

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
JEFFERSON CITY
December 21, 2000**

CASE NO: GC-2001-137

Office of the Public Counsel
P.O. Box 7800
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Michael C. Pendergast
Laclede Gas Company
720 Olive Street, Room 1520
St. Louis, MO 63101

General Counsel
Missouri Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Enclosed find certified copy of an ORDER in the above-numbered case(s).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Hardy Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

**Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge**

The Staff of the Missouri Public
Service Commission,

Complainant,

v.

Laclede Gas Company,

Respondent.

Case No. GC-2001-137

ORDER SETTING PREHEARING CONFERENCE
AND DIRECTING FILING OF PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE

On September 7, 2000, the Staff of the Missouri Public Service Commission (Staff) filed a formal complaint alleging that Laclede Gas Company (Laclede) failed to notify the Commission of a reportable incident within two hours of discovery and therefore, Laclede failed to comply with Commission rule 4 CSR 240-40.020(4)(A). Staff stated that the incident occurred on Saturday, March 25, 2000, at 416 Boyce Avenue in Farmington, Missouri. Staff stated that the incident involved natural gas escaping from company facilities and igniting within a residence, thereby causing damages in excess of \$10,000. Staff also alleged that Laclede violated or failed to comply with Commission rule 4 CSR 240-40.030(14)(C) by not conducting emergency procedures in a timely manner after initial investigations of the incident scene, which would have provided for public safety and would have protected property. Staff requested that the Commission find Laclede in violation of these Commission rules and authorize the

office of the General Counsel to seek civil penalties in circuit court and order such other relief as the Commission may find just and reasonable.

On September 12, 2000, the Commission served Notice of Complaint on Laclede. On October 12, 2000, Laclede filed its answer denying any violation of the Commission rules in connection with the incident. Laclede requested that the Commission schedule a hearing in this case and upon its conclusion reject the relief requested by Staff in its complaint. On November 2, 2000, Staff filed a responsive pleading to Laclede's answer in which it also requested a hearing be scheduled after November 20, 2000¹.

A prehearing conference and procedural schedule are appropriate because the facts in this matter remain at issue. The parties or their representatives should appear in person at the prehearing conference. The parties or their representatives should be prepared to discuss the nature of any discovery each will conduct and the time necessary to complete discovery and prepare for hearing. The parties should be prepared to name all the witnesses each expects to call at hearing; the number and nature of any exhibits each expects to offer at hearing; and the anticipated length of the hearing.

The parties or their representatives should also be prepared to discuss the current status of settlement negotiations. It is expected that the prehearing conference will provide an opportunity for the parties to further pursue settlement discussions.

¹ Staff noted that Laclede's Commission-ordered responses in Case No. GS-2000-673 were due on this date.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That a prehearing conference shall be held on January 18, 2001, beginning at 10:00 a.m. The prehearing conference shall be held in Suite 305, located in the office of the Missouri Public Service Commission in Jefferson City, Missouri, on the main floor of the Governor Office Building, 200 Madison Street. The Governor Office Building meets the accessibility standards required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If any person needs additional accommodations to participate in the prehearing conference, please call the Missouri Public Service Commission's hotline at 1-800-392-4211 (voice) or 1-800-829-7541 (TDD) prior to the hearing.

2. That the parties shall jointly prepare and file a proposed procedural schedule no later than February 2, 2001.

3. That this order shall become effective on December 30, 2000.

BY THE COMMISSION



**Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge**

(S E A L)

Shelly A. Register, Regulatory Law
Judge, by delegation of authority
pursuant to Section 386.240, RSMo 1994.

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 21st day of December, 2000.

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

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and
I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City,
Missouri, this 21st day of December 2000.

Dale Hardy Roberts

**Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge**

