File Tariffs) Case
Increasing Rates for Gas Service) No. GR-2000-512
Provided to Customers in the)
Company's Missouri Service Area.)

BEFORE:

BILL HOPKINS, Presiding,
SENIOR REGULATORY LAW JUDGE.
SHEILA LUMPE, Chair,
ROBERT G. SCHEMENAUER,
COMMISSIONERS.

REPORTED BY:

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Written Entries of Appearance filed.)

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Ladies and gentlemen, we'll
4 begin this hearing, and I will ask our court reporter
5 to go on the record.

6 If you would like to testify, as I've
7 already said, you should sign up to testify on our
8 sheet, and I believe that Gordon Persinger, and I
9 can't see him, but he's -- I'm sorry, or one of our
10 staff members will let you sign up. We've got some
11 more people back there.

12 And this is a local public hearing in
13 Mexico, Missouri, August 31, the year 2000. It's
14 6:30 p.m. We're in the Presser Hall in Mexico,
15 Missouri, Audrain County.

16 My name is Bill Hopkins. I am the appointed
17 Senior Regulatory Law Judge for the Missouri Public
18 Service Commission. I will be the presiding officer
19 this evening in the matter of Union Electric Company,
20 d/b/a AmerenUE for authority to file tariffs
21 increasing rates for gas service to provide its
22 customers in the Company's Missouri service area, and
23 this is Case No. GR-2000-512.

24 This case began on February the 18th of the
25 year 2000 when Union Electric Company, d/b/a AmerenUE

1 submitted to the Missouri Public Service Commission
2 tariffs reflecting increased rates for natural gas
3 service provided to customers in the Missouri service
4 area of the Company. For the proposed tariffs, they
5 are requesting an effective date of April 2, 2001.

6 The proposed tariffs are designed to produce
7 an annual increase of approximately 14 percent in the
8 Company's natural gas revenue. That's about \$12
9 dollars annually.

10 First of all, I would like to thank the
11 owners of the Presser Hall for the use of this
12 facility, and I will note that the views expressed
13 here are not necessarily those of Presser Hall.

14 And let me introduce the Commissioners who
15 are here with me this evening to hear your testimony.
16 On my left is the Chair of the Missouri Public Service
17 Commission, Sheila Lumpe, and on my right is
18 Commissioner Robert Schemenauer.

19 Let me ask the other persons sitting up here
20 for the record to enter their appearance and introduce
21 themselves to the public. Will counsel make their
22 entries of appearance, please?

23 MR. BYRNE: Tom Byrne and Ronald Evans
24 appearing on behalf of Union Electric Company. Our
25 address is 1901 Chouteau, St. Louis, Missouri, 63103.

1 I guess I would also mention that we have
2 some other employees of the Company here. In addition
3 to the comments about the rate case or said comments
4 about the rate case, if you have concerns about your
5 individual account, they are available to address
6 those. Thank you.

7 MR. SCHWARZ: My name is Tim Schwarz. I am
8 an attorney representing the Staff of the Missouri
9 Public Service Commission. My address is P.O.
10 Box 360, Jefferson City, 65102.

11 MR. MICHEEL: Douglas E. Micheel, appearing
12 on behalf of the Office of Public Counsel and the
13 Public, P.O. Box 7800, Jefferson City, Missouri,
14 65102-7800. And I would just encourage all of the
15 citizens to speak at the public hearing.

16 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Thank you.

17 Again, we have a sign-up sheet that's in the
18 back now, I believe, if anybody wants to sign up. We
19 will get that sheet before the end of the hearing.

20 The Missouri Public Service Commission is
21 the State agency which regulates investor-owned
22 utility service -- companies, excuse me, in Missouri
23 to ensure the rates are just and reasonable and the
24 quality of service is satisfactory and that safety
25 practices are employed during operation while at the

1 same time ensuring the utility company a reasonable
2 rate of return to their shareholders.

3 The Missouri Public Service Commission is
4 made up of five Commissioners who are appointed by the
5 Governor and confirmed by the Senate to hear and
6 decide cases regarding the public utilities issues as
7 indicated earlier.

8 The current Commissioners are the Chair,
9 Sheila Lumpe, who, as I said, is sitting on my left;
10 Vice-chair Diane Drainer; Commissioner Connie Murray;
11 Commissioner Robert Schemenauer, who is sitting on my
12 right, and Commissioner Kelvin Simmons. All of the
13 Commissioners, including those who are not currently
14 present, will have the opportunity to read all of the
15 witnesses' testimony and remarks.

16 The Missouri Public Service Commission
17 employs a staff of engineers, accountants, attorneys,
18 financial analysts and other specialists in the field
19 of utility regulation and rely upon their expertise,
20 along with other expert testimony and consumer
21 testimony. These people here who introduced
22 themselves earlier represent the PSC Staff and the
23 Office of the Public -- I'm sorry -- the Office of
24 General Counsel with the PSC, and also we have a
25 representative of the Public Counsel. And the Office

1 of the Public Counsel is separate from the PSC, and
2 they represent the public interest specifically before
3 the Public Service Commission.

4 The purpose of this hearing that the
5 Missouri Public Service Commission is having here
6 tonight is to get your input, your testimony. We want
7 to take evidence by way of your statement or your
8 testimony or any witness statement or documents that
9 you may wish to provide to the Missouri Public Service
10 Commission --

11 FEMALE VOICE: We can't hear you.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: I'm sorry.

13 -- regarding the AmerenUE's application for
14 a rate increase.

15 We will take your comments from this
16 evening, along with the other public hearings, and
17 follow up with a review and report which will be
18 issued, including any issues which you may raise with
19 us tonight about the rate increase. We've had these
20 local public hearings in Cape Girardeau, in Columbia,
21 in Jefferson City, and in Wentzville.

22 Commissioners, would either of you like to
23 make any comments at this time? Commissioner Lumpe?

24 CHAIR LUMPE: A very brief statement. We
25 really appreciate those of you that have taken time to

1 come out on a very hot day. We do want to hear your
2 comments. As was said, all of the other
3 Commissioners, since you will be sworn on the record,
4 will have the opportunity to read those comments and
5 it will be part of the record from which we can make
6 our decision because of this procedure.

7 So we do appreciate your coming. We really
8 want to hear your comments and make them part of the
9 record so that what you have to say can be as
10 important and as vital and have as much weight as the
11 testimony we hear from other parties. So thank you
12 again.

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?

14 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: Thank you, Judge.

15 I would just -- I would just also like to
16 thank you-all for coming out. It's part of the
17 process of our government to have input on every
18 aspect of it, and this way we get to hear your views,
19 whatever they are, on this issue before us, so I urge
20 you to let us know what you think. And thanks for
21 coming out.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, Commissioner
23 Schemenauer.

24 We will proceed with the taking of the
25 testimony at this time. Let me explain a little bit

1 about this.

2 Since this is an official hearing of the
3 Missouri Public Service Commission, the statements and
4 testimony of witnesses will be taken down by the court
5 reporter on the record and it must be under oath.
6 When your name is called to testify, would you please
7 come forward to be sworn in? We will allow you to
8 testify up here. If you have a problem with coming up
9 the steps, I think we've got a microphone that will
10 allow you to testify from down there.

11 We will also do the baseball rule thing and
12 tell you who the next speaker will be and have them
13 come down and sit in the "on-deck" chair, if you will.

14 Now, I'd like to remind you that the court
15 reporter can only listen to one person at a time. And
16 I cannot and nobody else is able to listen to two
17 people at the same time. So if you would please speak
18 one at a time and don't speak out from the audience.
19 This will help not confuse the court reporter and
20 everybody will have a chance to say what you want to
21 say.

22 We do need a complete and accurate record
23 because, as Chair Lumpe and Commissioner Schemenauer
24 both told you, the other Commissioners who are not
25 here will read this testimony and take into account,

1 so it has to be complete and accurate.

2 Now, if somebody comes up here and says what
3 you wanted to say, you can, if you want to, come up
4 here and be sworn in and say, I agree with Mr. Jones
5 or Ms. Smith, and then you can sit down, or you don't
6 even have to testify if you don't want to.

7 If you have a specific question or complaint
8 about service, you should see these people that the
9 utility has here. They have all kinds of experts here
10 tonight who will answer your questions, and after the
11 formal hearing is over, they will be able to help you
12 with your questions if you have any.

13 After you complete your comments, we ask you
14 to -- that you remain here at the lectern, and Chair
15 Lumpe or Commissioner Schemenauer or one of the
16 lawyers over here would like to ask questions perhaps,
17 or maybe I have a question or two. These lawyers are
18 not going to cross-examine you. This is not a trial.
19 It's not going to be like on TV. They may just want
20 to clarify something and will ask you a question.

21 So when you come up here, I'm going to ask
22 you to be sworn in, and then I'm going to ask you to
23 state and spell your name for the court reporter so
24 that we will have that in the record.

25 Before we start this, I'll ask if any of the

1 counsel have any opening statements?

2 MR. BYRNE: No, your Honor.

3 MR. SCHWARZ: No, sir.

4 MR. MICHEEL: No, sir.

5 JUDGE HOPKINS: None of the counsel have any

6 opening statements.

7 The first person on the list is Elenore

8 Schewe. Am I pronouncing that correctly?

9 S-c-h-e-w-e. Yes, ma'am. And the next one after that

10 is Ron Sterrett.

11 MR. RON STERRETT: Can I give my time to

12 Reverend Robert Marty?

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: If he signed the list.

14 The next person down is Barbara Willis, if

15 you want to come up and be on deck. Is Barbara Willis

16 here?

17 MR. ROBERT MARTY: I want to take

18 Mr. Sterrett's place. Can I do that?

19 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. What is your

20 name?

21 MR. ROBERT MARTY: Robert Marty. I'm on the

22 list.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: We'll let you be on deck.

24 Would you raise your right hand, please?

25 MS. ELENORE SCHEWE: But I only wanted to

1 yield to the next speaker.

2 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. We'll let you do

3 that.

4 All right, sir. Would you raise your right

5 hand, please?

6 (Witness sworn.)

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

8 Would you please state and spell your name

9 for the court reporter.

10 MR. ROBERT MARTY: Robert H. Marty, Marty.

11 Address 1411 Bennington, Mexico, Missouri.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

13 Go right ahead, sir.

14 MR. ROBERT MARTY: I want to say that we

15 welcome you-all to Mexico, Missouri, and we hope you

16 have at least a late supper here. We love to have

17 tourist dollars come in, and we're glad to have you

18 here.

19 I think you're glad to be in an

20 air-conditioned auditorium. The last time we had one

21 over water it was in Eminence, and it was hot, so this

22 is a plus here. This is privately funded, in case you

23 want to know that; 500,000 to renovate the auditorium

24 and 200,000 to renovate the air-conditioning.

25 I want to tell you that I want to focus most

1 on the charge for residential customer charge. I also
2 want to say that we've -- many of us believe that
3 AmerenUE is an excellent citizen in this community,
4 and they are highly regarded and very helpful on a lot
5 of projects.

6 But raising that from \$8 to \$14 or \$15, and
7 I've noticed that AmerenUE has done a great deal to
8 try and reduce costs. They certainly have reduced
9 Staff, because you can't talk to a person. It's
10 mechanical. They -- I believe they read our gas
11 meters by -- from the sky so they reduce the meter
12 reader, and, yet, they are pushing for an increase of
13 about 75 percent.

14 I'm concerned that in the overall scheme of
15 things that they have combined Ameren and UE and come
16 together, and you would think two major utility
17 companies like that would start to show a synergies
18 and reductions of cost rather than increases in costs.

19 We're not talking here about the cost of
20 gas, which is something the market controls. We're
21 talking here about the cost of doing business at the
22 point of a resident. And somewhere we've not seen any
23 of those savings from those mergers.

24 I also think that you need to look
25 carefully -- the Public Service Commission needs to

1 look carefully at executives' salaries. In a monopoly
2 where we have no choice but to buy from one company,
3 certainly those executives should not be taking
4 advantage of the people that have to have gas and
5 electricity.

6 Also, can I make this suggestion to the
7 Public Service Commission that since this is a
8 multi-state corporation, Illinois and Missouri, it may
9 well be a good idea to be an ally with the Illinois
10 Public Service Commission so that you have a larger
11 view of what it is they are up to and what their costs
12 are and what their expenses are. I think there is
13 more to this -- in this bag than what we have right
14 here.

15 I'll leave to my other comrades more
16 details, but I thank you for being here. I thank you
17 for this opportunity to speak.

18 Do you have any questions?

19 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

20 We appreciate your testimony, sir.

21 Chair Lumpe, any questions?

22 CHAIR LUMPE: No, but I would like to tell
23 Mr. Marty that I, too, appreciate the air-conditioning
24 on this night.

25 The other -- you made a comment about the

1 merger between a company in Illinois and here.
2 Illinois is -- now has restructured electricity, but I
3 don't know that Ameren has gas operations in Illinois.
4 But I appreciate that, and I'll check that out.
5 MR. ROBERT MARTY: Thank you. Thank you
6 very much.
7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?
8 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any counsel?
10 (No response.)
11 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from counsel.
12 MR. ROBERT MARTY: Thank you.
13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.
14 Now, Barbara Willis, and next on deck is
15 Martha Barton. Martha Barton. Is Martha Barton here?
16 Would you like to come down and be on deck?
17 I have a little trouble seeing everybody
18 down there, because I've got lights shining in my
19 eyes.
20 Thank you, ma'am.
21 Would you raise your right hand, please?
22 (Witness sworn.)
23 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.
24 Would you please state and spell your name
25 for the court reporter?

1 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: My name is Barbara
2 Willis, W-i-l-l-i-s. I live at 410 Woodlawn, Mexico.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. Go ahead.

4 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: I am one of the many
5 people living in our area who lives on a fixed income,
6 which I call it a broken income. After my cost of
7 living increase and my insurance -- health insurance
8 premiums for the same source, I am now getting \$30 a
9 month less than what I got last year. They say you
10 can't be killed by nibbling fishes, but right now with
11 AmerenUE proposing this increase, I feel like I'm
12 being attacked by sharks.

13 I have a fixed payday. AmerenUE has had it
14 set up so that no matter how quickly I get my payment
15 into the mail, I'm a day late. They get \$1.50 extra
16 out of me every month.

17 I think in the last 30 days I've gotten it
18 resolved due to some help from someone in Jefferson
19 City, but if they are getting \$1.50 from each fixed
20 income client who can't mail your payment until the
21 day it's due, that's already a rate increase in my
22 book.

23 I really, really oppose any increase at this
24 time on residential rates. There may be an excellent
25 economy for the rest of the nation, but for a person

1 who's living on Civil Service or Social Security
2 income, or any other type of disability pension, they
3 don't have any way to make up additional moneys. And
4 this increase may impact someone with a higher income
5 by only 1 percent or less. To me, I'm already paying
6 more than 10 percent of my net income to AmerenUE, and
7 I cannot afford to pay more. And so I hope that the
8 Commission will stand against this increase.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much for your
10 testimony.

11 Any questions. Commissioner Lumpe?

12 CHAIR LUMPE: Yes. Miss Willis, would you
13 explain a little further to me -- you said by the time
14 you get your bill it's already -- you're already late.

15 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: They have --

16 CHAIR LUMPE: How does that work?

17 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: They have my pay period
18 set up that my bill is due, I believe, the 28th, 29th
19 of each month. I get paid no sooner than the first
20 working day of the month, which is sometimes as late
21 as the 3rd if there's a holiday that falls, like a
22 Monday holiday, so I don't have any money in the bank
23 to send them until the 3rd.

24 On the way here I dropped off my payment in
25 the mail hoping to beat a late charge this month

1 because I will be paid hopefully tomorrow and the
2 money will be there. I can't afford to double a
3 month's pay to AmerenUE in order to get a month ahead
4 so that I could pay at the end of the month. It's not
5 that simple.

6 CHAIR LUMPE: So it's the timing of when the
7 bill comes --

8 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: It's the timing of
9 their pay cycle. And I called and asked that I be
10 allowed to pay later. I said, I get a Civil Service
11 retirement, and it comes at a certain day, and I don't
12 get it a day earlier. And I'm not trying to take
13 anything away from AmerenUE.

14 But I was explained by the St. Louis
15 customer service that, no, your pay date is set by the
16 computer, and you will pay on time or the computer
17 doesn't know.

18 Now, last month I did talk to someone in the
19 Jefferson City office who said because of Civil
20 Service and Social Security being paid on a set date,
21 they could allow you an extra day or two leeway, but
22 that's not the answer I've got from the past year.

23 CHAIR LUMPE: I would hope that among our
24 staff or among the Company tonight you might be able
25 to talk to them and see if something could be worked

1 out.

2 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: And if I may, while the
3 Commissioners are here, recently they came and took
4 the medical designation off my meter because the
5 doctor's appointment that would get the annual review
6 done won't be until next month. So during the storm
7 we lost our electricity from 10:00 at night until, I
8 would say, 2:30, 3:00 the next afternoon.

9 Even though there was a known medical need,
10 they did not make any attempt to assist us. Luckily,
11 there was no problem. But I was told that the
12 Commission insists that they renew those annually.
13 And it's a hardship for someone who is chronically ill
14 and disabled to constantly have to take a piece of
15 paper to a doctor to sign. I can't control the
16 actions of doctors, so if I mail it to them and they
17 don't sign it, it doesn't get issued.

18 I've never been late with my payments. I
19 pay in full each month, although I went on budget
20 billing, which is a new gimmick they have. On my
21 budget billing, because I did not pay my balance in
22 full, they said now I owe \$1.50 late fee for not
23 paying my bill in full. And, once again, I called
24 down to the Jefferson City office and -- that was St.
25 Louis that told me that, but Jefferson City

1 straightened that problem out, because on budget
2 billing you always have until your month that you
3 equal it up. You always have an outstanding balance,
4 so they shouldn't be charging people on budget billing
5 a late fee.

6 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you for your testimony.
7 I appreciate that.

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: We do have people who will
9 listen to your service complaints when we complete the
10 hearing.

11 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?

12 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions, but
13 thank you for your insights.

14 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
15 counsel?

16 MR. BYRNE: Can you talk to some of the
17 District people when you step down from the stage?

18 MS. BARBARA WILLIS: I would be very happy
19 to, yes.

20 MR. BYRNE: Thank you.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from any other
22 counsel.

23 Thank you.

24 All right. Martha Barton is next, and then
25 after her is Ella Reese. Is Ella Reese here?

1 If you would come down here and be on deck,
2 please.
3 MS. MARTHA BARTON: Hello.
4 JUDGE HOPKINS: Raise your right hand.
5 (Witness sworn.)
6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please state -- please state
7 and spell your name.
8 MS. MARTHA BARTON: My name is Martha
9 Barton, M-a-r-t-h-a, B-a-r-t-o-n. And I live at
10 607 East Bolivar, Mexico, Missouri.
11 JUDGE HOPKINS: Go ahead, please.
12 MS. MARTHA BARTON: And I would just like to
13 say that I oppose the rate increase at this time
14 because I am on a fixed income and I also am on the
15 budget plan, but sometimes it is very, very hard for
16 me to make ends meet, although I am on the budget
17 plan. But so far I have been able to pay my bills
18 like I'm supposed to pay them.
19 But it's just really hard. Sometimes I just
20 take the money that I have to pay maybe to buy food
21 and stuff like that to make sure that my -- I pay
22 my -- my utility bill so that I won't be cut off or
23 anything like that, because I live in housing, and if
24 you don't pay your electricity bill, you can be moved
25 out of housing, because that's the way it is. So

1 that's -- that's my thing for tonight, that I will
2 pay -- I oppose the rate increase because I really
3 can't afford it. I just -- I'm just not able to.

4 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much.

5 Commissioner Lumpe, any questions?

6 CHAIR LUMPE: I have no questions. Thank
7 you for coming.

8 MS. MARTHA BARTON: Thank you very much.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?

10 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
11 Thank you.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from counsel?

13 (No response.)

14 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions.

15 MS. MARTHA BARTON: Thank you very much.

16 JUDGE HOPKINS: Next is Ella Reese, and
17 after her will be Harold Enslin. Harold Enslin.

18 MS. ELLA REESE: I hope you're going to be
19 able to hear me.

20 My name is Ella Reese, and I live at
21 805 South Calhoun, Mexico, Missouri.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

23 Would you raise your right hand, please?

24 MS. MARTHA BARTON: Huh?

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: Raise your right hand,

1 please.

2 (Witness sworn.)

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please go right ahead.

4 MS. MARTHA BARTON: What I'm about to say is

5 almost the same as Mrs. Barton. I have lung trouble

6 and I have a sleeping syndrome. And I'm hoping it

7 don't go up no higher because I'm on a budget, too,

8 and I don't want to get cut off because at night I'm

9 on oxygen when I sleep and I have asthma. And so far

10 they've been -- you know, I've been okay. And I'm

11 hoping that it don't go up no higher.

12 And I really worried about a lot of the

13 elderly -- we have elderlies. We got an elderly lady

14 in the building that's 105, and she's on a fixed

15 income. And I hate to see that go up for others. I

16 don't know how they are going to be able to pay it.

17 So I'm hoping that you will look at the

18 people, not the rich, but the poor to try to help us.

19 You know, the people that can't do, it's not that we

20 don't want to, it's just that they can't afford it.

21 I went to St. Louis and some of the things I

22 brought back to housing on a lot of these of who you

23 can contact, you know, if something -- if you have

24 real bad trouble that you call in St. Louis. They are

25 very nice. So I'm just hoping that that will be

1 pretty well the same, where people can afford to pay
2 it and not get cut off.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much.

4 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

5 CHAIR LUMPE: Did I hear correctly, do you
6 have a medical on yours?

7 MS. MARTHA BARTON: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

8 CHAIR LUMPE: Okay. Thank you.

9 MS. MARTHA BARTON: And they have what you
10 put on the thing. What you put on your light bill, I
11 have that on my -- on there, too --

12 CHAIR LUMPE: Okay.

13 MS. MARTHA BARTON: -- on my meter.

14 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you for coming.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner
16 Schemenauer?

17 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
19 counsel?

20 (No response.)

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from the
22 counsel.

23 Next up is Harold Enslen, and after
24 Mr. Enslen is Annie Eldridge. Is Annie Eldridge here?
25 Annie Eldridge. If you are there, I can't see you.

1 MS. ANNIE ELDRIDGE: I'm here.

2 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Thank you.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Now, Mr. Enslen.

4 HAROLD S. ENSLEN: Yes, sir.

5 JUDGE HOPKINS: Raise your right hand,
6 please.

7 (Witness sworn.)

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. Please state and
9 spell your name for the court reporter.

10 HAROLD S. ENSLEN: I'm Harold S. Enslen,
11 E-n-s-l-e-n. I live at 901 Ruth Court in Mexico,
12 Missouri.

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Go right ahead, sir.

14 HAROLD S. ENSLEN: I'd like to re-affirm
15 what Reverend Marty talked about and what Mrs. Willis
16 talked about. There's many people that can't make it
17 here today that are on fixed incomes, and I know you
18 get tired of listening about fixed incomes, but that's
19 a way of life out here, everyplace now. And it's
20 important that we take this into consideration.

21 I -- I'm a UE -- AmerenUE customer. I use
22 the clean burning electricity. I don't have gas, but
23 now they're working on the gas thing, and electricity
24 is going to be the next thing they want rates
25 increased on.

1 So I'm definitely opposed to this gas
2 increase for the benefits of the citizens in this
3 community and also the businesses who use gas.
4 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.
5 HAROLD S. ENSLEN: All right.
6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Chair Lumpe?
7 CHAIR LUMPE: No, but thank you, sir, for
8 coming out.
9 JUDGE HOPKINS: And Commissioner
10 Schemenauer, any questions?
11 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
12 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from any of
13 the counsel?
14 MR. MICHEEL: No.
15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Counsel don't have any
16 questions.
17 And after Ms. Annie Eldridge is Helen
18 Nickens. Is Helen Nickens here?
19 MS. ANNIE ELDRIDGE: She's here, too.
20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.
21 Would you raise your right hand, please?
22 (Witness sworn.)
23 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.
24 Go right ahead.
25 MS. ANNIE ELDRIDGE: My name is Annie

1 Eldridge, E-l-d-r-i-d-g-e. I live at 931 Trinity here
2 in Mexico.

3 Again, I'm also one of the people that's on
4 a fixed income, and I don't particularly care for a
5 rate hike, but I'm not worried about myself, but I
6 have married children that has children that are also
7 having trouble paying their bills.

8 And, you know, if you've got kids -- I still
9 have two at home, but I have three that have children
10 at home, and if they can't pay their bills, they are
11 just in as much trouble as anybody else is. It's not
12 just the elderly, it's also the younger -- the younger
13 generation that has children that needs -- you know,
14 that can't afford to do this either.

15 I have a son and daughter-in-law both that
16 works, and they still can't keep everything paid. And
17 my other son and his wife are the same way, and they
18 all have children. So I'm just real concerned that if
19 these rate hikes go up, it's not only going to be the
20 elderly that's going to be hurting, it's going to be
21 families, younger gen-- younger people with all of
22 these children, high school kids and grade school
23 kids. They just can't afford this anymore.
24 Something's got to stop somewhere, and if you guys
25 don't stop it, then we're all going to be in trouble.

1 That's all I have to say.

2 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am.

3 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

4 CHAIR LUMPE: No, but thank you for coming

5 out, Ms. Eldridge.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner

7 Schemenauer?

8 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

9 MS. ANNIE ELDRIDGE: I have one more

10 question.

11 I also want to know why when AmerenUE comes

12 out and hooks up your gas line why the utility person

13 does not go in and light the hot water heaters and

14 stuff like they're supposed to?

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. We have service

16 people here that can answer that question, and they

17 will be happy to answer that for you either right now

18 or after the hearing.

19 Are there any questions of this lady from --

20 from the counsel?

21 MR. BYRNE: No. Again, maybe talk to one of

22 our district personnel. Ron Lush is our district

23 manager and perhaps he can answer that question.

24 MS. ANNIE ELDRIDGE: Okay. Thank you.

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from counsel.

1 Thank you, ma'am.

2 Helen Nickens. And after Ms. Nickens is

3 Sally Erickson. Sally Erickson, are you -- okay.

4 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you raise your right

5 hand, please?

6 (Witness sworn.)

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

8 Would you please state and spell your name

9 for the court reporter?

10 MS. HELEN NICKENS: My name is Helen

11 Nickens, N-i-c-k-e-n-s.

12 And I would just like to say that I oppose

13 this rate increase. And the speakers that have been

14 up here before me, I agree with what they say.

15 I had the question that Barb Willis had on

16 our pay periods. We have a fixed income. At a

17 certain time of the month we get our checks. Why do

18 we have to pay late charges and whatever.

19 And I thank you for letting me have this

20 time.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. I appreciate

22 that.

23 Any questions?

24 CHAIR LUMPE: No. But Ms. Nickens, you have

25 the same pay schedule issues, you say; in other words,

1 your check doesn't come in or jibe with when the bill
2 comes?

3 MS. HELEN NICKENS: Uh-huh.

4 CHAIR LUMPE: Okay. And I'm going to assume
5 that somebody here from the Company might be able to
6 address that for you.

7 MS. HELEN NICKENS: Yes, because it's not
8 only me. It's a lot of people on welfare. It comes
9 in the first -- the fourth of the month, and if you --
10 your bill's due, like she said, around the 28th, 29th,
11 the little grace period that you ask for is just
12 unconsiderable to them.

13 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you for coming.

14 MS. HELEN NICKENS: Thank you.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

16 Ma'am, if you want to testify and be seated,
17 we'll give you the microphone, if that will help you
18 out.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Her name is not Sally. It's
20 Susie Erickson.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

22 Ma'am, would you state and spell your name
23 for the court reporter?

24 MS. SUSIE ERICKSON: My name is Susie
25 Erickson, S-u-s-i-e, E-r-i-c-k-s-o-n.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.
2 (Witness sworn.)
3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am.
4 Go right ahead.
5 MS. SUSIE ERICKSON: Your Honor, I give
6 honor to each and every one of you. I'm here today to
7 oppose -- to oppose to the increase because I'm on a
8 fixed income and my disability in my body, and I don't
9 have any other -- my husband is gone, been gone. I
10 don't have no help there.
11 And the only thing, they give me \$10 a month
12 to eat on. I have to take my social security and pay
13 my bills and my rent and -- and then buy some food and
14 have soap to have a bath, all of those things. I
15 regret this has to happen, but I would say that I --
16 I'm -- I just can't afford it. And it's hard for me
17 now.
18 And I appreciate, you know, you-all, but I
19 oppose the increase. God bless you.
20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much, ma'am.
21 Any questions?
22 CHAIR LUMPE: No questions. But thank you,
23 ma'am, for coming out.
24 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Robin A-c-r-e-e.
25 MS. ROBIN ACREE: That's me.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: That's you. And after her
2 will be Janet Chambers. Is Janet Chambers here? If
3 Janet Chambers would come down.
4 Okay. Thank you.
5 JUDGE HOPKINS: I wondered where you got to.
6 Sorry.
7 Would you raise your right hand, please?
8 (Witness sworn.)
9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please state and spell your
10 name for the court reporter.
11 MS. ROBIN ACREE: My name is Robin Acree,
12 and it's R-o-b-i-n, A-c-r-e-e.
13 I'm here -- I live at 628 West Love here in
14 Mexico, and my occupation is an organizer for a social
15 justice group called ROWEL, Reformed Organization of
16 Welfare. And I know Ms. Lumpe is familiar with that
17 organization.
18 I'm here today because of a lot of reasons.
19 Number one, I'm here today to represent over 2,000
20 members across the state of Missouri, and of those I'm
21 sure 60 to 75 percent of those folks are AmerenUE
22 customers.
23 You -- some of you heard some of my
24 questions earlier, but my -- my main -- my main
25 opposition to this is that we're looking at a rate

1 increase for residential services that's 22.1 percent,
2 and yet I -- at the same time, the same proposal is
3 asking for a 6 percent increase in commercial and big
4 corporations.

5 And, you know, for someone who represents
6 people who are often on public assistance and welfare,
7 I think this is the fraud and that these folks get
8 enough tax breaks. And the folks that have been
9 coming up here and testifying today get no break. In
10 fact, their whole lives are under magnifying glasses.
11 And in order for these folks to even make their
12 payments currently they have to beg, borrow, and beg
13 to get their bills paid currently.

14 I get a lot of -- we do a lot of advocacy
15 work on the local grass roots level, and I can tell
16 you that on a constant basis I am faced with families
17 that are being shut off and disconnected only to catch
18 themselves right back up into a vicious cycle.

19 I'm going to put this on the record because
20 the other thing I think the Public Service Commission
21 needs to be aware of is that once these folks get
22 behind, these people on fixed incomes, they don't get
23 a big windfall of money. And AmerenUE, yeah, they
24 will negotiate to put them back on, but they won't do
25 anything to negotiate a forgiveness. Once they --

1 once they owe them, they owe them for the rest of
2 their lives. And I have seen bills in excess of over
3 \$1,000 that folks are paying late fees and service
4 charges on, and I am appalled -- I think that's
5 appalling, because it's by no choice of their own that
6 they are disabled or -- or in a situation where they
7 are having to receive public assistance. Living in
8 poverty is not a choice. It's a circumstance.

9 And I also wanted to just have on the record
10 as well that -- I don't think anybody brought up this
11 issue, but this is another issue I run across all of
12 the time. People who live in poverty are the most
13 creative people I've ever met in my life. I know.
14 I've been one. I've been a welfare mom myself.

15 And the reason I say that is because it
16 scares me, and I want the Public Service Commission to
17 be aware of this. Any time that folks are being faced
18 with an increase in utility bills, they are going to
19 begin to look at alternative fuel sources and
20 alternative ways to heat their home. Sometimes they
21 are creative, but sometimes they are not real safe,
22 and they are not real energy efficient.

23 When -- when you look at the proposal, and
24 they are saying that it's on average going to cost
25 approximately \$10 per month, per residential service

1 person, or whatever, customer, but they are -- the
2 people I represent aren't the average, and those --
3 that's what scares me. They are over here in
4 substandard housing a lot of times and their bills are
5 nowhere near what my bills are and -- and there is
6 no -- no weatherization or no energy assistance is
7 going to -- is going to get that house -- that new
8 furnace in there or whatever. There's a lot of limits
9 right now on what people can even do to get out of
10 substandard housing.

11 With all of the new laws that are out here,
12 people are being faced with almost not even living in
13 public housing to some degree because if they have
14 some type of a past record or whatever, so people are
15 already being forced into substandard housing. And it
16 just concerns me that people are going to lose life
17 over this, and I want that on the record.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much. Any
19 questions, Chair Lumpe?

20 CHAIR LUMPE: No, but thank you for coming.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?

22 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

23 Thank you.

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from any of
25 the counsel?

1 (No response.)
2 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from any of the
3 counsel.
4 Thank you, ma'am.
5 Janet Chambers is next, and then after her
6 is Judy Hoard.
7 MS. JUDY HOARD: I don't want to speak. I
8 don't want to speak.
9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. You don't want to
10 speak. Okay.
11 After that is -- I can't read the first
12 name. Dingledine, is that correct? I can't see
13 anybody.
14 Do you want to speak, sir? Are you
15 Mr. Dingledine?
16 MR. TERRY DINGLELINE: Yes.
17 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Wait down there.
18 Raise your right hand, please.
19 (Witness sworn.)
20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.
21 Would you please state and spell your name?
22 MS. JANET CHAMBERS: My name is Janet
23 Chambers, J-a-n-e-t, C-h-a-m-b-e-r-s. I live at
24 1015 East Lafayette, Mexico, Missouri.
25 I just want to say I'm in opposition to the

1 rate increase which is already on an estimate basis
2 anyway, so I don't really understand how you can
3 really get a fair billing on some of that. Most of
4 the time really it's estimated. And that's all I have
5 to say. I am in opposition to the rate.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

7 There are people here that can answer your
8 service questions, and they will be glad to help you,
9 ma'am.

10 Any questions?

11 CHAIR LUMPE: Yes. Ms. Chambers?

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: Ms. Chambers.

13 CHAIR LUMPE: You said your bill is usually
14 estimated?

15 MS. JANET CHAMBERS: Yes. For example, I
16 was gone for two weeks, and when I came back, I had a
17 bill that was more than -- because it is based on
18 budget billing, and I don't use the same amount every
19 month. It depends on the weather. We might have a
20 couple of weeks that -- you know, that the weather is
21 favorable. So, therefore, it's estimated when I'm
22 paying the same thing on budget billing. I don't
23 think that's fair.

24 Like a lot of people here, my income is
25 based on child support right now. I had an accident,

1 and I can't work. I'm dealing with Workman's Comp
2 right now. I have a daughter in school that -- that
3 the school fees have to be paid, so I'm struggling.

4 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you.

5 I just wanted to clarify that, if I could.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

7 Commissioner Schemenauer?

8 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

9 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from counsel?

10 (No response.)

11 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from counsel.

12 Mr. Dingledine is next, and then after him
13 will be Mary Beth Arnold. Is Mary Beth Arnold here?

14 Mary Beth Arnold.

15 Okay. Thank you.

16 Raise your right hand, sir.

17 (Witness sworn.)

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

19 Go right ahead.

20 MR. TERRY DINGLELINE: My name is Terry
21 Dingledine.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: State and spell your name.

23 MR. TERRY DINGLELINE: Terry, Dingledine is
24 D-i-n-g-l-e-d-i-n-e.

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: Could you step a little bit

1 closer to the microphone, sir?

2 MR. TERRY DINGLEDINE: Sorry. And I live at
3 517 East Central, Mexico, Missouri.

4 I'm on disability, like most of the people
5 out here, and I oppose the rate increase that you're
6 asking, that you want to raise. I could just barely
7 make my payments with the electric bill that I have on
8 the income that I have.

9 And like most of them out here, sometimes
10 you-all say that I need to pay on a certain day, but
11 my check comes, like, on the 3rd. Now, if there's a
12 holiday, like, there's going to be a holiday coming
13 up, I can't make those payments on the 3rd because the
14 check doesn't -- it's not there. There is no money in
15 the bank.

16 So -- and I'm -- and if my electricity goes
17 off, then I'm in trouble, so I have to have
18 electricity. And my neighbor that's not here is on
19 oxygen, so a hike for -- for someone who's on
20 disability is going to be hard to pay.

21 And I thank you.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir. We
23 appreciate your testimony.

24 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

25 CHAIR LUMPE: Mr. Dingledine, do you use gas

1 from UE also or just electricity?

2 MR. TERRY DINGLELINE: Yes, ma'am.

3 CHAIR LUMPE: So you do have gas service as

4 well?

5 MR. TERRY DINGLELINE: Yes.

6 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you.

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions,

8 Mr. Schemenauer?

9 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

10 Thank you.

11 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from any of the

12 counsel.

13 Thank you very much.

14 Mary Beth Arnold is next. And then after

15 her is Doris Kelley. Doris Kelley. Doris -- oh,

16 there you are.

17 Okay. Thank you, ma'am.

18 Would you raise your right hand?

19 (Witness sworn.)

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please state and spell your

21 name.

22 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: My name is Mary Beth

23 Arnold. Mary Beth is two words. Last name is Arnold.

24 Not only am I here myself -- I have electric

25 at home; I don't have gas -- but I work for a

1 community action agency, and I -- one of my main jobs
2 is doing the utility programs for low-income families,
3 so I -- you know, I was asked to get some numbers
4 together on kind of what we do and how much we've
5 spent.

6 And the year -- the winter year of 1998 and
7 '99 I spent at least \$8,000, and that's only one
8 program. I didn't have the Dollar More numbers, but
9 we do get Dollar More funds also.

10 And in the winter of '99, I paid bills that
11 equalled up to \$18,000 for individuals and families.
12 And out of all of the families that we serve, which
13 was about 143 for those two years, approximately
14 18 of those were not AmerenUE. Most of the rest of
15 them were.

16 I still see a need, especially for our
17 low-income and restricted people with their income,
18 especially for senior citizens because they will not
19 come for assistance usually. They will pay their bill
20 even if they have to go without food, and that is a
21 crying shame to me. You know, they need to be able to
22 eat better. They don't get as many food stamps as
23 most people do, and I think we're hurting them the
24 most out of an increase.

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much for your

1 testimony.

2 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

3 CHAIR LUMPE: Yes. The assistance, is it
4 needed more for gas or electricity or equally both, or
5 do you give to both?

6 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: Pretty equally both.
7 I didn't read the summer cooling funds because this is
8 a gas increase we're talking about, but if you want to
9 hear some of the summer cooling money, the increase in
10 the last two years in money that we have gotten to
11 help people has greatly increased. I'm afraid that
12 next year they won't come along and people are really
13 going to be hurting then.

14 The summer of '99 I had \$17,500 to spend.
15 And the summer of 2000 I started out with 12,000, and
16 they've now added on four more thousand for me to
17 spend to help individuals.

18 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you.

19 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

20 Any questions, Commissioner Schemenauer?

21 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions,
22 your Honor. Thank you.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: We have some questions from
24 counsel over here.

25 MR. SCHWARZ: Which agency do you work for?

1 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: I work for a
2 community action agency, Human Development
3 Corporation, Central Missouri Counties in Columbia.
4 MR. SCHWARZ: Eames.
5 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: Eames, yes.
6 JUDGE HOPKINS: Mr. Eames was at our --
7 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: Columbia?
8 JUDGE HOPKINS: -- Columbia hearing, and he
9 had some documentary evidence that he filed with us.
10 Do you have anything like that to file?
11 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: I could hand you
12 this. I didn't write anything else on it other than
13 some numbers.
14 JUDGE HOPKINS: That's okay. We've got it
15 in the record. I appreciate your testimony.
16 Thank you.
17 MS. MARY BETH ARNOLD: Uh-huh.
18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Doris Kelley is next, and
19 then John Phillips. Is John Phillips here? You can
20 be on deck, Mr. Phillips.
21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Raise your right hand,
22 please.
23 (Witness sworn.)
24 MS. DORIS KELLEY: I didn't intend to
25 testify, but since I'm here, I will, I guess.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please --
2 MS. DORIS KELLEY: Huh?
3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please state and
4 spell your name for the court report.
5 MS. DORIS KELLEY: Doris Kelley,
6 K-e-l-l-e-y, 2977 South Clark, Mexico.
7 Okay. I want to say that I agree with
8 Mr. Marty and Mr. Enslin the way they feel.
9 And, also, my husband and I are both on
10 Social Security now and since we're caught in this
11 date -- birthday, we fall in the middle of the month,
12 which is the third Wednesday. I get my bill on the
13 14th, and it only gives you a few days. I mean, I'm
14 fortunate enough that I can do it, but I can
15 understand -- we used to get, like, two weeks, and
16 then people could kind of put it where they want it.
17 Also -- and you're going to tell me to talk
18 to the others about needing assistance, I was on the
19 phone one day for 25 minutes because I timed it, and
20 hung up. Now, I needed to report something, and
21 machines and I don't get along, and I think that we
22 should do something about it.
23 Now, I know Lori and Ron both, but I don't
24 feel like I should have to call them when there is an
25 emergency. So is there any other way you can get --

1 get through to somebody?

2 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 I had a -- I had a question, ma'am.

5 MS. DORIS KELLEY: I'm sorry.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: You mentioned the name Lori
7 and Ron. Would you please tell us who that is?

8 MS. DORIS KELLEY: Lush and Lori Trammell,
9 isn't it now? Yes, they work here.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: I'm sorry. They are who?

11 MS. DORIS KELLEY: With UE.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: With UE?

13 MS. DORIS KELLEY: Uh-huh.

14 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. And we do have
15 service complaint people, or the utility has people
16 here who will answer your complaints also.

17 MS. DORIS KELLEY: Okay.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: And, Commissioner Lumpe, do
19 you have any questions?

20 CHAIR LUMPE: No. I appreciate your
21 testimony. It seems to me we have a lot of the
22 paycheck and the bill synchronization issue here.

23 MS. DORIS KELLEY: I'm fortunate enough not
24 to have to squeeze that together, but I know that I
25 start worrying. And I have two bills, and one is

1 supposed to come one day ahead of the other one, and
2 sometimes the first one will come after I've already
3 written the check, so I know what they're going
4 through.

5 And I just know that since Social Security
6 is going according to your birthday now, instead of
7 the first or the third, or however it used to be, it
8 throws us clear down. So, you know, I think it's
9 going to be a handicap --

10 CHAIR LUMPE: I appreciate --

11 MS. DORIS KELLEY: -- that should be looked
12 into.

13 CHAIR LUMPE: I appreciate hearing about it,
14 because it's an issue that seems --

15 MS. DORIS KELLEY: I was surprised, because
16 I was going to have my check on the third, and they
17 said no, the third Wednesday.

18 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you.

19 MS. DORIS KELLEY: You bet. Any others?

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Commissioner Schemenauer?

21 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
22 Thank you for your testimony.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
24 lawyers?

25 (No response.)

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from the
2 lawyers.
3 Thank you very much.
4 John Phillips is next, and then James
5 Maddox. Is James Maddox here?
6 Raise your right hand.
7 (Witness sworn.)
8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please state and spell your
9 name for the court reporter?
10 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: My name is John
11 Phillips, P-h-i-l-l-i-p-s. I live at 715 Woodlawn
12 here in Mexico.
13 And I oppose the rate and I oppose it
14 because I'm looking at the informational sheet that
15 the Public Service Commission put out, and it says for
16 a typical residential customer the proposed increase
17 would be approximately \$10 a month. And I asked
18 before what the typical rate was for a residential
19 customer, and nobody seemed to know. They knew how
20 much gas a typical customer used, 900 Ccf's, but they
21 didn't know what the typical rate was.
22 Well, that be as it may, I'm going back to
23 another sheet that was passed out that I asked for,
24 information about the current AmerenUE natural gas
25 rate case, and it has residential customer charge \$8;

1 proposed rate \$14 to \$15. Mr. Marty mentioned this is
2 an increase of 75 to 87.5 percent.

3 On down this sheet it shows the UE proposal.
4 The proposal says that out of the \$12 million rate
5 increase, the residential customers will be charged
6 \$11,333,000, which is the big -- is most of the entire
7 increase. General service, interruptible services,
8 transportation services, they are getting a remand.
9 They are not paying for the -- they are getting a
10 decrease rather than an increase in their rate.

11 What I'm trying to say, I guess, is
12 according to this paper that was passed out, UE says
13 it's 22.1 percent increase up at the top from \$8 to
14 \$14 or \$15, 75.8 percent, is not 22 percent, or I'm --
15 I went to the wrong school.

16 If UE is saying 22.1, that's being very
17 deceitful in their advertising and what they're
18 putting out. They put out a paper that the hearing
19 was about a 22 percent increase. That's not correct
20 according to the figures here that you folks
21 published.

22 So what I'm trying to say, I guess, is
23 something is not adding up here, and either UE is
24 being deceitful, or we're not getting the straight
25 facts about \$8 to \$14 or \$15. That's all I have.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Sir, would you mind to let
2 me see those so I can identify them for the record,
3 what you're speaking of.

4 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: They were laying back
5 there on the table.

6 JUDGE HOPKINS: I understand. I just need
7 to identify them for the record.

8 Now, we have a yellow sheet which is called
9 Information on the AmerenUE Natural Gas Rate Case,
10 Case No. GR-2000-521.

11 MR. PERSINGER: That's the Staff's.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: That is put out by the
13 Staff. And he is also referring to information about
14 the current UE natural gas rate case. This is put out
15 by the Public Counsel, and it's on a white sheet of
16 paper. And there is also a SC Missouri Public Service
17 Commission News Release entitled, Unscheduled Summer
18 Natural Gas Fund Approved for AmerenUE.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: That was this.

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions?

22 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: Also -- I'm sorry. I
23 had one other thing to say.

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay.

25 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: And this concerns -- the

1 Public Service Commission was here earlier in the
2 water commission increase, and I understand that that
3 is going to be announced tomorrow. I wish it would
4 have been announced today, because there would have
5 been a lot of people here to talk to the Commission
6 tonight, I'm sure, if they would have knew how much
7 you had okayed for the water people here.

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Okay. Just a moment please.

9 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

10 CHAIR LUMPE: No, but thank you for coming
11 out, sir.

12 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner
13 Schemenauer?

14 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
15 Thank you for coming.

16 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.

17 MR. BYRNE: I have a question.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: I'm sorry. Mr. Byrne?

19 MR. BYRNE: Sir, would you be willing to
20 talk to Doug Micheel from the Office of Public
21 Counsel --

22 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: I have talked to him.

23 MR. BYRNE: -- and ask him to explain and
24 reconcile the two sets of numbers.

25 MR. JOHN PHILLIPS: No, he can't explain it.

1 We've already talked.

2 MR. BYRNE: Okay.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

4 James Maddox is next. And then after that

5 is Danny Hoe (sic). Is Danny Hoe (sic) here.

6 MR. DANNY GOE: Goe, G-o-e.

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Sir, I'm sorry.

8 Go ahead, Mr. Maddox. Would you raise your

9 right hand, please?

10 (Witness sworn.)

11 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please state and

12 spell your name for the record?

13 MR. JAMES MADDOX: James Maddox, 1307 North

14 Jefferson. M-a-d-d-o-x.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir. Go ahead.

16 MR. JAMES MADDOX: Well, I'm -- I am opposed

17 to the rate increase and the amount of it. I'm not

18 opposed to them having a rate increase. I think it

19 ought to be based like our Social Security checks are.

20 We get 1 1/2 or 2 percent in a year's time figured on

21 the inflation rate. Why can't the gas rates be

22 figured accordingly to that? Take everybody into

23 consideration.

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.

25 Any questions, Commissioner Lumpe?

1 CHAIR LUMPE: No. Thank you, sir, for
2 coming and testifying.

3 JUDGE HOPKINS: And Commissioner
4 Schemenauer?

5 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
6 Thank you for coming.

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
8 counsel?

9 (No response.)

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much, sir.
11 Now, after the next one will be Jerry -- I'm
12 sorry. I can't read the last name. He lives on
13 Promenade.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Mehr.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Yes, it's him, Jerry. Raise
16 your hand or do something. I can't see you.
17 There you are. Thank you, sir.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Raise your right
19 hand.

20 (Witness sworn.)

21 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you. Go right ahead.

22 MR. DANNY GOE: Danny Goe, D-a-n-n-y, G.
23 G-o-e.

24 Many thanks to the Public Service Commission
25 to allow citizen input, and thanks to all of the

1 concerned citizens for attending.

2 Higher cost of fuels will fuel inflation.

3 Invest in inflation. I hear it's going up.

4 I oppose the per month meter charge and any
5 increase, but I understand there is a cost to develop
6 the system, and I ask this Commission to allow the gas
7 company to recover the outlay to any metered service
8 over a reasonable period of time.

9 I believe for Missouri to be economically
10 viable and to address the cost of gas and to encourage
11 savings of natural gas which is already in short
12 supply, those that use the product should pay the
13 cost. I ask this Commission to support and move
14 towards straight rate billing.

15 I ask the Missouri Public Service Commission
16 to move Missouri towards a fair and equitable service
17 of fee-for-service. The fee-for-service will
18 encourage efficiency and therefore savings, and make
19 Missouri profitable in the long run through
20 conservation of dwindling resources. This will bring
21 Missouri into the 21st Century and prepare Missouri
22 for even higher energy costs, subject to the adoption
23 of the Kyoto Treaty.

24 The economic data from the Bureau of
25 Economic Analysis for 1997/98, shows that many

1 Missouri counties are below the national income level.
2 Audrain County itself in the last census data showed
3 19.8 percent above 65 on Social Security. The
4 Consumer Price Index has not addressed even my
5 mother's meager Social Security, which is less than
6 \$500.

7 The national gross personal income increased
8 5.9 percent. Missouri's increased only 3.8. Eighty
9 percent of Missouri -- of Americans live in
10 metropolitan areas and earn 85 percent of the gross
11 personal income.

12 Sixty-eight percent of Missourians live in
13 Missouri -- in the metropolitan area and earn 76
14 percent of Missouri's gross personal income.

15 Twenty percent of Americans live in
16 non-metropolitan areas and earn 15 percent of the
17 gross personal income.

18 Thirty-two percent of Missourians live in
19 non-metropolitan areas and make 24 percent of
20 Missouri's gross personal income. We are a rural
21 state.

22 Nationally, metropolitan incomes are about
23 6 percent higher than national average incomes.
24 Missouri's gross personal incomes from the
25 metropolitan areas are about 12 percent higher than

1 the Missouri average.

2 Nationally non-metropolitan incomes are
3 about 75 percent of the national. Missouri's gross
4 personal incomes in the non-metropolitan areas are
5 about 75 percent of Missouri average, and 66 percent
6 of the metropolitan -- national metropolitan gross
7 personal income.

8 While Missouri has 2.01 percent of the
9 population, they only make 1.86 percent of the
10 Nation's gross personal income.

11 When you compare to national figures, these
12 figures do not indicate a bright future for many
13 Missourians. I have submitted many interrogatories to
14 the Office of the Public Counsel. With limited time,
15 he has not been able to address all. I've asked him
16 to send his relevant findings on for your
17 consideration. I ask for your consideration and
18 support for, one, lower meter costs, and
19 fee-for-service billing.

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.

21 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

22 CHAIR LUMPE: Mr. Goe, did you say something
23 about straight based billing? Did I hear that
24 correctly?

25 MR. DANNY GOE: Yes. Fee-for-service. If

1 you buy gas -- use the gas, you pay for it.

2 CHAIR LUMPE: That's the same thing.

3 MR. DANNY GOE: I've asked to do a

4 Lorenz (ph. sp.) Economic Study from the Office of

5 the Public Counsel and to figure and show those who

6 use what percent of the gas pay what percent of the

7 bill. Due to the selection -- the -- the private

8 contracts, I'm not privy to that information.

9 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you, sir.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

11 Any questions, Commissioner Schemenauer?

12 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

13 Thank you.

14 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the

15 counsel?

16 (No response.)

17 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from the

18 counsel.

19 Thank you.

20 Mr. Jerry Mehr. Am I pronouncing that

21 correctly, sir? And then after him will be Roslyn --

22 Roslyn Mehr. Roslyn Mehr. Do you want to be on deck?

23 Thank you, sir.

24 Would you raise your right hand?

25 (Witness sworn.)

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.

2 Please state and spell your name for the

3 court reporter?

4 MR. JERRY MEHR: My name is Jerry Mehr,

5 J-e-r-r-y, M-e-h-r. And my residence is 1321 East

6 Promenade.

7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Go right ahead, sir.

8 MR. JERRY MEHR: We bought this home, and

9 we've lived here six months. We came from Chicago.

10 And I never knew in my whole life that I would

11 confront so many bills that I don't know which way to

12 turn. Every mail that comes has got a bill from

13 somebody. I'm almost thinking of getting -- excuse

14 me -- getting the hell out of here.

15 This town is something else. You bleed the

16 public. It isn't that I can't afford to pay their

17 rates. I can. But it just makes me furious to find

18 out that it's so easy for companies your size to -- to

19 get money out of the poor who can't afford it just to

20 feather your nest.

21 I don't know -- let's make a comparison.

22 I'm 81 years old. I've been through life a long time.

23 And I'm sure that amongst you young people, I'm almost

24 twice your age. So I'm speaking to you like I'd like

25 to speak to any young person. Your salary and my

1 salary are so far apart. We're here living here,
2 paying your salaries to feather your nest. I'm sorry,
3 but I have to be plain. That's exactly the way I
4 feel.

5 And as soon as I can, I am leaving. I will
6 not live in a place that's going to take every penny I
7 have while I've still got some left. I'll take it and
8 go. I can't live here like that. I can't.

9 Every time I turn around they are raising
10 something. Why? Whose salary am I paying? How many
11 more executives are you going to put on? How many
12 people are going to make three and four figures taking
13 it away from us? It's not fair.

14 That's all I've got to say. If I keep
15 talking here, I'm going to start yelling.

16 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, sir.

17 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

18 CHAIR LUMPE: No. Thank you.

19 MR. JERRY MEHR: Thank you.

20 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Chair --
21 excuse me -- Commissioner Schemenauer?

22 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

23 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from counsel?

24 (No response.)

25 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions.

1 Thank you.

2 Roslyn Mehr.

3 After her --

4 MS. ROSLYN MEHR: My name is Roslyn Mehr,
5 spelled R-o-s-l-y-n, M-e-h-r. I live at 1321 East
6 Promenade, also with the gentleman that you just
7 heard.

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

9 Would you raise your right hand, please?

10 MS. ROSLYN MEHR: Yes, sir.

11 (Witness sworn.)

12 MS. ROSLYN MEHR: Yes, sir. I only speak to
13 the truth.

14 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you.

15 MS. ROSLYN MEHR: I once read a book called,
16 There Ain't No Justice, and you know what? I stand by
17 that book.

18 What I've heard here today of these people
19 that have to beg time after time and all their horror
20 that they are living in, and you people can listen to
21 it and just, So what? You're going to get what you
22 want. And there's supposed to be no inflation.

23 Utilities are supposed to be a need that we
24 have. Everybody has these needs, and you are charging
25 luxurious prices. That's all I have to say.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am.
2 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?
3 CHAIR LUMPE: No.
4 Thank you, ma'am, for coming to testify.
5 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner
6 Schemenauer?
7 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
8 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. Vickie Davis is
9 next, and the last person I have on my list is Randy
10 Addington. Is Randy Addington here? Randy Addington,
11 come down and be on deck.
12 Raise your right hand, please.
13 (Witness sworn.)
14 JUDGE HOPKINS: Would you please pull that
15 mike a little closer to you and then say and spell
16 your name, please?
17 MS. VICKIE DAVIS: My name is Vickie Davis,
18 V-i-c-k-i-e, D-a-v-i-s.
19 I was raised in this town for approximately
20 ten years between '64 and '74. I moved to Los Angeles
21 with my family. There I have my education and a
22 wonderful career as a teacher.
23 I came back home to an area that I am
24 embarrassed to say I came from. What has happened to
25 this small town and the people that live here is gross

1 and disgusting.

2 I am most likely the youngest one who is up
3 here speaking tonight. I am in agreement with my
4 elders. It is appalling for you to take from their
5 wallet what they have worked so hard for for so long.

6 Most of these people don't even know how to
7 read your bills so they read the amount and they pay
8 the amount and they pray to God that it won't be
9 turned off. The language that you speak is not the
10 language that these people understand. They get their
11 bills; they pay their pills, and they pray to God each
12 night that their electricity is going to come on.
13 They pray their heat is going to be there through the
14 winter. They pray that the air-conditioner is going
15 to turn on when it's 106 degrees outside.

16 And I'm standing and protesting in agreement
17 with my elders today that your rates are far too high.

18 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you, ma'am.

19 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

20 CHAIR LUMPE: No questions.

21 Thank you.

22 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner
23 Schemenauer?

24 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions,
25 your Honor.

1 JUDGE HOPKINS: No questions from the
2 counsel.
3 Thank you.
4 The last speaker we have is Randy Adams.
5 Raise your right hand, please.
6 (Witness sworn.)
7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Please go ahead, sir. State
8 and spell your name.
9 MR. RANDALL ADAMS: It's Randall,
10 R-a-n-d-a-l-l, Adams, A-d-a-m-s. And my residence is
11 526 Orchard Street, Centralia, Missouri.
12 I think I'm the only one here from
13 Centralia. We have basically the same concerns in the
14 Centralia area that they have here in Mexico. They --
15 I've been -- I had a big -- big array of things I
16 could have said before I got up here, but many of them
17 has already been said.
18 One of the -- one of the main things that I
19 have noticed, nobody has spoke for the -- your rates,
20 22 percent is what they are talking about. Mr. Marty
21 said 75 percent. If you'll turn around and look at
22 what the factory increases have been in our areas in
23 the last several years, I think most of the time we
24 have seen where -- at least in Centralia it's 3,
25 3 1/2, at the most probably 5 percent.

1 And I sell real estate in the Centralia
2 area. I have a real estate company there. One of the
3 main gripes I have with UE is just like the other
4 people have is when you've got to have something
5 turned on or something done, you've got to talk to
6 that recorder. We've lost the human touch, and I
7 think it's -- it's pretty poor of a large company like
8 this.

9 We used to be able to pay our bills right in
10 town locally. Then it become a thing where if we'd
11 take them there, you'd mail them in. They'd take them
12 for seven days, or something like that, and then after
13 seven days you had to mail them. Then they turned
14 around and they eliminated that person.

15 So at least in our Centralia area -- I don't
16 know how it is here in Mexico -- everything has got to
17 be mailed when you get it, and you never really get to
18 see a person.

19 And as far as AmerenUE's service, I don't
20 have any complaints. I think you've done us a good
21 job, and they got good people working for them, but as
22 far as the rate increase like they're talking, I think
23 it's ridiculous. That's really all I have to say.

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you for testifying.

25 Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

1 CHAIR LUMPE: No. Thank you for coming,
2 Mr. Adams.
3 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Commissioner
4 Schemenauer?
5 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.
6 Thank you for coming.
7 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
8 counsel?
9 (No response.)
10 JUDGE HOPKINS: On behalf of the Public
11 Service Commission, I wish to tell you-all that we
12 find it very encouraging that we have --
13 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: I came in late.
14 JUDGE HOPKINS: All right. If you want to
15 testify, ma'am, come on up here.
16 Raise your right hand.
17 (Witness sworn.)
18 JUDGE HOPKINS: I need you to state and
19 spell your name, and once you get through testifying,
20 would you please come sign this sheet.
21 Go right ahead.
22 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: My name is Carolyn,
23 C-a-r-o-l-y-n, Howard, H-o-w-a-r-d.
24 I oppose, of course, the rate increase
25 because like the other people talked about not having

1 a person to talk to. Now, we had a carbon monoxide
2 incident, and I called about three or four times and
3 finally I just yelled at the girl and they sent
4 someone right over, and we had a carbon monoxide leak
5 that was killing us.

6 And you're talking about an increase, but
7 you're taking jobs away, and I think that's wrong. If
8 you've got a job -- if you're going to raise the
9 increase of our bills, then put the people back here
10 in Missouri and Mexico so we can talk to them.

11 It took us quite awhile health-wise to get
12 over the carbon monoxide, and we're still having some
13 effects from it. It shouldn't -- shouldn't happen
14 that way. That's it.

15 JUDGE HOPKINS: Thank you very much.

16 Tell me what caused this carbon monoxide
17 problem.

18 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: We had -- the house was
19 built in 1950, and it was the old heater, and it had
20 cracked six inches this way and six inches this way
21 (indicated) so every time it was turned on it
22 expanded, and we were getting a slow leak.

23 And I could taste it. I don't know. I
24 don't care what anybody says, but I could taste it.
25 And I came in the house, and I had called and they

1 came out, and they said, Nothing here, and off they
2 go, and -- but I had to beg to have somebody come out.

3 The last time I told the young lady that I
4 did get in St. Louis that I came through my back door,
5 and I said, That's it. There is something wrong here.

6 And we have a small Chihuahua, and she was
7 quite ill, and her hair was turning white. And it was
8 the carbon monoxide poisoning. And I feel that if we
9 had somebody here in Mexico that we could contact
10 instead of St. Louis that it should have been taken
11 care of way before this.

12 Now, you have to beg someone to come out
13 here, and you're asking us for an increase, and you
14 can't pay for the people that are here and they are
15 losing their jobs. I just don't understand that. And
16 there are other people that are going through this. I
17 imagine there are a lot of other people in these old
18 houses that are having the same problem.

19 And they don't understand that -- they are
20 supposed to be -- when there is a senior citizen to
21 call and ask for AmerenUE to come out and look at
22 their appliances, they should be able to do that, but
23 they don't do that anymore. You've got somebody else
24 doing it, but they have to go through all of this --
25 all of the phone calls, and a lot of people don't

1 understand those -- those phone calls and all of this,
2 dial this, and if you don't have a touch tone, sorry.
3 You get that a lot. You have to have a touch tone.
4 Well, a lot of these old people don't have them. So
5 what are they going to do? Die from carbon monoxide
6 poisoning.

7 And I'll tell you one thing: Carbon
8 monoxide poisoning sneaks up on you, and you do have
9 that here in Missouri, because I have read the paper.
10 I've read in the paper where someone has died from
11 carbon monoxide. Well, if they came out and checked
12 on it, then that would be -- you would save a lot of
13 lives. And a lot of people don't know why they are
14 dying. I can tell you why they are dying, but a lot
15 of people can't taste or smell. And I could and I was
16 right.

17 JUDGE HOPKINS: Is it my understanding that
18 you did call AmerenUE and they would not come out and
19 check, or did?

20 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: Right. They did come
21 out and check because my husband called, and they
22 said, Well, sir, we can't come out.

23 And I said, What do you mean they are not
24 coming out? This is terrible.

25 So I got right back on the phone, and I

1 yelled. And I said, You have somebody out here within
2 15 to 20 minutes. I want to know what's going on
3 here. There is something wrong with my gas bill, my
4 gas. And I was right.

5 When we had that taken out, they were
6 shocked, because we had to put -- we had to go out and
7 get a loan to put in a new heater, and if we hadn't
8 done that, we would have died. And we were already
9 exposed to it.

10 And do you know -- do you know what the
11 problem is? When you're exposed to carbon monoxide,
12 you start losing your -- your oxygen in your brain.
13 Therefore you can't concentrate.

14 And this -- and we have a lot of houses in
15 Missouri, in this town, in fact that I know. We even
16 went to one on real estate, and you could smell gas in
17 the house, and they were trying to sell it, you know.
18 I mean, it's ridiculous.

19 When you took all of these people away that
20 came out and checked on these things, so why ask for
21 an increase if you can't pay for the people here for
22 us to be able to go and talk to them and not get on
23 the phone and punch buttons all over the place?

24 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions, Chair Lumpe?

25 CHAIR LUMPE: Just one.

1 If I understood you, you're saying that in
2 the past there used to be regular checks and -- on
3 these and there are no more?

4 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: No.

5 CHAIR LUMPE: I heard that correctly?

6 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: Uh-huh.

7 CHAIR LUMPE: Thank you.

8 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions?

9 COMMISSIONER SCHEMENAUER: No questions.

10 JUDGE HOPKINS: Any questions from the
11 counsel?

12 (No response.)

13 JUDGE HOPKINS: Miss -- ma'am, would you
14 come back, please, and sign this?

15 MS. CAROLYN HOWARD: Oh, yes. You told me
16 to sign that.

17 JUDGE HOPKINS: We don't put anybody on a
18 mailing list. We just -- I want to -- that is for the
19 record.

20 I want to thank everyone for coming out.
21 It's very important that you exercise your First
22 Amendment right, and I want you to -- I'm sorry.

23 It's very important that everyone exercise
24 their First Amendment rights, and we appreciate you
25 coming out. We appreciate you testifying.

1 And the Commission wants me to assure you
2 that this decision has not been made by the Commission
3 yet. All of the Commissioners will read all of this
4 testimony and from the other four local public
5 hearings that we have had. So your testimony is very
6 important, and we appreciate it.

7 This hearing is now closed.

8 Thank you.

9 WHEREUPON, the local public hearing at
10 Mexico, Missouri was concluded.

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	Ms. Barbara Willis		16
4	Ms. Martha Barton		21
	Ms. Ella Reese		22
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