

Exhibit No.:
Issue: Customer Service
Call Center Reporting
Witness: Deborah A. Bernsen
Sponsoring Party: MoPSC Staff
Type of Exhibit: Direct Testimony
Case No.: ER-2001-672
Date Testimony Prepared: December 6, 2001

MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
UTILITY SERVICES DIVISION

DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF
DEBORAH A. BERNSEN

FILED³
DEC 6 2001
Missouri Public
Service Commission

UTILICORP UNITED INC.
d/b/a MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE

CASE NO. ER-2001-672

Jefferson City, Missouri
December 2001

1 management operating and control systems at utility companies under the Commission's
2 jurisdiction. The name of the Management Services Department was changed to the
3 Engineering and Management Services Department (EMS) in February 2000.

4 Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?

5 A. The purpose of my testimony is to address the continuation of a reporting
6 requirement as ordered by this Commission in the merger application of UtiliCorp and
7 St. Joseph Light & Power (SJLP), Case No. EM-2000-292.

8 Q. What specifically was the reporting requirement?

9 A. The Commission ordered that UtiliCorp provide the Staff with monthly
10 reports pertaining to specific indicators on the reliability of its electric distribution system
11 and other performance indicators from its customer Call Center for both of the
12 Company's operating divisions in the state of Missouri, Missouri Public Service and
13 SJLP. My testimony in that case focused on two indicators from the Call Center, the
14 Abandoned Call Rate (ACR) and Average Speed of Answer (ASA). I will address the
15 Call Center data in my testimony. The distribution reliability data will be addressed by
16 Staff witness Jim Ketter in his direct testimony.

17 Q. What do the ACR and the ASA indicators measure?

18 A. Both indicators assist in measuring the responsiveness of the Call Center
19 to customer inquiries. The Abandoned Call Rate is the percentage of incoming telephone
20 calls that are terminated after being placed in the Call Center network queue. This
21 indicator provides a measure of the number of customers who hang up after waiting for a
22 representative to answer their call. The Average Speed of Answer is the number of
23 seconds that a caller waits before the call is answered by a Call Center employee and

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1 gives an indication of how long customers had to wait before someone answered their
2 call. Both of these measures are used to monitor the effectiveness of the Call Centers in
3 answering customer calls.

4 Q. What did the Staff request the Commission to require from the Company
5 in Case No. EM-2000-292?

6 A. The Staff requested several items within its direct testimony on the subject
7 of service quality. The Staff requested that several programs utilized by St. Joseph Light
8 & Power Company be continued once the merger took place. These programs included
9 the continuation of tracking the level of customer complaints separately for the Missouri
10 Public Service and St. Joseph Light & Power divisions, the continuation of the
11 Company's Service Guarantee Program, and the administration of monthly transactional
12 surveys to customers. The Staff also requested that the Company be required to report
13 staffing levels at its Call Center. Specific objectives were to be developed for the ACR
14 and ASA indicators, with procedures in place to address deviations from the objectives.

15 Q. Did the Commission grant the Staff its request?

16 A. The Commission did order the Company to report both Call Center and
17 distribution reliability data for one year following the merger. The Commission echoed
18 the Staff's belief that a regular reporting of this information by UtiliCorp to the Staff was
19 the most efficient and effective method by which the Staff could fulfill its responsibility
20 to monitor the quality of service UtiliCorp is providing to its customers.

21 Q. Has the Company been meeting its responsibility to provide this
22 information to the Staff in a timely manner?

1 A. The reporting requirement began in January 2001 with the completion of
2 the merger. Overall, the Company has been meeting its reporting responsibility but
3 several months have been reported late. The Staff has received the following reports
4 from the Company:

<u>Period of Data Provided</u>	<u>Date Received</u>
January, 2001	February 15, 2001
February, 2001	March 20, 2001
March & April, 2001	May 31, 2001
May & June, 2001	August 6, 2001
July & August, 2001	September 20, 2001

11 The Company has provided Staff the data in an electronic format. However, at this time,
12 the Staff received the last report on September 20, 2001, which provided July and August
13 data.

14 Q. Does the data provided for year 2001 for the period of January through
15 August indicate any service problems?

16 A. That is difficult to determine. The January through April data for 2001
17 detailed in the table below reflects information from just the Missouri Public Service
18 division at UtiliCorp's Call Center in Raytown, Missouri. As a requirement of the
19 Order, the Company also submitted data on the Call Center at St. Joseph Light & Power
20 until it closed May 1, 2001. When the SJLP Center closed, all customer inquiries were
21 transferred to the Raytown Call Center. The following table illustrates the information
22 received for the Raytown Call Center:

RAYTOWN CALL CENTER

Year 2001 (January-August)

	<u>Month</u>	<u># Calls Offered</u>	<u>#Calls Handled</u>	<u>ACR UCU Method</u>	<u>ACA Seconds</u>
5	January	80,132	75,905	5.3%	55.8
6	February	59,402	58,237	1.9%	19.0
7	March	62,608	61,528	1.7%	15.0
8	April	75,136	71,960	4.2%	37.0
9	May	92,864	85,984	7.4%	67.0
10	June	86,902	81,671	6.0%	54.0
11	July	99,362	94,733	4.7%	44.0
12	August	107,940	103,629	4.0%	36.0

As the table indicates, there was a significant increase in the number of calls received between April to May. The Staff believes that this may have been due to the consolidation of the St. Joseph Light & Power Call Center calls into the Raytown Call Center.

Q. Has the Consumer Services Department of the Commission noted any significant changes in the number and types of complaints/inquiries it has received relating to the Missouri Public Service and St. Joseph Light & Power divisions since 1999?

A. Yes. Consumer Services Staff have continued to track separately the number of complaints associated with the St. Joseph Light & Power and Missouri Public Service divisions. The Staff also reviewed the types of complaints received. The number of complaints that the Consumer Services Staff of the Commission have received are illustrated in the following tables:

COMPLAINTS ON MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE TO MO PSC

<u>Year</u>	<u>Complaints</u>	<u>Customers</u>	<u>Complaints per 1,000 Customers</u>
2000	102	202,042	.5048
2001 (Jan.-Sept.)	116	202,042	.7655*

*reflects the utilization of an annualized figure for complaints

COMPLAINTS ON ST. JOSEPH LIGHT & POWER TO MO PSC

<u>Year</u>	<u>Complaints</u>	<u>Customers</u>	<u>Complaints per 1,000 Customers</u>
2000	12	62,495	.1920
2001 (Jan.-Sept.)	3	62,495	.0640*

*reflects the utilization of an annualized figure for complaints

Q. Do these numbers reflect increases over what the Consumer Services Staff have received previously that may signal potential problems in the future?

A. Yes. For the Missouri Public Service division, the Commission's Consumer Services Staff have recorded increases from 2000 to 2001 in the levels of certain types of complaints. These increases are most significant in the following areas: billing, high bills, estimated billing, delinquent account, outages and refusal of service. It is very important that the Consumer Services Staff continue to monitor the level and types of complaints it receives to determine and pinpoint any specific areas of concern before they become major problems.

Q. Has the Staff made any conclusions regarding the quality of service provided to the UtiliCorp customer since the merger?

A. No. Since the Company is still going through a conversion of methods and processes and with limited data since the merger, it is difficult to make conclusions regarding the quality of service UtiliCorp customers are receiving.

1 Q. For what period of time is the Company required to provide the data on
2 the Call Center performance to the Staff?

3 A. The Commission's order requires the Company to provide the data for one
4 year following the merger.

5 Q. Does the Staff believe this is an adequate time frame with which to make a
6 determination regarding the quality of service that UtiliCorp is providing all of its
7 Missouri customers since the merger?

8 A. No. The Staff believes that at least three years of data is necessary
9 following a merger to determine what effects are occurring to the Company's customers.
10 This time frame allows for systems conversions to be completed, operating synergies to
11 be fully realized, and for the Company to establish its identity with its new customers. It
12 also allows enough time to determine if there are trends of decline or improvement
13 regarding service quality.

14 Q. What is your recommendation concerning the reporting of Call Center
15 indicators?

16 A. The Staff requests that the Commission order UtiliCorp to maintain the
17 Call Center indicators of Abandoned Call Rate and Average Speed of Answer on a
18 monthly basis, and report to the Staff on a quarterly basis, for the calendar years 2002
19 and 2003.

20 Q. Has this approach and time frame for reporting been utilized before with
21 other utility companies under the Commission's jurisdiction?

22 A. Yes. Similar types of reporting and time frames were proposed and
23 agreed to in the mergers of Western Resources, Inc. and Kansas City Power & Light

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1 Company, Case No. EM-97-515; Southern Union and Pennsylvania Enterprises, Inc.,
2 Case No. GM-2000-49; Atmos Energy Corporation and Arkansas Western Gas
3 Company, Case No. GM-2000-312; and Missouri-American Water Company and
4 St. Louis County Water Company and Jefferson City Water Works Company, Case No.
5 WM-2001-309.

6 Q. Has the Commission's reporting requirement represented an undue or
7 tedious task to the Company?

8 A. No. The Company already maintains and utilizes the information of its
9 Call Center operations for management purposes and Staff believes it will continue to do
10 so. The Staff's request, if adopted by the Commission, will simply require the Company
11 to provide the information to Staff over a longer period of time. To further simplify the
12 reporting requirement, the data could be presented monthly and reported quarterly. After
13 a period of an additional two years of reporting, the Staff and Company may mutually
14 agree to recommend to the Commission that it modify or eliminate any of the reporting
15 requirements.

16 Q. Does this conclude your direct testimony?

17 A. Yes, it does.

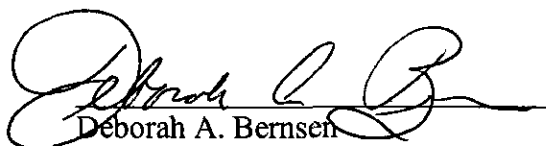
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF MISSOURI

In the Matter of the Application of the Tariff)	
Filing of Missouri Public Service (MPS))	
A Division of UtiliCorp United Inc., to)	Case No. ER-2001-672
Implement a General Rate Increase for Retail)	
Electric Service Provided to Customers in the)	
Missouri Service Area of MPS)	

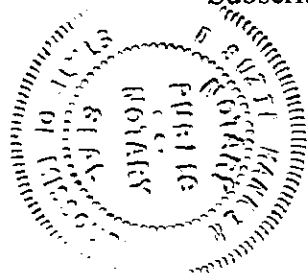
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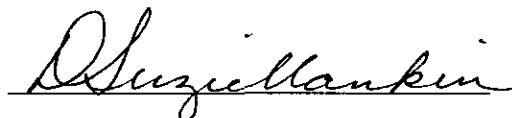
STATE OF MISSOURI)	
)	ss.
COUNTY OF COLE)	

Deborah A. Bernsen, being of lawful age, on her oath states: that she has participated in the preparation of the foregoing Direct Testimony in question and answer form, consisting of 8 pages to be presented in the above case; that the answers in the foregoing Direct Testimony were given by her; that she has knowledge of the matters set forth in such answers; and that such matters are true and correct to the best of her knowledge and belief.


Deborah A. Bernsen

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5th day of December 2001.





D SUZIE MANKIN
NOTARY PUBLIC STATE OF MISSOURI
COLE COUNTY
MY COMMISSION EXP. JUNE 21, 2004