

1 STATE OF MISSOURI
2 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
3
4 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
5 Public Hearing
6 January 10, 2007
7 Kirksville and Hayti, Missouri
8 Volume 9

9 In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a AmerenUE for)
10 Authority to File Tariffs)
Increasing Rates for Electric) Case No. ER-2007-0002
11 Service Provided to Customers in)
the Company's Missouri Service)
12 Area)

13 In the Matter of Union Electric)
Company d/b/a AmerenUE for)
14 Authority to File Tariffs)
Increasing Rates for Natural Gas) Case No. GR-2007-0003
15 Service Provided to Customers in)
The Company's Missouri Service)
16 Area)

17 RONALD D. PRIDGIN, Presiding,
18 REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

19 CONNIE MURRAY,
STEVE GAW,
20 ROBERT M. CLAYTON III
LINWARD "LIN" APPLING,
21 COMMISSIONERS.

22
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5 FOR: Office of the Public Counsel
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Good evening. The Missouri
3 Public Service Commission has set this time for a local
4 public hearing in Cases No. ER-2007-0002 and GR-2007-0003.
5 The Missouri Public Service Commission regulates the rates
6 charged by investor-owned utility companies in Missouri to
7 ensure that those rates are just and reasonable. The
8 Commission also regulates the quality of service and
9 safety of the operations of investor-owned utilities.

10 The Commission is made up of five
11 Commissioners, four of whom are here this evening. They
12 are appointed by the Governor to fixed terms and confirmed
13 by the Senate. The Commissioners employ a staff of
14 engineers, accountants, attorneys, financial analysts and
15 other specialists in the field of utility regulation.

16 I am Ron Pridgin. I'm a Regulatory law
17 Judge for the Commission, and I will preside over these
18 hearings. With me this evening are Commissioners Connie
19 Murray, Lin Appling, Robert Clayton and Steve Gaw.

20 This is an official hearing of the Missouri
21 Public Service Commissioner, and the statements and
22 testimony of witnesses will be recorded by the court
23 reporter and must be given under oath. All of the
24 Commissioners will have the chance to read all of your
25 remarks.

1 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to hear
2 from you. The company will not present witnesses and will
3 not answer questions during the hearing. This is your
4 chance to testify, and your remarks will be made a part of
5 the official record of this case.

6 I will call the name of each witness who
7 has signed up to speak. When your name is called, please
8 come forward to the witness area and please spell your
9 name for the court reporter so she can put it in the
10 record correctly. I will ask you a few preliminary
11 questions such as your name and your address, and then you
12 can make your statement. And when you are done, there may
13 be questions from the Commissioners or from myself.
14 Please do not leave the witness area until excused.

15 If a previous speaker has already made the
16 points you wanted to make, you may simply state that you
17 agree with what somebody previously said. There may be
18 someone tonight who wishes to testify but for religious
19 reasons cannot take an oath. If so, please let me know
20 that, and I will ask your testimony to be affirmed instead
21 of sworn.

22 Does anyone have any questions about
23 tonight's procedure?

24 (No response.)

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Hearing none,

1 we will begin the public hearing in Cases No. ER-2007-002
2 and GR-2007-003. Let me see if we have any counsel that
3 wish to make entries of appearance in Kirksville, please.

4 MR. MILLS: Here in Kirksville, my name is
5 Lewis Mills. My address is Post Office Box 2230,
6 Jefferson City, Missouri 65102. I'm appearing on behalf
7 of the Office of the Public Counsel and the public. I
8 don't believe there are any other attorneys present here
9 in Kirksville.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Mills, thank you. Any
11 counsel in Hayti?

12 MS. KREMER: No, there is not.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. And I
14 don't believe I see any counsel in the room in Jefferson
15 City.

16 Ms. Kremer, do you have the witness list,
17 or Ms. Mantle?

18 MS. KREMER: I do, yes.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Is the first
20 witness ready?

21 MS. KREMER: Billy Previtt.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If we could adjust the
23 camera just a little bit to try to get the witness.
24 Wonderful. Thank you. Thank you very much. All right.
25 Is this Mr. Previtt? Is that correct, sir?

1 MR. PREVITT: Yes, sir.

2 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you'd raise your right
3 hand to be sworn, please.

4 (Witness sworn.)

5 BILLY PREVITT testified as follows:

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
7 If you would, please state your name for the record and
8 spell your last name for the court reporter.

9 MR. PREVITT: My name is Billy Previtt,
10 P-r-e-v, like in Victor, i-t-t.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please,
12 sir?

13 MR. PREVITT: 9209 North Walnut, Steele,
14 Missouri.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a customer of
16 AmerenUE?

17 MR. PREVITT: Yes, I am.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statements
19 you have for the Commission, sir?

20 MR. PREVITT: I'm also an alderman on the
21 city council of Steele, Missouri, and I would like to say
22 that I'm not against the rate increase, a small rate
23 increase, not an enormous one, if they improve service. I
24 believe that we have the very worst service of any power
25 company that I have ever dealt with in my life.

1 The lights are continually going off and
2 on, and you call in and they'll say, I can tell you how
3 many times your lights has been off. Your meter calls in.
4 But your meter don't call in if the lights go off for two
5 minutes or three minutes four times a day, and you have to
6 reset everything in your house. You have to replace --
7 I've replaced the furnace in the last three years, and
8 they attribute it to the power surge jumping the
9 transformer burning the furnace up.

10 Since I put the new furnace in, I have put
11 four switch circuit boards in it, and that is attributed
12 to their power surges. I have replaced numerous, three or
13 four answering machines, two microwaves, and all this has
14 been attributed to the power surges jumping the
15 transformers when the lights come back on. One TV.
16 And they say it's an act of God.

17 And when you call somebody, they're not
18 cordial. They tell you, I know how many times your
19 light's out. Your meter's calling me. The meter may call
20 in, but I'm sure it won't call in if they just on and off,
21 on and off. And they say, well, we can't do anything
22 about squirrels. Well, they make a squirrel guard for
23 transformers.

24 And then they say, well, we can't cut
25 trees. Your neighbor's going to pull a shotgun on us for

1 cutting trees. Well, it's my understanding it's like the
2 city, that you have an easement under your power lines and
3 you can trim a tree, and I know they're trying to save
4 money by not trimming trees.

5 And we've got streetlights out in Steele,
6 Missouri, and I faxed in one. I stood there and watched
7 the city clerk fax it in two weeks ago, and that
8 streetlight is still out, and we have numerous
9 streetlights out in Steele that's been out for the last
10 month. And they're not very good and not many -- not many
11 of them to start with, and we haven't been able to get any
12 service. They're nice people, but we can't get -- we
13 can't get service.

14 They started back to helping the schools a
15 little bit. They weren't helping the schools any. All
16 power companies have always helped schools around their
17 ball fields with lights and stuff like that, and for a
18 long time AmerenUE wouldn't. They didn't give us any
19 help. But now they have started back to helping the
20 students some.

21 And as far as servicemen living close, most
22 of the time when our lights go out, we've got a man from
23 Mollett, and that's -- we don't have anybody close to come
24 and service our electricity problems unless they have just
25 started recently. That's all I have to say.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Previtt,
2 thank you very much, sir. The Commissioners may have some
3 questions for you, so if you'll give me just a moment.
4 Commissioner Murray?

5 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Good evening,
6 Mr. Previtt. You said that you had replaced several
7 things, and you said that the replacements were attributed
8 to power surges. Did you have an electrician or an
9 appliance repairman tell you that?

10 MR. PREVITT: Yes, I did. Woody's Electric
11 in Steele, Missouri, he's replaced the circuit boards in
12 the furnace since I've put in a new furnace and central
13 air together.

14 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I'm sorry. Who did
15 you say told you that it was caused by power surges?

16 MR. PREVITT: Yes. Woody's Electric in
17 Steele, Missouri.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And what about the
19 other appliances that you mentioned, the microwaves, the
20 TV?

21 MR. PREVITT: Well, I wasn't having any
22 trouble 'til the lights started going off and on.

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. And how
24 often -- how frequently would you say that you have power
25 surges?

1 MR. PREVITT: Power surges, I have --
2 yesterday they were off twice, and they weren't off for a
3 long period of time, but if they're off for two or three
4 minutes, then when it comes back on, you've got a power
5 surge.

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And how did you
7 realize they were off? Was something blinking?

8 MR. PREVITT: The satellite's messed up.
9 You have to reset your satellite. You have to reset your
10 answering machine. Everything is messed up.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: In a month's period
12 of time, how frequently would you estimate that you have
13 to reset those things?

14 MR. PREVITT: Sometimes five or six times,
15 sometimes ten times. If the wind blows, a lot of times.

16 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Is there ever a month
17 that you don't have to do that during that time period?

18 MR. PREVITT: There has not been a single
19 month in five years that I haven't had to set that.

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. Thank you very
21 much.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Murray, thank
23 you. Commissioner Gaw?

24 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you. Commissioner
25 Murray asked several questions that I think were very

1 good. I wanted to ask you about the tree trimming. Can
2 you give me an idea about what you see down there
3 regarding the trimming of trees by Ameren?

4 MR. PREVITT: Well, I haven't seen very
5 much. About two years ago we had a big problem down
6 there. We had our lights out. We had a storm and had
7 some damage, and they came down and they trimmed trees
8 down Cooter Road, and they trimmed some trees on 61 on
9 North Walnut coming down the highway.

10 But what I see as the main problem with
11 trees in Steele, Missouri, there's an alley behind my
12 house that runs down along with Seminole Drive, and the
13 trees are up in the -- the tree limbs are in the -- a lot
14 of tree limbs are up in the wires there, and they need to
15 go down through that alley and trim those trees. And if
16 they would cut the limbs out of the trees, out of the
17 lines, I believe they would cure a lot of their problems
18 down there.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: So is that a fairly
20 consistent problem that you see around that area?

21 MR. PREVITT: I believe it is. I believe
22 it is. I think we just need service down there. If we
23 could get some service, I believe, on our power lines and
24 poles, I believe that we would be in pretty good shape.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Now, have you

1 noticed anything about the infrastructure itself, the
2 poles and the wires that concern you?

3 MR. PREVITT: To me, 90 percent of
4 everything we have is wore out.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: Tell me why you say
6 that.

7 MR. PREVITT: Well, I believe we have the
8 most worn out equipment, the most past equipment in the
9 state of Missouri there.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

11 MR. PREVITT: That's my opinion, just from
12 looking at it. I was born and raised in Steele, Missouri,
13 and I have -- all my life, and I have watched Arco Power
14 come and go. I watched Union Electric come and go. I
15 watched AmerenUE in there. And of all the power
16 companies, I have to say I believe AmerenUE is the very
17 worst one I've ever seen.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: And I want you to give
19 me a little more detail about why you think that. What
20 makes you have that conclusion?

21 MR. PREVITT: If they -- if there's a pole
22 laying down, they'll let it lay there 'til it pulls the
23 wire down before they'll come and put another pole in or
24 pull it up and guy it up, and then you're without
25 electricity. It's just --

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir.

2 MR. PREVITT: I just believe it's the worst
3 system in the world.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Have you -- you probably
5 live around some people down there that have got service
6 from the coops?

7 MR. PREVITT: I was on the coops
8 electricity for about three or four years, and that's the
9 best service I ever had.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: So comparing the two
11 services, I think you've already answered my question, but
12 how would you compare them?

13 MR. PREVITT: If I could get on the coop
14 tomorrow, I would do it.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is that because -- is
16 that because of the rates they charge or the service they
17 provide or both?

18 MR. PREVITT: It's just it's a lot better
19 service. My son is on REA in Benton, Missouri. He's been
20 out there for 12 years, and I can honestly say I bet his
21 lights haven't been off 12 times in 12 years.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Now -- go ahead. I'm
23 sorry.

24 MR. PREVITT: There's been some pretty good
25 storms come through.

1 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. Now, in
2 regard to the -- when you call about these outages, I
3 assume you've called. What kind of response do you get
4 from Ameren about it?

5 MR. PREVITT: You get a recording first
6 that says, we're aware of the power outage. But if you go
7 far enough, you can talk to a person, and I did talk to a
8 person, and he kind of snickered at me and he said -- he
9 said, how many times have your lights been out? I told
10 him. He said, I can tell you how many times your lights
11 have been out. Your meter calls in every time you're out.
12 I said, well, then you tell me. He said, they've been out
13 two times in the last six months. And I said, they were
14 out four times yesterday.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: What did he say to that?

16 MR. PREVITT: I told him, I said, I've
17 written a letter to the Public Service Commission. He
18 said, oh, good. Have you heard from them yet? Have you
19 got a reply? I said, no, sir, I haven't, but I expect to.
20 He said, well, let me know what they say. That was his
21 answer.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. Did you ever
23 get a reply, by the way?

24 MR. PREVITT: No.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: You did?

1 MR. PREVITT: No, I didn't.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: We need to see about
3 that. When did you send that in?

4 MR. PREVITT: It's been about six months
5 ago.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: And you haven't heard
7 back? Do you know --

8 MR. PREVITT: I'm the one that's laughing
9 now.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: I want to see if we can
11 get a copy of that letter from somebody and track it down.
12 So if --

13 MR. PREVITT: Well, I've given her a letter
14 tonight.

15 COMMISSIONER GAW: Did you? Is it similar
16 to the one you sent earlier?

17 MR. PREVITT: Yes, it is.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Good. I hope
19 that Staff will make sure, and I'm sure they will, to get
20 that to the Commissioners.

21 MR. PREVITT: Yes, sir.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: And the only other thing
23 I've got to ask, you mentioned something about squirrels
24 earlier causing a problem. Where did you hear that?

25 MR. PREVITT: Well, they told me --

1 AmerenUE said on the phone, we can't do anything about
2 squirrels.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: I see.

4 MR. PREVITT: And I know that, but they do
5 make a squirrel guard for a transformer.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: I just wondered if
7 there's any more squirrels left down there after all of
8 those outages you've had.

9 MR. PREVITT: There's a lot of squirrels
10 left down there.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very much,
12 sir. There may be some more questions. I appreciate you
13 coming out.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank
15 you. Commissioner Clayton?

16 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I have no questions.
17 Thank you for coming, sir.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I'm sorry.
19 Mr. Previtt, I'm going to see if Commissioner Appling has
20 any questions.

21 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No questions.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And I don't
23 have any. Mr. Previtt, I'm sorry. Thank you very much
24 for coming out this evening. We appreciate your remarks.

25 And I don't -- Mr. Mills or Mr. Kelly in

1 Kirksville, I certainly don't want to ignore you folks,
2 but I'll leave it up to you to tell me if you have anybody
3 who wishes to testify, but if you don't alert me, I'm just
4 going to continue to call names in Hayti.

5 MR. KELLY: That would be fine, Judge.
6 Thank you.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much. All
8 right. Ms. Kremer or Ms. Mantle, do you have another
9 witness?

10 MS. KREMER: Yes. H.W. Wells.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you would come forward
12 to be sworn, please. If you'll raise your right hand.

13 (Witness sworn.)

14 H.W. WELLS testified as follows:

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
16 If you would, please state your name for the record and
17 spell your last name for the court reporter.

18 MR. WELLS: H.W. Wells, W-e-l-l-s.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please,
20 sir?

21 MR. WELLS: 453 State Highway 164 East,
22 Steele, Missouri, zip 63877.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. And are you a
24 customer of AmerenUE?

25 MR. WELLS: I am.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Did you have a statement
2 for the Commission, sir?

3 MR. WELLS: Yes. I'd like to -- pretty
4 much what's been stated to you already, I'd just like to
5 say that I would agree with this gentleman.

6 In regards to the pole you were speaking
7 about, the equipment a while ago or Mr. Previtt was being
8 questioned, I've got a pole with a transformer on it in my
9 yard that's leaning toward the sunset and has been for
10 about three or four, five years. And I've had probably
11 seven or eight visits from the Ameren people, and they've
12 discussed the possibility of replacing the pole.

13 Insofar as the power surges jumping the
14 transformer, I have lost three TV sets in the last nine
15 months. Specifically I send them to Sears and Roebuck in
16 Byerville, Arkansas. They in turn send them to Memphis.
17 Memphis in turn charges me \$70 to fix it, and they send it
18 back to Byerville. It's got so routine with me that the
19 people in Memphis that does the repair, instead of the
20 Byerville Sears office, the go-between people, they call
21 me direct to tell me my TV's ready. And that's -- that's
22 provable.

23 Now, insofar as the appliances that the
24 lady was mentioning a while ago, I have every kind of
25 appliance you can think of, even down to and including

1 light bulbs that go out in my house because of these power
2 surges. I have a Don Rogers Electrical Company, the ones
3 that installed the wiring in my house when it was built,
4 and they said it was the power surges in the transformers.
5 I don't know what else all.

6 Now, so far as Mr. Previtt's testimony that
7 he had no objection to the raising of the rates, I
8 strongly -- I strongly resist the raising of the rates. I
9 recommend we lower the rates according to the service
10 we're getting. I think a while ago I said to these
11 ladies, I've lived all over the world. I'm retired Army.
12 And I've never had service as lousy as I'm getting from
13 Ameren, nowhere, not even in third world countries. This
14 is the lousiest service I've ever seen. As Mr. Previtt
15 told you, it goes out constantly. It pops.

16 Now, how do I know, for example, I think
17 one question you-all asked Mr. Previtt was how did he know
18 when it went out. In my particular instance, in my living
19 room, it sounds like a shotgun going off whenever my TV
20 blows out from those power surges. So I'm pretty well
21 alerted to it.

22 I can't think of much more I can add other
23 than the lousy service as you've been told before. That's
24 it.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Wells,

1 thank you, sir. The Commissioners may have some questions
2 for you. Commissioner Murray?

3 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes. Mr. Wells, how
4 frequently in a month's time would you say that you have
5 these power outages?

6 MR. WELLS: Mr. Previtt pretty much hit it
7 on the line. Just about six or seven times a month.

8 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. And --

9 MR. WELLS: And that's not going overboard
10 either. That's pretty conservative.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And about how
12 frequently would you say that you have been replacing
13 some -- replacing an item because of such power surges?

14 MR. WELLS: I haven't had to replace a lot
15 of items because of the power surges, unless you want to
16 say something about light bulbs, but that's ridiculous.
17 But my TV sets, three in nine months, that's a fact.
18 That's pretty rough. Now, my other stuff, I don't know.
19 What do you do? You got a coffee maker that goes out
20 quicker than it should. I don't know whether it's the
21 power surges or not, but I'm suspicious.

22 I've got a lot of appliances in my home
23 that seems to wear out a little faster than they ought to.
24 I can't say for sure it was power surges, but I'm
25 suspicious. But the TV sets I'm standing.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And the pole with the
2 transformer in your yard that is leaning, how long did you
3 say it's been in that condition?

4 MR. WELLS: I'm going to say three, four,
5 five years. Maybe five years.

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And you have talked
7 with AmerenUE about it; is that correct?

8 MR. WELLS: Yes, ma'am. They've been out
9 there. They've surveyed that rascal, looked at it, talked
10 to it, looked it over and discussed it. They've never
11 done anything.

12 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Have they said that
13 it's not any danger or that it's, you know, functioning
14 properly, or what has been the explanation?

15 MR. WELLS: In the number of trips they've
16 made out there, I think they've often said there's no
17 danger as such, but also they've said that it needs to be
18 replaced and they're going to replace it, yes, ma'am. I
19 don't know how you'd interpret that.

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Have they given you
21 any time frame for replacement?

22 MR. WELLS: No, ma'am.

23 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Have they indicated
24 to you when they would be replacing it?

25 MR. WELLS: No, ma'am.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. Thank
2 you.

3 MR. WELLS: Excuse me. You said indicated.
4 They said they were going to replace it, and they've come
5 out and they've looked at it and they've looked at the
6 trees and whether they were going to run the line here or
7 there.

8 I don't have any trouble, by the way, like
9 Mr. Previtt, I don't have any trouble along the line of
10 having tree branches in my way. All the trees are on my
11 own property, and all the trees have been trimmed properly
12 and there's no lines touching. I don't have a tree
13 problem.

14 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So has AmerenUE been
15 trimming the trees near the lines on your property?

16 MR. WELLS: Not very often. I don't need
17 it. The way I'm situated out there, the way the lines run
18 and everything, trees are not a problem.

19 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. You're not
20 saying that they have been trimmed; you're just saying
21 that there haven't been any in places that need trimming?
22 Is that what you said?

23 MR. WELLS: Maybe 15, 20 years ago they
24 might have trimmed some trees. I don't know. But there
25 hasn't been any -- there is no trees through there.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. Thank you very
2 much for your testimony.

3 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Murray, thank
4 you. Commissioner Gaw?

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: Real quick, sir. Thank
6 you for coming. And how far over is this pole leaning, by
7 the way? Can you give me an idea on an angle?

8 MR. WELLS: I have no idea at all. I took
9 plain geometry, but I can't tell you.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: That's all right. When
11 did they -- when did you first notify Ameren about this
12 problem?

13 MR. WELLS: Four or five years ago.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Four or five years ago.
15 How many times have --

16 MR. WELLS: Yes, sir.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: How many times have they
18 been out there?

19 MR. WELLS: Oh, I'm going to say four or
20 five times. Always nice, understand. They've always been
21 nice to me.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. Is the pole
23 leaning more now than it was when you first called them?

24 MR. WELLS: I'd take a scientific guess,
25 I'd say yeah, you know, no doubt it's bound to move some,

1 especially after windstorms and that sort of thing.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir.

3 MR. WELLS: Fortunately, it's not over my
4 house. I'm not too concerned about it.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: I really appreciate you
6 being here, sir. Thank you.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank
8 you.

9 MR. WELLS: I want to tell you --

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: He's got something else.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Yes, sir. Go ahead.

12 MR. WELLS: This pole business, one of the
13 reasons that I'm upset about it is not because I'm afraid
14 the pole's going to fall on me. It's because the stinking
15 pole is where that transformer sits that I have been told
16 that the power is jumping that's knocking out my
17 appliances. That's my concern about the pole. I'm
18 looking forward to the pole --

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you think that the
20 fact that the pole is leaning is contributing to this
21 transformer issue, is that what you're saying?

22 MR. WELLS: I'm saying that the fact that
23 the pole is leaning, therefore the transformer that's on
24 it is probably old as me, is probably why it's giving me
25 trouble, yes, sir.

1 retire from the Army or the Air Force?

2 MR. WELLS: The Army, sir.

3 COMMISSIONER APPLING: I'm a retired Army

4 guy, too. Are you sure you don't have a 5K generator

5 hooked up in your backyard back there?

6 (Laughter.)

7 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Thank you very much

8 for coming.

9 MR. WELLS: No.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Wells, thank you very

11 much, sir.

12 And I'm not sure if it's Ms. Mantle or

13 Ms. Kremer.

14 MS. KREMER: Judge, we have another witness

15 coming.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And I'm sorry. Ms. Kremer,

17 the name, please?

18 MS. KREMER: Richard Ashbaugh.

19 MR. ASHBAUGH: Ashbaugh, yes.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry. Richard?

21 MR. ASHBAUGH: Ashbaugh, A-s-h-b-a-u-g-h.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, sir. If you

23 would, please raise your right hand to be sworn, sir.

24 (Witness sworn.)

25 RICHARD ASHBAUGH testified as follows:

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
2 If you would, please state your name for the record and
3 spell your last name for the court reporter.

4 MR. ASHBAUGH: Richard Ashbaugh,
5 A-s-h-b-a-u-g-h.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please?

7 MR. ASHBAUGH: 417 North 4th, Hayti.

8 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a customer of
9 AmerenUE, sir?

10 MR. ASHBAUGH: Yes, sir.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statement
12 that you have for the Commission, sir?

13 MR. ASHBAUGH: Yes. I would like to just
14 let the Commission know that here in Hayti we don't have
15 seems like the problem that maybe they do on south. As
16 far as our service here, we have fair service, but the one
17 thing that I do know over the years with -- back in Arco
18 days and stuff, we had more servicemen and everything in
19 the area, and they're down to three servicemen that serves
20 Pemiscot County per se, and it's hard for them to do it.

21 And I know that when it comes to wages,
22 when you take the pie and take wages, that don't take up
23 much of that pie for wages to give good service that we've
24 been accustomed to. I'm not saying we've got bad service
25 in this area like maybe they have at Steele, but, you

1 know, they need more servicemen, I think. They bring
2 servicemen in from counties north of us down here at times
3 when our servicemen are out of pocket, and I think it
4 would help if they could just give us more servicemen.

5 I hate to see a rate increase, because like
6 I say, I'm the mayor of Hayti here, and last year our
7 employees didn't get a raise because we didn't have the
8 money. If you raise rates, what's going to happen next
9 year? Are city employees going to get a raise? We're
10 paying more utility bills. We've got a factory here in
11 town that uses a lot.

12 It hurts Pemiscot County any time we've got
13 to pay more for any utilities or anything because we're
14 the poorest -- well, out of 115 counties, we're 114 as far
15 as poverty, so you know where we stand there. I just --
16 I'd like to see us get help instead of charge us more for
17 any services, try to help us in other ways and not have to
18 charge us. I mean, we just can't stand it.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Ashbaugh,
20 if there's nothing else, we'll see if we have any
21 questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner Murray?

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Just a quick
23 question. Did I understand you to say that you don't have
24 any complaints with your service?

25 MR. ASHBAUGH: I don't really have any

1 complaints. They have done real good. Of course, I think
2 part of it is, I hired two of the guys that works out at
3 AmerenUE right now. I'm a retired utility worker myself.
4 And I think that makes a little difference right there,
5 when you got -- I'm not going to say connections, but
6 they -- it does help.

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And you're not
8 experiencing the power outages or the surges like we've
9 heard about?

10 MR. ASHBAUGH: No, we're not.

11 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. Thank you very
12 much.

13 MR. ASHBAUGH: I'm not saying -- there have
14 been down there, I know it, but here in Hayti, we're not
15 having the extreme power outages. We'll have some power
16 outages every now and then true enough, but it's nothing
17 to extreme or nothing that I'm aware about anyway.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, Mayor, for
19 being here tonight.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

21 COMMISSIONER GAW: Hi, Mayor. Thank you
22 for coming. Just ask you about, what are you seeing about
23 tree trimming in Hayti? Is it adequate and what is it
24 like?

25 MR. ASHBAUGH: It got bad enough a few

1 years ago that we had to twist a few ears, got the trees
2 trimmed, but it's starting to get that way again. In
3 another two or three years, if we don't get some major
4 trimming done, we're going to be in bad shape. And I
5 understand that. Like I say, being retired from the
6 utility business, I know what it's all about. I know that
7 there's some things you can do and some you can't.

8 But I think AmerenUE to just help us a
9 little more in service, it's -- the customers here in this
10 area has been used to back through the years with Arco and
11 all when they had the local offices, you called the local
12 office, yeah, you're Ms. Jones, you live down on the
13 corner, yes. Well, now when you call the utility, you get
14 somebody in St. Louis. They don't know where Hayti's at
15 or Steele or something. Half of them don't, and that
16 hurts because we don't have the tough, the relationship
17 with the power company that we used to have.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. I understand
19 what you're saying. So as far as the tree trimming is
20 concerned, you think it's that in the last couple years
21 it's fallen off again, is that adequate to say that?

22 MR. ASHBAUGH: Yes. Yes. We needed this
23 good trimming a few years ago, but it's something I know
24 goes on about a five-year cycle, and, you know, they say
25 five years -- or maybe it's seven years in St. Louis, but

1 seven-year cycle in St. Louis is different than it is
2 here. Trees grow faster here than they do in St. Louis.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: Because of the soil and
4 other things down --

5 MR. ASHBAUGH: Well, it's a little warmer,
6 too. It's a warmer climate here in southeast Missouri.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very much,
8 Mayor, for coming.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Commissioner
10 Clayton? Thank you. Commissioner Appling?

11 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No questions.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Ashbaugh, thank you
13 very much for your remarks this evening, sir. We
14 appreciate it.

15 Ms. Kremer, could you call the next
16 witness, please.

17 MS. KREMER: Michael Davis.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry. What was the
19 name again, please?

20 MS. KREMER: Michael Davis, D-a-v-i-s.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Mr. Davis, if
22 you would raise your right hand to be sworn, please, sir.

23 (Witness sworn.)

24 MICHAEL DAVIS testified as follows:

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.

1 If you would, please state your name for the record and
2 spell your last name.

3 MR. DAVIS: Name is Michael Davis,
4 D-a-v-i-s.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please,
6 sir?

7 MR. DAVIS: 224 Lawrence Drive, Steele,
8 Missouri.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a customer of
10 AmerenUE?

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Any statements you have for
13 the Commission, sir?

14 MR. DAVIS: Yes. I'm the Mayor of Steele,
15 Missouri, and it's well documented that the poverty that
16 we have in Pemiscot County, and we live -- our town is in
17 the south part of the county, which is eight miles from
18 the Arkansas line. In the south part of the county, we
19 have three towns. We have Steele, Holland and Cooter.
20 And we have really no industry there. Most of our
21 citizens are retired senior citizens living on fixed
22 incomes.

23 And one of my biggest concerns about this
24 rate increase is that, you know, it's -- you know, for
25 those people and for us to pay the same rates as they do

1 in more affluent areas of the state, it just seems unfair.
2 It seems like if we're going to have a rate increase, we
3 ought to tier something to the income of the area, because
4 our income compared to other towns just a few miles north
5 of us, like Sikeston, Cape, Farmington, those areas
6 that -- you know, our county, Pemiscot County, over the
7 last 25 years has dropped over roughly 20,000 in
8 population.

9 So, you know, we're made up of senior
10 citizens, a lot of fixed income. And I think a rate
11 increase would really affect our citizens probably more
12 than anywhere in the state just because of the income of
13 our county. And I think most everybody in the state knows
14 Pemiscot County and they know our income averages compared
15 to other counties and the rest of the state.

16 That's my biggest concern is it's really
17 going to affect us more than it is really customers you
18 have in Sikeston, Farmington, St. Louis and the other
19 areas. It would seem unfair that we would pay the same
20 rate. That's my biggest concern.

21 I don't really have -- as far as I'll say,
22 you know, I'm not here, I don't have any complaints, but I
23 do as the mayor have concerns. In my -- as a mayor, I
24 feel like part of my job is to plan for the future. It's
25 not what we do today that really makes the difference, but

1 I want to think about what we're going to be doing now,
2 how it's going to affect people in our town and in our
3 area maybe 10 years from now, 20 years from now.

4 And I guess my concern is -- and I'm a
5 lifelong resident of Steele also. I remember when we had
6 local service, we had local servicemen, we had a local
7 office in our town. But if -- it appears that our service
8 seems to be moving further and further away from us. And
9 I guess my concern would be is where is it going to be ten
10 years from now? You know, are service people going to be
11 maybe not in Hayti, are they going to be in Sikeston ten
12 years from now?

13 I mean, I always like to say, somewhere I
14 like to draw a line in the sand so we kind of know what
15 it's going to be. You know, we need to make a decision
16 for the future, you know, what -- what of our -- whenever
17 I do something in Steele, I feel like it's for the kids
18 and for the grandkids, those kind of things. How's it
19 going to make the town work 20 years from now? Are they
20 going to be able to survive?

21 I guess my concern is, is our county Steele
22 and the south part of our county, which is even poorer
23 than the northern part of our county I like to say, but
24 how are we going to be able to survive? What's it going
25 to look like 20 years from now? Our service is farther

1 away.

2 I do know that one of the concerns that I
3 do have is we don't get quite as quick a response on
4 replacing of our lights in our town. I know we've had to
5 fax them two or three times to get our lights that are out
6 replaced. We've got a good group of people that work down
7 in this area. We have a good rapport with them. They're
8 easy to talk with. I know they're doing the best they can
9 with what they've got, is what I'm saying.

10 So I'm not complaining about it, but it's
11 just a concern of mine, because I could ask, you know,
12 it's kind of like when you rely on somebody else to do
13 service for you, then I as a mayor, if I go to the
14 restaurant or if I go in the grocery store, well, then
15 like, you know, this morning I visited our local cafe and
16 I had two questions about streetlights. The same guys
17 asked me about them two weeks ago, when are they going to
18 get our streetlights on?

19 And I think that also goes back to, you
20 know, we do have some elderly people in our area. You
21 know, those people that ask those questions were elderly,
22 and I think they were probably concerned about the
23 lighting in their area. So that's just really the only
24 concern, two concerns I have about service is not so much
25 what we're getting, is that it seems to be moving farther

1 away and we're not quite getting the response on the
2 replacement of our lights within our city. That's
3 basically what my concerns are.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Mr. Davis, thank you
5 very much, sir. We may have some questions from the
6 Commissioners. Commissioner Murray?

7 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, Mayor.
8 Would you tell me about how long it usually takes to get a
9 streetlight replaced?

10 MR. DAVIS: You know, I think that's a hard
11 question. Sometimes we get a real quick response, You
12 know, they may come down within a week to do it, but then
13 sometimes it may take two months to get it. You know, I
14 know our last situation on the lights, I know we faxed it,
15 faxed the list of the lights and streets, you know, two or
16 three times. We still haven't had the response this time.
17 But it's hard to say. It's not that way every time.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Are any of these
19 lights that remain out for a period of time safety -- I
20 mean, are they lighting areas that you feel need to be lit
21 for safety purposes?

22 MR. DAVIS: I would say some of them are,
23 yes.

24 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Is there any kind of
25 a priority that they are given, do you know?

1 MR. DAVIS: That I don't know.

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Well, thank you very
3 much for your testimony.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Davis, thank you. Let
5 me see. Commissioner Gaw, any questions?

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Real quick. Mayor,
7 thank you very much for coming, first of all, and then I
8 wanted to ask you whether you see similar reliability of
9 service issues to what was discussed earlier by the
10 gentleman from Steele on the outages, the blinking lights
11 and other things.

12 MR. DAVIS: Well, the area of town that I
13 live in is a newer part of town. I haven't experienced
14 quite as much as some of the others, but I do hear those
15 concerns about that. I do know that we -- we had a lot of
16 problems a few years back with it, and there's enough of a
17 problem that we -- some people from your company came and
18 visited our town. We had a hearing, and I think some of
19 that was corrected, but we still -- we do still have some
20 of the outages.

21 I think maybe a couple years ago we had a
22 brownout situation that maybe cost our local cotton gin
23 maybe an engine, something along that line. But I do hear
24 some of that, people talking about their lights going off
25 during the day while they're at work. I don't hear near

1 as much as I did a few years ago.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. But do you hear
3 similar concerns from other constituents to what we heard
4 from the gentleman from Steele earlier this evening?

5 MR. DAVIS: I hear some of those, yes.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: And tree trimming, can
7 you give me any comment about how that is in Steele?

8 MR. DAVIS: I haven't really had a concern
9 about that myself. I know we have had them come in and
10 work for our town. They have come, to my knowledge, and
11 done what we asked them to in the city.

12 Now, one of the gentleman that spoke here
13 tonight is out in the rural area of Steele, so, you know,
14 it's -- but I know in town they have -- you know, they
15 have come and have worked and done some tree trimming in
16 our city, yes.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do they do that on their
18 own or is it as a result of you or someone from the city
19 calling them and asking for the trimming to occur?

20 MR. DAVIS: I think -- I think some of
21 both.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Thank you very
23 much, Mayor.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Clayton, no
25 questions. Thank you. Commissioner Appling, no

1 questions. Mr. Davis, thank you very much for your
2 remarks this evening. We appreciate it.

3 And let me verify before we go to the next
4 Hayti witness and make sure that we don't have anybody in
5 Kirksville. Mr. Mills or Mr. Kelly, do we have anyone
6 wishing to testify in Kirksville?

7 MR. KELLY: Not at this time, Judge. Thank
8 you.

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Thank you.
10 Ms. Kremer, is there another witness ready?

11 MS. KREMER: Yes, James Vaughn.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: If you'd come forward to be
13 sworn, please, sir. If you'll raise your right hand to be
14 sworn, please.

15 (Witness sworn.)

16 JAMES VAUGHN testified as follows:

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
18 Please state your name for the record and spell your last
19 name for the court reporter.

20 MR. VAUGHN: James Vaughn, V as in Victor,
21 a-u-g-h-n.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please,
23 sir?

24 MR. VAUGHN: 176 County Highway 344, Hayti,
25 Missouri.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a customer of
2 AmerenUE?

3 MR. VAUGHN: Yes, I am.

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any remarks for
5 the Commission, sir?

6 MR. VAUGHN: As far as my lights blinking
7 and dimming, I do experience some of that. I was asked
8 from south citizens from the south end of Dunklin County
9 to say a few words.

10 From their experiences, when they're out of
11 lights, they're out minimum of two, two and a half hours,
12 and they're getting service from Dexter, Sikeston area,
13 and that's a big concern on them. Looks like throughout
14 Pemiscot and Dunklin County. I'm in the area every day,
15 and there's very little pole maintenance. Tree trimming,
16 looks like it's been -- you know, it's very little. If
17 it's not on the ground, it don't look like it's getting
18 fixed. That's pretty well what I wanted to say.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Okay. Mr. Vaughn, thank
20 you. We may have some questions from the Commissioners.
21 Commissioner Murray, any questions?

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't have any
23 questions, but thank you very much.

24 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes. Mr. Vaughn, thank

1 you for coming. I want to ask just a few things. First
2 of all, the individuals that wanted you to come up and
3 speak tonight, are they in the rural part of the county
4 or -- did I understand that correctly?

5 MR. VAUGHN: In the southern part of
6 Dunklin County mainly, Hornersville.

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: Say that again, I'm
8 sorry?

9 MR. VAUGHN: Hornersville, south of Steele,
10 I had some people down there, Hollywood area, Dunklin
11 County.

12 COMMISSIONER GAW: All right. And you're
13 talking on their behalf tonight?

14 MR. VAUGHN: Yes. I told them I was going
15 to come to this and told them I would mention their
16 concerns of it.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: The outages that you
18 described being a minimum of two, two and a half hours, I
19 can't remember which, how often do they occur?

20 MR. VAUGHN: I'm not -- I'm not sure of
21 that. I can't speak on that behalf.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is it something that
23 occurs -- if you know, is it something that occurs just
24 during storms or does it occur without anything obvious
25 going on?

1 sorry. There are trees that are growing up through the
2 lines?

3 MR. VAUGHN: Yes, sir.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: And is that a common or
5 uncommon thing?

6 MR. VAUGHN: It's common to see, but it
7 shouldn't. It needs to be taken care of.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir.

9 MR. VAUGHN: The poles, you know. They're
10 wanting us to give them more money and them to put less in
11 their company. You know, if we're going to give more
12 money, then we ought to get service. We ought to be
13 driving down the road seeing those poles, trees trimmed,
14 contractors out there giving us some sort of service that
15 we're not receiving.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: When you say the poles
17 are a problem, give me an idea about what you mean by
18 that. Are they rotted? Are they falling down? Give me a
19 little more specific information.

20 MR. VAUGHN: Yes, sir. Leaning, broke tops
21 out of them. For instance, if they've got a broken pole,
22 they'll drill in it, set an old pole beside it, bolt it to
23 it, keep from having to repair the whole thing. I seen
24 that in cases. I seen them strapped together before.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is there any --

1 MR. VAUGHN: Sorry.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: No, it's my fault.

3 MR. VAUGHN: No doubt in an emergency
4 situation, you know, I can understand that, but every day
5 driving down the road and you see leaning poles, old
6 transformers, old wire, you're not getting any service out
7 of it.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Are there other
9 providers in that area, not specifically in the Ameren
10 territory, but that you are aware of, coops for instance?

11 MR. VAUGHN: Yes, sir, there is a
12 cooperative.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: Is there a comparison in
14 regard to the service and the infrastructure and tree
15 trimming that you could make to that system?

16 MR. VAUGHN: I would rather not comment on
17 that.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Well, I won't make you.
19 Just if you want to.

20 MR. VAUGHN: I appreciate that. I've got
21 my own reasons.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. That's all
23 right. I'll leave you alone. Thank you very much for
24 coming tonight.

25 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank

1 you. Commissioner Clayton, no questions. Commissioner
2 Appling, no questions. All right. Mr. Vaughn, thank you
3 very much for your comments this evening.

4 All right. Ms. Kremer, if you'd call the
5 next witness, please. I'm sorry. What was the name?

6 MR. CRAIG: Robert Craig.

7 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Mr. Craig, if
8 you'd raise your right hand to be sworn, please, sir.

9 (Witness sworn.)

10 ROBERT CRAIG testified as follows:

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
12 Please state your name for the record and spell your last
13 name for the court reporter.

14 MR. CRAIG: Robert Craig, C-r-a-i-g.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please?

16 MR. CRAIG: 15650 State Highway A in
17 Kennett.

18 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And are you a customer of
19 AmerenUE?

20 MR. CRAIG: My employer is, yes.

21 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Any comments
22 for the Commission, sir?

23 MR. CRAIG: Yes, please. I'm the manager
24 Dalton Cotton Company in Senath. We have been in business
25 for ten seasons, beginning in 1997. Our business has

1 grown threefold since we started in 1997, and we expect
2 that trend to continue. Based on what I know about my
3 company's bill, I would say in 2006 that the four or five
4 local gins probably spent around \$200,000 in electrical
5 service for this season.

6 We've always had very satisfactory
7 communications from Rick Davis here in Hayti. He has kept
8 us informed as best I guess he can about situations both
9 during and before the ginning season. Dealing with him
10 has definitely been a plus through the years.

11 We know that there are situations beyond
12 anyone's control that can happen, and we can appreciate
13 that. However, I would like to let you know that when the
14 power blinks in a cotton gin, it's not just a matter of
15 flipping a switch and continuing work. When the power
16 blinks and are ginning, it takes a minimum of two hours
17 and perhaps as long as six hours for us to recover.
18 Take that times 15 to 20 workers, and you can see a
19 source -- that this is a source of concern for us.

20 On Saturday, November the 11th, 2006, the
21 power blinked at least three times that day. We were down
22 a total of about eight hours overcoming those outages.
23 The very next day it blinked again and we were down for
24 another six hours. It's not just about the time, but
25 there is also the risk of damage to machinery. Motors and

1 computers can burn up if the situations are just right.
2 Major expense there. Brownouts I guess they're called and
3 surges devastating to our business.

4 I realize that we may want the impossible,
5 but the apparent lack of anyone stationed in south Dunklin
6 County gives us no opportunity to get to know someone to
7 whom we can go to for more or less immediate answers. I
8 know the power goes out sometimes. I don't necessarily
9 blame UE for that.

10 But what is aggravating is that we have no
11 one local to call and see if they have any kind of idea
12 whether it will be one hour before the problem is fixed or
13 into tomorrow morning. There is a difference if a -- if a
14 cat gets fried, that may just take an hour, but if a semi
15 blasts down your substation, that's going to take a little
16 longer. You know, it would be nice to know sort of what
17 the problem is.

18 A customer service person in St. Louis
19 cannot give us those answers that are so vitally important
20 to us during these outages. Do we keep our 15 to 20
21 employees on standby or do we send them home? On more
22 than one occasion we made the decision to send them home,
23 and the dust had not settled in the parking lot when the
24 power came on. That has happened more than once.

25 Our major concern here in Senath is the

1 apparent deterioration of the electrical lines and the
2 system down here in south Dunklin County and the lack
3 of --

4 JUDGE PRIDGIN: We're not getting a
5 connection anymore in Hayti. Can you hear us in
6 Kirksville.

7 (AN OFF-THE-RECORD DISCUSSION WAS HELD TO
8 RESTORE THE TELECONFERENCE CONNECTION.)

9 JUDGE PRIDGIN: We have audio now. If I
10 can get folks to hang on for just a second, please.
11 Ms. Bernsen, sounds like you can hear us in Kirksville?

12 MS. BERNSEN: Yes. We can hear you. Okay.
13 We do see you now.

14 JUDGE PRIDGIN: I'm sorry. Hayti, can you
15 hear us?

16 MS. KREMER: We can hear you and see you.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Very good. And, Mr. Craig,
18 I sincerely apologize. We lost you during your testimony.
19 If I could ask you to kind of go back -- if I can ask you
20 to kind of go back. I think about the time we lost you
21 you were mentioning sending employees home and about the
22 time the dust settled in the parking lot your power would
23 come back on. I think we lost you about then. So if you
24 could kind of resume your comments from there.

25 MR. CRAIG: Okay. I was almost finished.

1 Our major concern here at Senath is the apparent
2 deterioration of the electrical lines and the system down
3 in at least south Dunklin County and the lack of
4 maintenance to the system, to speak nothing of the
5 apparent lack of planned improvements.

6 We were advised this past season by
7 AmerenUE during major electrical problems that Dalton
8 Cotton Company where I work and Farmers Union Gin, another
9 large gin, in Senath, that we might need to alternate
10 shifts. I would say that this is an unacceptable
11 solution. While we want satisfactory service year round,
12 we have a time frame of about two and a half months where
13 we must have dependable service. We pay for it and we
14 expect it. That was all. Thank you.

15 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Craig, thank you very
16 much, and again, I apologize for the technical problems.
17 We may have some questions from the Commissioners.
18 Commissioner Murray?

19 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you.
20 Mr. Craig, I just have a few questions for you. How long
21 has your company been in business in that area?

22 MR. CRAIG: Nine years but ten ginning
23 seasons.

24 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And how long have you
25 been the manager?

1 MR. CRAIG: The whole time.

2 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. Over that
3 period of time, have you seen the customer service
4 deteriorate?

5 MR. CRAIG: I would say it kind of comes
6 and goes. We might have years where it's not really too
7 bad, but then there are other times I recall that it's
8 pretty bad. So it's not consistent, I will say.

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Is your company
10 located in any other areas?

11 MR. CRAIG: No, ma'am.

12 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Okay. And you
13 mentioned that you were told at one time recently, I
14 believe, that you might have -- you might need to
15 alternate shifts; is that correct?

16 MR. CRAIG: Yes. That was -- yes, that was
17 towards of the end of this season when we were having lots
18 of problems, and I know the other gin in Senath was also
19 having problems, and like I say, it was suggested to us
20 that we operate for 12 hours and the other large gin in
21 town operate for 12 hours.

22 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And was it --

23 MR. CRAIG: Not at the same time.

24 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Was it your
25 understanding that the reason for that was that there --

1 that that would prevent outages if you alternated?

2 MR. CRAIG: Well, I guess so. It was just,
3 you know, if you want to get anything done, maybe you-all
4 could work half and half and keep on going instead of one
5 of you being down 100 percent.

6 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Have you ever had to
7 do that in the past?

8 MR. CRAIG: I've never heard that. It was
9 kind of a laugh when they suggested that.

10 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And you mentioned
11 customer serv-- not being able to get information specific
12 to your area through customer service in St. Louis. Was
13 it always -- in the nine years that you have been there,
14 was the customer service representative that you would
15 call always located in St. Louis?

16 MR. JOHNSON: I believe that's correct,
17 yes.

18 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. I'll let
19 the other --

20 MR. CRAIG: We have had good communication,
21 like I said, with Rick Davis, and he's given us, I guess,
22 more or less a private number, and when he's available, we
23 have good luck with him. If it's a weekend, though, and
24 he's off or something, then it's a different story. Rick
25 has been very helpful.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. Now, I'm
2 assuming when you are out and it takes two to six hours to
3 restore service or to recover from an outage, that you're
4 losing valuable production time; is that correct?

5 MR. CRAIG: Absolutely. And if we don't
6 gin it now, we're just going to tag it on at the end of
7 it, and we're still paying people now. So it's costing us
8 money as we sit there.

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So you have to pay
10 the people who are there on the shift that is unable to
11 work?

12 MR. CRAIG: Well, we make that decision
13 whether we're going to hold them. Usually if the power
14 goes out, we try to wait around a little while. If we can
15 get any kind of an idea of what the problem is, we might
16 just hold them and do other things. It's not like they're
17 just standing around, but, you know, like I say, you don't
18 know if the problem's going to be an hour or if it really
19 will be 24 hours.

20 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Can you tell me how
21 many times in the last month, for example, that you have
22 had outages that have created a work stoppage?

23 MR. CRAIG: Well, I'm going to go by our
24 ginning season, which was about mid September to early
25 December.

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right.

2 MR. CRAIG: There was a handful, four or
3 five or six, I guess. Maybe more.

4 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: And that's in one
5 ginning season?

6 MR. CRAIG: Right. But I guess that's for
7 extended times. If the power blinks, then that does knock
8 us down for a while. So yes, it is more than that, I'd
9 say.

10 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: All right. Thank you
11 very much.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Murray, thank
13 you. Commissioner Gaw?

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you for coming,
15 sir. I want to ask just a few questions about your
16 conversations with Ameren. Have they given you any
17 indication about what the problem is on these outages?

18 MR. CRAIG: No, because they have no idea.
19 You call up there and, you know, they're sitting in
20 St. Louis and they have no idea. I guess I really
21 wouldn't expect them to. But, you know, why can't we have
22 a little communication amongst those of us down here, you
23 know, about what's going on? I mean, I'll say they're
24 always cordial to me. I've never had any problems along
25 that lines with them, but they basically just say, well, I

1 really can't tell you anything. I understand.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: So it's pretty evident
3 that you've got a problem that's impacting your bottom
4 line on your business, then. If you -- if you have a
5 chance before you leave, would you talk to our staff
6 people that are down there and see if they can't assist
7 you in trying to track down what it is that's the problem
8 there, if it's a problem that's just constantly in that
9 area or if it has anything to do with the feeder line
10 that's coming to your business, unless you've already done
11 that.

12 MR. CRAIG: Well, we've talked to them in
13 the past, and I know some of the problems have been the
14 substations have gone out. Kind of the story is they're
15 so old and they just have not updated them and that's the
16 problem. So that's kind of where we've come from.

17 COMMISSIONER GAW: Do you know if there are
18 other businesses that are similarly impacted there around
19 you?

20 MR. CRAIG: Sure. There's three other
21 cotton gin representatives sitting here tonight. I know
22 they're along the same lines, and any other business
23 down -- there's not a whole lot of businesses in that
24 area. We're all affected, of course.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. How close are the

1 other gins to you?

2 MR. CRAIG: Okay. Two of them are in
3 Senath with us, one is Hornersville and one is at
4 Cardwell.

5 COMMISSIONER GAW: Are they going to
6 testify later?

7 MR. CRAIG: I do not know that.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you very much,
9 sir. Thank you for coming.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank
11 you. Commissioner Appling, no questions. Mr. Craig,
12 thank you very much for your time and for your testimony
13 this evening. We appreciate it.

14 And, Ms. Kremer, about how many more
15 witnesses do you have left?

16 MS. KREMER: Judge, we have one more
17 witness signed up, and I have been told that there aren't
18 any more witnesses after that. So I think just one.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And any Kirksville
20 witnesses?

21 MR. KELLY: No, sir, Judge.

22 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.
23 Would the next witness please come forward to be sworn,
24 and could I get that name, please?

25 MS. KREMER: Allen Williams.

1 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you. Mr. Williams,
2 if you would raise your right hand to be sworn, please,
3 sir.

4 (Witness sworn.)

5 ALLEN WILLIAMS testified as follows:

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Thank you very much, sir.
7 Please state your name for the record and spell your last
8 name for the court reporter.

9 MR. WILLIAMS: My name is Allen Williams,
10 W-i-l-l-i-a-m-s.

11 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And your address, please,
12 sir?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: My place of business who I'm
14 representing is 216 West Urthic Street, Hornersville,
15 Missouri.

16 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And is that business a
17 customer of AmerenUE?

18 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, it is.

19 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Any statements
20 you have for the Commission, sir?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do. I would like to
22 reiterate a lot of what Craig said. I am on the same
23 system that he is with AmerenUE. I might say that there
24 is four towns that is involved in this, and which is
25 Cardwell, Arbyard, Senath and Hornersville. When we have

1 these blinks, the entire town of Cardwell, the entire
2 Hornersville, the entire town of Senath, the entire town
3 of Cardwell all get the same thing.

4 There's five cotton gins that when mine
5 blinks, their blinks. So when he goes down, four other
6 cotton gins goes down with him. And sort of like he was
7 saying, that when that blinks, we're ginning 20, 30, 40
8 bales an hour. Takes us anywhere from two to four to five
9 hours to clean this gin out, of whom we're paying
10 employees usually time and a half to do that.

11 And when Mr. Swinger, Terry Swinger came to
12 my office one day and said he was running for office, he
13 asked me, is there anything that I -- he could do for me
14 as far as his political position, and I said, could you
15 please do something with the blinking that we have down
16 here with AmerenUE. So I know it's been going on since
17 Terry Swinger first campaigned, and it's been at least
18 four years.

19 And it seems like -- or it doesn't seem
20 like. When all five gins are running, this triples as far
21 as the occurrence is concerned. I have -- I've had it
22 happen as many as three times in one day. It happens I'd
23 say on the average of two times a week.

24 We are an agricultural situation down there
25 where that is the only industry in south Dunklin County as

1 far as south of Kennett. We have to do all that we are
2 going to do within a 10 to 15-week period. We work 24
3 hours a day, 7 days a week, and it just takes one blink to
4 shut the entire cotton gin down.

5 We have talked with Mr. Davis, with our
6 Public Service Commission. We've talked with Terry
7 Swinger. We have talked with Rick Davis. I would like to
8 say that as far as the employees of AmerenUE, we've had no
9 problem whatsoever. They have talked with us on the
10 phone.

11 One of our biggest problems is is that our
12 closest service is at least 50 miles away, and if they
13 don't have what we need to fix it, then you're turning
14 around and looking at another four-hour drive to get what
15 we need.

16 So another problem that I have, and I live
17 right down there beside of it, every time that this thing
18 blinks, and it's going on constantly during ginning
19 season, they go to the same substation every time. So you
20 would think in four years of this going on and on and on
21 and on and on and they're going to the same substation to
22 fix it every time, is that they would assume that this
23 substation is where the problem is and let's get it fixed.

24 So I would just like to say that some of
25 the other people here are talking about the power outages,

1 and during ginning season, most of the time it's just a
2 blink, but just that blink shuts us completely down. When
3 I was talking with the Public Service Commission,
4 Mr. Davis, I have a fan, four-inch fan sitting on my desk,
5 and just by a coincidence, it blinked and came back on,
6 and when it came back on, I could count each individual
7 fan blade as he was speaking, as it was turning around,
8 where it was very, very low voltage.

9 I had two 30 horsepower motors burn out at
10 that time, and I'm sure a lot of these other cotton gins
11 had a lot of things that was costly as far as burning out
12 or whatever. You can't really pinpoint it sometimes.

13 But we have been on the phone with the
14 Public Service Commission and with Terry Swinger for more
15 than one year, more than one ginning season, trying to get
16 this fixed. And I can just say that it is not -- the
17 service as far as this problem, the situation has just
18 been awful.

19 As far as the rate increase, you're looking
20 at 24 percent increase for something the size of a cotton
21 gin. We probably gin somewhere between around 200 to
22 300,000 bales between these five cotton gins. 24 percent,
23 you're talking at \$2 a bale, so basically what we're
24 saying is that because you're costing us so much money
25 we'd like to give you a 4 to 500,000 raise. We just can't

1 see that.

2 We'd just like to have our problems fixed
3 and attended to, and we certainly don't see that a rate
4 increase is going to help that problem. That's all I
5 have.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Mr. Williams,
7 thank you. We may have some questions from the
8 Commissioners. Commissioner Murray?

9 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I don't believe I
10 have any specific questions for you, but thank you very
11 much for being here.

12 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw?

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just a couple of
14 questions. First of all, thank you, too, for coming, and
15 have you -- have you gotten any explanation from Ameren on
16 what's causing this problem?

17 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, one particular time
18 they called and said that they were on the way to fix it,
19 and at that particular time we were out about an hour and
20 a half. They called back and said that within an hour
21 they'd have it on. They called and said that it was back
22 on, we found out what the problem was and we bypassed the
23 transformer. So that was on a Saturday.

24 Monday it did it again. We called them.
25 They came down, they looked at it, they called me back and

1 said, we found out what the problem was. I said, what was
2 it? They said, somebody bypassed the transformer. So
3 other than that, that's the only explanation I've ever
4 had, other than the substation at is old and wore out and
5 needs to be upgraded.

6 COMMISSIONER GAW: Have they said that to
7 you?

8 MR. WILLIAMS: Off the record.

9 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: I have -- we've had a cotton
11 gin at Cardwell since 1971, and I've been there for 21
12 years.

13 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: And this has been going on
15 for quite some time.

16 COMMISSIONER GAW: What has been going on
17 for quite some time, this problem?

18 MR. WILLIAMS: The blinking, blinking and
19 the power outages and the brownouts.

20 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Well, your
21 earlier explanation that you got may tell us a whole lot
22 about this. I don't know. If -- if you have any idea --
23 I want you to describe, because both of you that have
24 talked about these gins have said that when you get a
25 power surge or a blink, that if the gin shuts down it

1 takes quite a while to put it back into play where it's
2 working. Can you tell us why that is, for the record?

3 MR. WILLIAMS: I mean, you've got a cotton
4 gin here and you've got cotton going through this gin full
5 blast, 20, 30 bales an hour. I mean, at 30 bales an hour,
6 that's a bale of cotton going through it every two
7 minutes. What happens is, if you just walk in there and
8 throw the breaker like that, all this cotton stops in
9 every one of these machines from front to back. You can't
10 start it back up because everything's choked up. You have
11 to take every back of every machine off, pull the cotton
12 out, throw it on the floor, sweep it out the front, wait
13 for electricity to come back on and run it back in
14 gradually.

15 And I've had several different times that
16 we would do that waiting on the electricity to come back
17 on, and within ten minutes it does it again and we've got
18 it all to do over again.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: It sounds very
20 frustrating to say the least.

21 MR. WILLIAMS: It is. And especially for
22 the employees, and it's very costly.

23 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. Is there
24 anything else you want to tell us about this? You've
25 given us a pretty good synopsis of your problem, I think.

1 MR. WILLIAMS: I would just like to say
2 that we have been in good contacts with the Public Service
3 Commission, and I'm sure that if you would talk to
4 Mr. Davis in Braggadocio that he can back up exactly what
5 we're saying here. And with Terry Swinger, we have been
6 in a lot of contact with him, and I'm sure if someone
7 would talk with him, they could verify what we say.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, sir. Thank you
9 very much for your time, sir.

10 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank
11 you. Commissioner Appling?

12 COMMISSIONER APPLING: No questions.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: No questions Commissioner
14 Appling. Thank you very much, Mr. Williams.

15 All right. Ms. Kremer, any further
16 witnesses in Hayti?

17 MS. KREMER: Judge, we'll double check.
18 Anyone else care to comment, testify? Judge, I think
19 that's it.

20 JUDGE PRIDGIN: All right. Ms. Kremer,
21 thank you. Any witnesses in Kirksville?

22 MR. KELLY: No, Judge. Thank you.

23 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Kelly, thank you. Let
24 me see if we have any remarks from the Commissioners in
25 closing. Commissioner Murray?

1 COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I'd just like to say,
2 I think one of our staff people there has a birthday.
3 Happy birthday.

4 MS. KREMER: Thank you.

5 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Murray, thank
6 you. Commissioner Gaw?

7 COMMISSIONER GAW: I'll echo those birthday
8 wishes, but I want to also say that we really appreciate
9 those of you who have turned out this evening doing so.
10 It's important for us to hear from you, and hopefully as
11 we get through this, those voices will make a difference
12 in the outcome. So thank you very much.

13 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Commissioner Gaw, thank
14 you. Commissioner Appling?

15 COMMISSIONER APPLING: Just want to say
16 thank you for your comments, and again, thanks.

17 JUDGE PRIDGIN: And also, in conclusion, I
18 certainly want to thank everyone who has come down and
19 taken time out of your evenings to tell us your thoughts
20 about this. And again, the Commission will certainly take
21 your comments seriously.

22 Is there anything else from either
23 Kirksville or Hayti before we conclude?

24 MR. KELLY: Nothing else, Judge, other than
25 I would just reiterate that both in Kirksville and in

1 Hayti that there are sheets available. If someone chose
2 not testify tonight but wants to submit comments to the
3 Commission, that we have sheets available here for them to
4 take with them or they can leave them here with us and to
5 give us their comments if they so desire.

6 JUDGE PRIDGIN: Mr. Kelly, thank you very
7 much for reminding us of that. If there is something that
8 you thought of after the hearing and you want to tell the
9 Commission, please feel free to let us know and we can
10 read those comments. If there's nothing further? All
11 right. Very well. That will conclude this evening's
12 local public hearings in Cases No. ER-2007-0002 and
13 GR-2007-0003. Thank you very much. We're off the record.

14 WHEREUPON, the public hearing was
15 concluded.

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 STATE OF MISSOURI)
3) ss.
4 COUNTY OF COLE)

5 I, Kellene K. Feddersen, Certified
6 Shorthand Reporter with the firm of Midwest Litigation
7 Services, and Notary Public within and for the State of
8 Missouri, do hereby certify that I was personally present
9 at the proceedings had in the above-entitled cause at the
10 time and place set forth in the caption sheet thereof;
11 that I then and there took down in Stenotype the
12 proceedings had; and that the foregoing is a full, true
13 and correct transcript of such Stenotype notes so made at
14 such time and place.

15 Given at my office in the City of
16 Jefferson, County of Cole, State of Missouri.

17 Kellene K. Feddersen, RPR, CSR, CCR
18 Notary Public (County of Cole)
19 My commission expires March 28, 2009.
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