

FILED³

DEC 27 2018

Missouri Public
Service Commission

Case No. GC-2017-0348

David Apted, Complainant

v.

Laclede Gas Company, Respondent

Exhibit 100

Staff's Investigation Report

Staff Exhibit No. 100
Date 12-10-18 Reporter BJB
File No. _____

WHEREFORE, Staff submits its *Report*.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Marcella L. Forck

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that true and correct copies of the foregoing were served electronically to all counsel of record this 15th day of August, 2017.

/s/ Marcella L. Forck

REPORT OF THE STAFF

TO: Missouri Public Service Commission Official Case File
Case No. GC-2017-0348, Apted vs. Laclede Gas Company, d/b/a Laclede

FROM: Joe Roling, Regulatory Economist, Tariff/Rate Design Unit, Operational
Analysis Department

/s/ Robin Kliethermes/August 15, 2017 /s/ Marcella Forck/August 15, 2017
Tariff/Rate Design Manager/Date Staff Counsel's Office/Date

DATE: August 10, 2017

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This complaint concerns a disputed bill issued by Laclede Gas Company, d/b/a Laclede ("Laclede" or "Company") on the Residential account of David Apted ("Complainant"), which includes three apartment units. Complainant indicated that the dispute is concerning a \$1950.94 bill balance.

On June 23, 2017, Mr. David Apted filed this formal complaint with the Commission.

Complainant is requesting the following relief:

Complainant would like the Public Service Commission to force Laclede Gas to do a formal high bill investigation, would like gas meters tested and a Spreadsheet review of Laclede Gas bills from the previous 10 Years. Additionally would like an explanation as to how 3 separate apartments with different floor plans and different appliances can run the exact number of therms in a month.

On June 26, 2017, Staff was ordered to investigate this complaint and file a report no later than August 15, 2017. Staff's investigation has not uncovered any violation by the Company of any applicable statutes, Commission rules, or Commission-approved Company tariffs related to this complaint.

STAFF FINDINGS

Staff completed a thorough investigation of Mr. Apted's formal complaint. Based on the information Staff has received and reviewed during its investigation of this formal complaint, the Company has not violated a tariff or Commission Rule. Staff has also

determined that Laclede has already completed the actions complainant is requesting for relief.

On May 11, 2017, Mr. Apted filed an informal complaint with Case no. C20170762. As part of the informal complaint process, the Company provided a report stating that on February 15, 2017, Mr. Apted requested a high bill investigation which prompted a meter test. The Company reported that a meter test was completed on February 17, 2017. There is no defined tariff or Commission rule procedure for exactly what is entailed in a high bill investigation.

The technician noted there were no problems with the meters or the Automated Meter Reading (AMR). Based on the information provided by the Company in Mr. Apted's informal complaint, Laclede tests meters at 100% (open rate) and 20% (check rate) of the capacity of the meter. This is called a two-point check since Laclede is looking at two different flow rates. The meter must be accurate within +/-2% at each of these rates and within +/-2% accuracy of each other to be considered a properly operating meter. All meters are tested with equipment which is traceable to the National Bureau of Standards and Testing and are tested in a climate controlled room. In order to test the meters, the Company removed the old meters and replaced them with different meters on February 17, 2017. Units A and C meters had previously been replaced in 1986, while unit B was previously changed in 1993. The results of the meter test of all three of the old meters to determine whether they had been working properly during the billing period in dispute are below.¹

Unit A meter # (000918701) was condemned due to excess water in the meter.²

Unit B meter # (001089655)
Tested 4/1/17 by emp. #00420
Prover # XU-3558
Open 99.6
Check 98.5
PASSED

Unit C meter # (000918628)
Tested 4/1/17 by emp. #00724
Prover # XU-3558
Open 99.6
Check 98.5
PASSED

¹ Tariff Sheet No.R-8 of Laclede's currently effective tariffs and in accordance with Commission Rule 4 CSR 240-10.030 states that the Company will provide a meter test free of charge at the request of the customer provided that only one test is conducted with one a 12-month time frame, unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. Tariff Sheet No. 31-a provides that an additional meter test if requested more than once in a 12-month timeframe by a customer will cost \$75 per meter unless the meter is proved to be inaccurate in excess of 2%.

² The Company explained that this happens when the meters are either kept outside or in the bed of a truck with caps and was caused by transporting the meter once removed. The technician did not note any water in the meter at the time of removal from unit A.

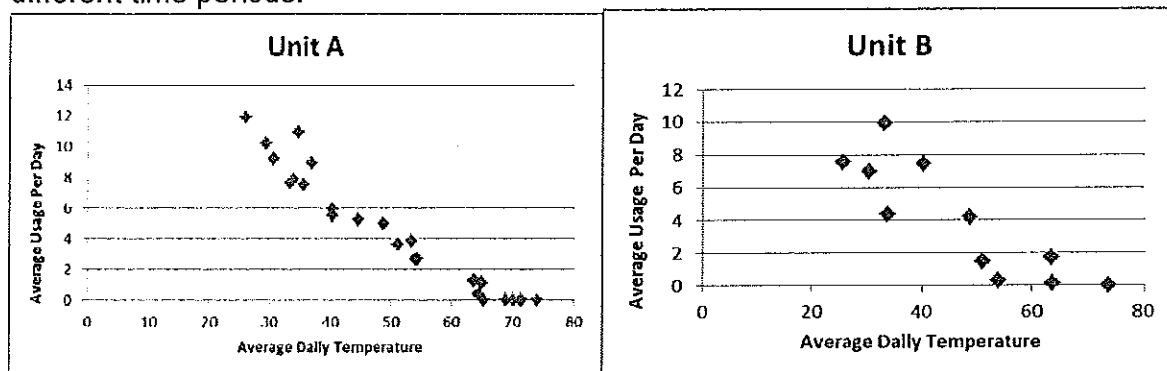
On July 26, 2017 the Company filed its answer to this formal complaint and provided historical winter season usage from December 2013 to current for all three of the apartment units.

1736 Nicolson-Unit A				
	Previous Customer 2013-2014	Previous Customer 2014-2015	Previous Customer 2015-2016	Mr. Apted 2016-2017
Dec.-Jan.	286	339	184	237
Jan.-Feb.	333	251	211	155
Feb.-Mar.	244	316	168	113
Mar.-Apr.	150	80	116	81
Apr.-May	35	12	32	38

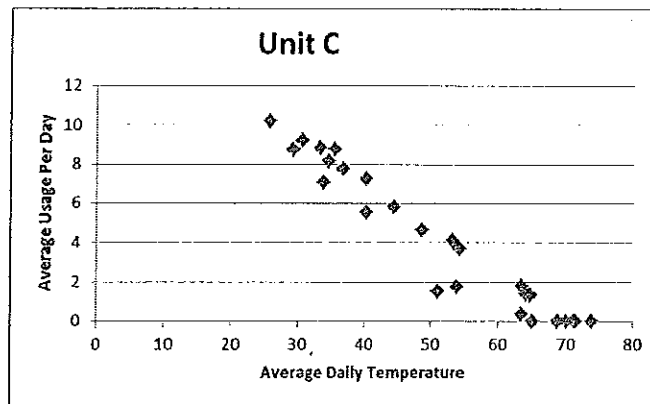
1736 Nicolson-Unit B				
	Previous Customer 2013-2014	Previous Customer 2014-2015	Previous Customer 2015-2016	Mr. Apted 2016-2017
Dec.-Jan.	217	No service	No Service	348
Jan.-Feb.	212	No service	No Service	208
Feb.-Mar.	135	No service	No Service	46
Mar.-Apr.	126	No service	No Service	9
Apr.-May	50	No service	No Service	4

1736 Nicolson-Unit C				
	Previous Customer 2013-2014	Previous Customer 2014-2015	Previous Customer 2015-2016	Mr. Apted 2016-2017
Dec.-Jan.	286	253	226	275
Jan.-Feb.	286	217	245	155
Feb.-Mar.	220	272	187	48
Mar.-Apr.	140	111	123	53
Apr.-May	53	41	40	11

Below, Staff graphed the above usage against the average daily temperature for the different time periods.³



³ For purposes of this analysis, Staff assumed that the meter read dates for the months were the same across the time periods.



As shown in the charts, as the temperature increases, average usage per day decreases all the way to zero and the relationship is the same for all time periods. This is consistent with what Staff would expect to see during the heating season and into the spring/summer season.

The complainant states that units B and C are unoccupied. However, the meters are still registering usage. The Company completed a test of all three meters on February 17, 2017, which showed the meters were working properly.

Tariff Sheet No.R-10 states that:

All pipe and equipment beyond Company's meter and accessories thereto, necessary to utilize service furnished by Company, shall be installed by and belong to the customer, or owner, and must be maintained at all times in safe operating conditions and at his expense. The customer, or owner, shall bring his piping to a point for connection to company's meter or meters at a location satisfactory to company which provides easy access to the meter or meters. Any change of location of service line or meter requested by the customer shall be done by Company according to the charges set forth on Sheet No. 31.

Tariff Sheet R-10a further states that:

Upon written request of the customer, or owner, Company will at its convenience make repairs to, replacements of, or clear obstructions in lines of the customer, or owner, and may charge the customer, or owner, for such labor and material as is necessary to place his lines in good operating condition.

Although Mr. Apted did not specify that he wanted the requested investigation to focus on the building, which is on the side of the meter for which he is responsible, that appears to be the investigation he is seeking. The meters were tested and replaced months before the formal complaint was initiated, so Staff concluded it is unlikely he wants them tested again in response to this complaint. In Laclede's answer to the complaint filed on July 26th, Laclede agrees to conduct another high bill investigation for the complainant that will focus on the building in accordance with Tariff Sheet R-10a, since the meters have recently been tested. Laclede requests that the customer pay

\$975, which is half of the disputed amount, prior to Laclede conducting the second investigation.

CONCLUSION

Based upon Staff's review of information provided by the Company and Complainant regarding the formal complaint, Staff has determined that:

1. the Company performed a meter test on February 17, 2017 that found the meters to be working properly,
2. the Company provided four (4) years of historical usage,
3. units A, B, and C do not use the same level of usage in every month.

Based on the historical usage provided for apartment units A, B, and C, the usage that is being reported is not unreasonable compared to prior usage and a comparison of average daily usage to average daily temperature for the specific time periods. Since the apartment units had previous owners and tenants prior to December 2016, a comparison of ten (10) years of historical data, as requested by the complainant, is not more applicable than the time period Laclede already provided.

Staff's investigation has not uncovered any violation by the Company of any statutes, Commission rules, or Commission-approved Company tariffs related to this complaint.

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

David Apted,)	
)	
Complainant,)	
)	
	v.)	<u>File No. GC-2017-0348</u>
)	
Laclede Gas Company,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

AFFIDAVIT

State of Missouri)
) ss.
County of Cole)

COMES NOW Joseph P. Roling and on his oath declares that he is of sound mind and lawful age; that he contributed to the attached *Investigation Report*; and that the same is true and correct according to his best knowledge and belief.

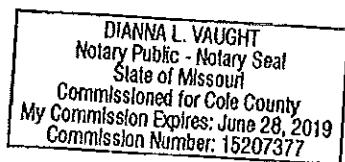
Further the Affiant sayeth not.




Joseph P. Roling

JURAT

Subscribed and sworn before me, a duly constituted and authorized Notary Public, in and for the County of Cole, State of Missouri, at my office in Jefferson City, on this 15th day of August, 2017.





NOTARY PUBLIC