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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Public Hearing

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September 10, 2008

13

Dexter High School Auditorium, Dexter, Missouri

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Volume 5

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In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a AmerenUE's Tariffs) Case No. ER-2008-0318
To Increase Its Annual Revenues)
For Electric Service)

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1 COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

2 Colleen L. Dale, Chief Regulatory Law Judge
3 Commissioner Terry Jarrett

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20 MISSOURI PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION STAFF:

21 Gregg Ochoa, Public Information Coordinator
22 Public Service Commission
23
24
25

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

2 JUDGE DALE: Welcome. We are here
3 tonight, September 10, 2008, in the matter of Union Electric
4 Company, d/b/a AmerenUE's request for increased annual
5 revenues, Case No. ER-2008-0318. This is a local public
6 hearing at which members of the public may come and give us
7 any remarks that they wish to, and then Commissioner Jarrett
8 may have some questions.

9 Gregg, will you call the first witness,
10 please.

11 MR. OCHOA: Judge Dale, do you want to
12 do some appearances from counsel?

13 JUDGE DALE: Oh, okay, sure. Who's
14 there?

15 MR. BYRNE: Your Honor, I'm Tom Byrne,
16 representing AmerenUE. My address is 1901 Chouteau Avenue,
17 St. Louis, Missouri 63103.

18 JUDGE DALE: Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

19 MR. BYRNE: Thank you.

20 MR. MILLS: Lewis Mills on behalf of
21 the Office of the Public Counsel, and my address is Post
22 Office Box 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

23 JUDGE DALE: Thank you. Staff?

24 MR. FREY: Dennis L. Frey, representing
25 the staff in the Missouri Public Service Commission, Post

1 Office Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

2 JUDGE DALE: Is there anyone else who
3 wishes to enter an appearance?

4 MR. MILLS: No.

5 MR. BYRNE: No.

6 JUDGE DALE: Is there any other matter
7 that I need to discuss before we call the first witness?

8 MR. MILLS: No.

9 MR. BYRNE: No.

10 JUDGE DALE: Okay. Introduce the first
11 witness.

12 MR. OCHOA: We've got Margieann
13 Leaming.

14 MS. LEAMING: M-A-R-G-I-E-A-N-N
15 L-E-A-M-I-N-G.

16 MR. OCHOA: Sorry about that, Judge.

17 JUDGE DALE: That's okay. All right.
18 Go ahead, Mrs. Leaming.

19 MS. LEAMING: I --

20 JUDGE DALE: Oh, would you please raise
21 your right hand.

22 (Thereupon, Witness Leaming was sworn on
23 her oath by Judge Dale.)

24 Thank you. Go ahead and give us your remarks.

25 MS. LEAMING: Well, I'm 66 years old.

1 I own -- I'm buying my own house, and I'm having trouble
2 paying bills because I'm on a fixed income. I have gone out
3 and got a part-time job. I can't afford any more increases,
4 and I know they're coming.

5 It -- it bothers me that there's no help for
6 senior citizens. When they're on fixed incomes, and they
7 can't pay their bills, they feel like they don't have a
8 recourse. They don't have any way to help themselves.

9 And I have called Ameren several times to
10 discuss my bill with them, and finally got so frustrated
11 that I just said shut it off. And I know they can't, but it
12 just -- I have no power over how much they want to charge --
13 how much you want to charge me and how much I can pay
14 because of the fixed income. And I don't think that that's
15 right.

16 I think that there are a lot of people that
17 can afford more, but people on fixed incomes can't. They
18 don't get the increases like you do, Ameren does, and I
19 think that needs to be taken into account when the increases
20 -- when you ask for an increase.

21 And I thank you for listening to me.

22 JUDGE DALE: Thank you. Commissioner
23 Jarrett, any questions?

24 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Yes. My name is
25 Terry Jarrett. I'm one of the five Commissioners of the

1 Public Service Commission. I want to thank you for your
2 testimony, and I have a couple of questions.

3 How long have you been a customer of Ameren's?

4 MS. LEAMING: I have been in Dexter,
5 Missouri for 11 years, at 2 different places.

6 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: And have you
7 ever had any problems -- any problems in service?

8 MS. LEAMING: No, I haven't.

9 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: And you said you
10 talked with the company several times about your bill. What
11 was the nature of your conversations?

12 MS. LEAMING: The problem is -- is that
13 I have only \$200 a month I can pay for my bill, and my bill
14 is more than that. And I struggle to pay that, and that's
15 what that --

16 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Well --

17 MS. LEAMING: That's what we discussed.

18 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: When you talked
19 with the service folks there at Ameren, were they courtesy
20 and professional, and did they try to help you?

21 MS. LEAMING: Yes, they did. They --
22 they really tried. I have to give them that. I mean, it's
23 not their fault, and they're in a hard spot trying to
24 explain all this to me and follow their rules, and I know
25 that. And I try to keep my temper under control when I

1 call, which isn't always easy.

2 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Well, anyway, I
3 don't have any further questions. But thank you very much,
4 ma'am, for your testimony. It's very important, and we will
5 consider it.

6 MS. LEAMING: Thank you.

7 JUDGE DALE: Thank you, Mrs. Leaming.

8 MR. OCHOA: The next witness is Mr. Ken
9 Jackson.

10 MR. JACKSON: Hello.

11 JUDGE DALE: Good evening, Mr. Jackson.

12 Would you please raise your right hand.

13 (Thereupon, Witness Jackson was sworn on
14 his oath by Judge Dale.)

15 Thank you. Please go ahead and give your
16 remarks.

17 MR. JACKSON: Well, I -- I'm the
18 superintendent of schools here in Dexter. And first of all,
19 I want to say that we've been well served by Ameren, and
20 they are good neighbors to our school district. And when we
21 have an issue, they're quick to resolve it, and I have many
22 friends that work with Ameren. So I'm not -- just not here
23 to come and complain about the quality of service, because
24 it's been good.

25 I guess my concern is when I heard about the

1 opportunity to present tonight, the 12.1 percent increase,
2 our -- our district currently pays 20 to 25 thousand dollars
3 a month to Ameren. And it's -- it's a difficult time in
4 this area, as well as the rest of the state, with increasing
5 costs in other areas. We also have a fairly substantial gas
6 bill for the district, so our total bill is 350 to 400
7 thousand dollars per year that we're spending on utilities.

8 And a 12 percent on 300,000 would be \$36,000.
9 That's one less teacher that I'll be able to employ for the
10 next school year, and you pass that along with increased
11 transportation and fuel costs, food costs, delivery costs go
12 up for us every day, health insurance cost increasing, it's
13 just getting more -- obviously more and more difficult.

14 And I realize their costs go up too. They provide
15 a service as well. So I'm not sure what the answer is, but
16 at a time like this, to be looking at a double-digit
17 increase in the rates, it's really going to -- it's going to
18 be a tremendous burden. We're losing industry in this area.

19 On the news last night, we have some
20 well-established businesses that are going out. And I know
21 it's tough on people right now. We see our free and reduced
22 lunch rates going up. As a matter of fact, we have 90
23 students more in our district this year than the same time
24 last year that are qualifying for free and/or reduced
25 lunches.

1 So I -- I just say that because it's a
2 difficult time, and, you know, the margin -- the operating
3 margin is getting slimmer and slimmer it seems like, and I'm
4 -- while I'm not having a difficult time personally paying
5 my bills, there are many families in our community who are.
6 And I hate to see them see a double-digit increase in their
7 rates.

8 JUDGE DALE: Thank you. Could you tell
9 me 90 out of how many students?

10 MR. JACKSON: We have approximately
11 2,000 students in our district. Our free and reduced lunch
12 rate, most years, runs from 45 to 47 percent. That's about
13 what it was last year K through 12, and we have an addition-
14 -- I just learned this information yesterday. We have an
15 additional 90 students that have qualified for free or
16 reduced this year as compared to last.

17 JUDGE DALE: Thank you.

18 MR. JACKSON: Thank you.

19 JUDGE DALE: Commissioner Jarrett?

20 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Mr. Jackson.

21 JUDGE DALE: Mr. Jackson?

22 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Commissioner
24 Jarrett. I just had a couple of questions. I thank you for
25 your testimony.

1 You just gave us that there were a couple of
2 companies that are leaving the area, I believe?

3 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Do you know the
5 names of those companies?

6 MR. JACKSON: I do. One of them I
7 can't -- it's not public knowledge yet, so I can't say that.
8 The -- the other is Gale --

9 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Okay.

10 MR. JACKSON: Galemore Motors in
11 Charleston, Missouri. It's -- it's a car dealership that's
12 been there 52 years. They've had four dealerships, and it
13 was announced in the news last night they're closing, and
14 it's typical of what we're seeing in our community down here
15 right now.

16 And we're close to the Boot Hill, and the
17 median family income is not real substantial, and it was
18 testified earlier tonight about people on a fixed income.
19 We're a rural area, a lot of retirees, and it's a pretty
20 tough time for people in this area.

21 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Did they give a
22 reason why they were leaving; was it financial, --

23 MR. JACKSON: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: -- lack of
25 sales?

1 MR. JACKSON: Yeah, it's a sign of the
2 economy I believe, poor sales and, you know, people are just
3 making do with what they have as opposed to buying new
4 vehicles right now.

5 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Mr. Jackson, we
6 thank you for your testimony tonight. I appreciate it.

7 MR. JACKSON: You're welcome.

8 MR. OCHOA: Judge Dale, we've got
9 another witness, Mr. Jeff Dudley.

10 MR. DUDLEY: Hello. How are you today?

11 JUDGE DALE: I'm good. Mr. Dudley,
12 could you spell your last name for me, please.

13 MR. DUDLEY: D-U-D-L-E-Y.

14 JUDGE DALE: Thank you. I just wanted
15 to make sure I heard it correctly. Would you please raise
16 your right hand.

17 (Thereupon, Witness Dudley was sworn on
18 his oath by Judge Dale.)

19 Thank you. Please give your remarks.

20 MR. DUDLEY: Well, I'm late. I just
21 got here. I'm not for sure what -- what's really going on.
22 They just -- I walked in the door, and they asked me to come
23 up here.

24 What my statement is I have some issues with
25 our rates being raised. Whenever I first bought my house,

1 they wouldn't turn my gas on because they said I didn't have
2 a double-walled pipe going through my vent -- through my
3 ceiling. And I assured them that I did, asked them to go up
4 to the attic they could look at it, where it's coming out
5 going through the roof.

6 They declined to do that, said they wasn't
7 going to walk on my rafters, and I had to strip out my
8 sheetrock to prove to them that I had my gas, that I had
9 double-walled pipes. And then after that, after I stripped
10 it down, they sent me a bill for that month for \$8 and 90
11 something cents, and they hadn't even turned my gas on for
12 gas.

13 And my other issue is all I have is a hot
14 water heater which is natural gas, and it's running me right
15 at 59 to 60 something dollars a month. My brother, all he
16 has is hot water down here on the east end of town, eastern
17 side of town, and his is only \$29. And I'd like to find out
18 what that -- you know, what that is, what the issue is
19 there.

20 JUDGE DALE: Is there -- does Mr. Ochoa
21 have a consumer representative there, a Consumer Services
22 representative?

23 MR. OCHOA: Yes.

24 MR. DUDLEY: Yes, ma'am.

25 JUDGE DALE: After you finish

1 testifying, you can talk to that person, and they may be
2 able to answer some of your questions about the differences
3 in hot water heaters and how to find out what exactly the
4 difference is.

5 MR. DUDLEY: Okay.

6 JUDGE DALE: Do you have anything else
7 you want to say?

8 MR. DUDLEY: I oppose the rate
9 increase.

10 JUDGE DALE: Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. DUDLEY: Thank you.

12 JUDGE DALE: Commissioner Jarrett, do
13 you have questions?

14 COMMISSIONER JARRETT: Mr. Dudley,
15 Commissioner Jarrett. I don't have any questions, but I do
16 thank you for your testimony this evening.

17 MR. DUDLEY: Okay. Thank you.

18 JUDGE DALE: Thank you, Mr. Dudley.

19 MR. OCHOA: Judge Dale, that's the last
20 person that has signed up or wants to testify.

21 JUDGE DALE: Is there anyone else who
22 wishes to testify who hasn't signed up?

23 MR. OCHOA: No, your Honor. That's it.

24 JUDGE DALE: Well, I thank you very
25 much. We appreciate all of you coming out and telling us

1 your opinion about this. The Commission does take these
2 hearings very seriously, and there are other issues that
3 will have to be considered.

4 And with that, we'll be off record. Good
5 night.

6 (WHEREIN, the hearing was concluded at
7 6:14 p.m.)

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I N D E X		
	WITNESS NAME	PAGE
	Margieann Leaming	4
	Ken Jackson	7
	Jeff Dudley	11

1	EXHIBITS
2	None
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