

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

Norman Harrold,)	
)	
Complainant,)	
)	
v.)	<u>Case No. GC-2007-0311</u>
)	
Laclede Gas Company,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

NOTICE ACKNOWLEDGING FILING OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Issue Date: June 27, 2007

On February 22, 2007,¹ Norman Harrold filed a formal complaint against Laclede Gas Company (“Laclede”) in which he disputed the amount of an estimated gas bill rendered by Laclede. The following day, the Commission ordered its Staff to commence an investigation of Mr. Harrold’s formal complaint and to file a report concerning the results of its investigation no later than three weeks after Laclede filed its answer to the complaint. After requesting and being granted four extensions of time to facilitate settlement negotiations between Mr. Harrold and Laclede, which apparently culminated in a settlement offer from Laclede that was declined by Mr. Harrold, Staff filed its report on June 26, thereby satisfying the Commission’s Order Directing Staff to Investigate and File a Report dated February 23.

¹ All dates specified in this order refer to the calendar year 2007.

Among other things, the report indicated that in Staff's view, both Mr. Harrold and Laclede "have added to the confusion [surrounding the estimated bill in dispute] and should take a share of responsibility for the events resulting in this complaint." Accordingly, Staff recommended that Mr. Harrold and Laclede "continue [to] discuss the amount of gas usage during the re-bill period to find a solution that is acceptable to both." Staff further recommended that the Commission schedule a prehearing conference and set a date for hearing, but only if they are unable to reach a settlement within thirty days.

As the Commission has previously noted in this case, "the law favors settlements and compromises based upon valid considerations."² For this reason, and because the Commission firmly believes it is in the best interest of all parties to make one final attempt to settle this case before they incur the time, expense, and uncertainty of a formal evidentiary hearing, the Commission hereby notifies Mr. Harrold and Laclede that they have until July 27 to settle this matter by mutual agreement.

(S E A L)

BY THE COMMISSION



Colleen M. Dale
Secretary

Dated at Jefferson City, Missouri,
on this 27th day of June, 2007.

Lane, Regulatory Law Judge

² *Miners' & Farmers' Bank of Aurora v. American Bonding Co.*, 186 S.W. 1139, 1140 (Mo. App. S.D. 1916). See also *Sanger v. Yellow Cab Co.*, 486 S.W.2d 477, 481 (Mo. banc 1972) (internal quotation marks omitted) ("The law favors settlements fairly made.")