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STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
Local Public Hearing
January 5, 2015
St. Louis Community College, Missouri
Volume 3

In The Matter Of Union)
Electric Company d/b/a) File No. ER-2014-0258
Ameren Missouri's Tariff)
To Increase Its Revenues)
For Electric Service)

MORRIS L. WOODRUFF, Presiding
CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE

STEPHEN M. STOLL
SCOTT T. RUPP

COMMISSIONERS

REPORTED BY:
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Good evening, everyone.

3 I want to welcome you to our local public hearing
4 this evening. Once again, my name is Morris
5 Woodruff. I'm the chief judge for the Commission
6 and with me I have two commissioners tonight. To my
7 left is Commissioner Steven Stoll.

8 Commissioner Stoll, do you have any comments
9 you would like to make?

10 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Okay. I just
11 wanted to thank everybody for coming out this
12 evening. We are here to listen to your statements
13 regarding this rate case. This is, as I suspect
14 that you heard when they had the question-and-answer
15 period, is really the beginning of the process
16 because we're holding 12 local public hearings and
17 then later this year at Jefferson City we'll have
18 what is called evidentiary hearings, which are much
19 more complex. And we go through all the records of
20 the company and the issues are presented and you can
21 get more information about that from our Staff table
22 if you'd be interested in watching that online or
23 possibly attending.

24 We do have five commissioners, as the judge
25 said. Two of us are here this evening and we have a

1 court reporter who's making a transcript of
2 tonight's proceedings and the three commissioners
3 who cannot be with us will be reading those before
4 the evidentiary hearings.

5 Also wanted to mention that again we are here
6 to listen to you. You were probably told that we
7 can't answer questions that you may pose to us. We
8 act as judges in the case and, therefore, we can't
9 answer any specific questions about the case but we
10 could ask you something regarding customer service
11 or some, we'll say, service issues. So, again,
12 thank you for being here and we look forward to
13 hearing your testimony.

14 JUDGE WOODRUFF: On my right is
15 Commissioner Scott Rupp.

16 COMMISSIONER RUPP: Great. Thank you
17 for being here. I'm Commissioner Scott Rupp. First
18 off, welcome. We're going to listen to you tonight.
19 We would like for you to come up and just tell your
20 story of what you think about the rate case. If you
21 have any concerns about customer service or anything
22 of that nature to please go ahead and let us know
23 how the company is doing as well.

24 You'll probably hear a lot of themes. Some
25 people that speak before you might be saying similar

1 things as what's on your mind. You have every right
2 to sit there and tell your story but it's also okay
3 to say I agree with the person that spoke before me
4 and things of that nature. So we will be having
5 hopefully quite a few people testify but it is okay
6 to just say I agree with the themes from this person
7 but we do want everyone to come up and to be able to
8 speak your mind.

9 I think the judge will probably try to ask
10 everybody to keep it to just a couple of minutes so
11 that everyone has a chance to have their voices
12 heard. And as my fellow commissioner did state, we
13 are not allowed to answer any questions that you
14 pose to us, so you might see us sitting here very
15 stoically or very stoned face and that's just our
16 job, as we're supposed to take in all of the
17 information you present to us and then we make a
18 decision later on down the road, several months down
19 the road.

20 So welcome and we look forward to hearing
21 what you have to say.

22 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you,
23 Commissioner. I have a list of people that signed
24 up out front here and I'll just go through the list
25 and call you and bring you up here to be seated at

1 the microphone at the middle of the auditorium here.
2 I'll swear you in to tell the truth, the whole truth
3 and nothing but the truth and after you testify we
4 may have questions for you, the attorneys for the
5 parties may have questions for you, so just stick
6 around for a moment.

7 And, as the Commissioner said, we want to try
8 -- I'm not going to put you on a stopwatch or
9 anything but just out of respect for everybody that
10 wants to testify tonight keep your comments to about
11 five minutes or so. And, before we call the first
12 witness then, I need to find out which attorneys are
13 here for the parties so we'll take entries of
14 appearances beginning with Ameren.

15 MS. TATRO: Good evening. Wendy Tatro,
16 1901 Choteau Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

17 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And for the Staff?

18 MR. DOTTHEIM: Steven Dottheim, Post
19 Office Box 360, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102,
20 appearing on behalf of the Staff of the Missouri
21 Public Service Commission.

22 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And for Public Counsel?

23 MR. OPITZ: Good evening, Judge. For
24 the Office of Public Counsel I'm Tim Opitz, P.O. Box
25 2230, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

1 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Any other attorneys for
2 the parties here that I missed? I don't see
3 anybody.

4 All right. We'll call the first witness then
5 and that would be Patty DeGonia. I don't see anyone
6 responding. Rick Walter? Charles Meador?

7 Please raise your right hand and I'll swear
8 you in. Do you solemnly swear or affirm the
9 testimony you're about to give in this matter is the
10 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

11 MR. MEADOR: As I see it, yes, sir.

12 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. And could
13 you tell us your name and spell your last name?

14 MR. MEADOR: My name is Charles Meador.
15 My last name is spelled M-E-A-D-O-R.

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you very much.
17 What would you like to tell us?

18 MR. MEADOR: I would like to make some
19 general comments here if I might. The gentleman
20 earlier said something about social security
21 increase was about \$20 for people who get social
22 security. That's true for some people, some people
23 not. But if we take, let's say, \$10 from everyone,
24 that's \$20 a month but if you take \$10 for Ameren,
25 \$10 for Laclede Gas, \$10 for the water company, \$8

1 for the sewer, \$6 for the trash company, more money
2 for the cable, more money for the phone, you're in
3 the hole. That's just in general.

4 I have a question for Ameren: Why do they
5 spend millions, hundreds of millions of dollars
6 every year, or maybe more, for advertising on TV,
7 radio and print? This is a total waste of money
8 because they have a monopoly. There's nobody
9 they're against.

10 A lady asked me from the company, from
11 Ameren, said, "Well, don't you want to know what
12 we're doing?" I said, "I know what you're doing.
13 As long as lights work I know you're doing a fine
14 job. As long as the lights are working at my house,
15 in my neighborhood, and the businesses in the area,
16 everything is fine."

17 The money that they -- that I consider a
18 waste, could be used to fund the Dollar Help plan
19 for those who do not have enough money to pay for
20 their bills. The public does not want to know what
21 you do to provide power. The public just wants the
22 electricity to work.

23 If you wanted to let us know what you're
24 doing, put a flier in our bills. Now, most of that
25 stuff is going to be thrown away. I, myself, would

1 read every word of it. I do it every month when you
2 put a flier in there. I read every word of it
3 because I am interested in what's going on. I
4 worked -- well, whatever I worked at with
5 electricity as well as other utilities for years.

6 All right. I'll get to that here in a
7 moment.

8 A little history, I'll go back in history but
9 before Callaway went online, you know, Callaway
10 plant went online -- and I know Callaway at some
11 point is going to be mothballed. I hope the cost of
12 that being mothballed is built into the rates now or
13 they've already set aside money for mothballing
14 because they knew this was going to happen before
15 they even built the plant, they were going to get
16 mothballed at some point in time.

17 All of that money should have been set aside
18 for mothballing. I don't think they would have done
19 so. I think they will ask us for more money to
20 mothball Callaway when it comes up and that is --
21 again, it's a waste.

22 But before the Callaway was online the
23 electric company asked for a hundred percent raise
24 in rates. The PSC did not allow them that. The PSC
25 allowed a 55 percent raise in rates. A few months

1 later UE asked for another 80 percent and they
2 granted 45 percent of that. And within two years
3 they had 120 percent of what that asked for in the
4 first place. So they got it all and more and that's
5 what's happened every single time they ask for a
6 rate since.

7 If they don't get their 17 or 18 percent
8 raise they ask for now, then six months from now
9 they'll ask for another raise of, say, 20 percent
10 and then they'll get a piece of that. And then in
11 six months they'll ask for another 20, 30 percent
12 and they get a piece of that. So they're going to
13 get -- over a period of time they'll get everything
14 they're asking for now and more if history repeats
15 itself and I have no doubt it will.

16 All right. I'm going to cut it a little
17 short. I don't want to belabor the point. Oh, it
18 was brought up earlier in questions about replacing
19 older appliances. I've replaced some of my older
20 appliances. Six years ago I replaced the furnace
21 and air-conditioning in my home, more energy
22 efficient. I replaced -- in last January I replaced
23 a refrigerator in my home.

24 Last year, earlier last year, I took out or
25 removed a freezer I had in my basement, just removed

1 it, took it out of service. All of this to save
2 money but I do not notice it showing up in my rates,
3 in my bills, that I save money. To Ameren maybe a
4 little less money is going out for power to my
5 neighborhood or my area because other people have
6 done the same thing I've done but it doesn't lower
7 my rates any to get this energy efficient appliances
8 in.

9 And now one other little problem. No, it's
10 not a problem. It's just a problem to me a little
11 bit. It was touched on earlier in the
12 question-answer period session about the executives
13 at this company, they get a very nice salary, large
14 salary. They get bonuses, large bonuses. They get
15 stock options, large stock options. They get stock,
16 they get stock options. They get stock straight
17 out, a lot of stock.

18 My question is: What do they do to deserve
19 all of this money they're receiving? What do they
20 do to generate 1 kilowatt of power serving the
21 community or serving the state or the two states
22 they're in? What do they do to deserve this money?

23 To my mind, it's little to nothing because
24 they don't go out on the lines. They don't do
25 anything to provide power to my house, nor to anyone

1 else's. So why not take the profits that are used
2 to pay their bonuses and put that into these
3 hundreds of millions of dollars they need for the
4 infrastructure? Why not take the hundreds of
5 millions of dollars put into advertising and use
6 that instead of asking for more hundreds of millions
7 of dollars from the public?

8 I've got more to say but that's enough.

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Any questions?
10 Mr. Dottheim?

11 MR. DOTTHEIM: Yes, my comment that I
12 would be happy to talk with the gentleman after the
13 remainder of the testimony, that Union Electric
14 company does have an external decommissioning trust
15 fund and has had such extra --

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Your microphone is
17 cutting out.

18 MR. DOTTHEIM: I'm sorry, is that
19 better?

20 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Not really. I think I
21 can speak for Mr. Dottheim, what he's saying, go
22 over and talk to him after the hearing is over and
23 he can answer all your questions about the
24 decommissioning fund and probably also about
25 advertising and executive compensation.

1 MR. MEADOR: Your mic is breaking up
2 too.

3 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Can you hear me now?

4 MR. MEADOR: Yeah.

5 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Technology is
6 wonderful sometimes and causes trouble other times.
7 Well, thank you for testifying, sir.

8 MR. MEADOR: Thank you.

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Next name on the list
10 is Neville Rapp. Good evening.

11 MS. RAPP: Good evening.

12 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Please raise your right
13 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
14 you're about to give in this matter is the truth,
15 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

16 MS. RAPP: I do.

17 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Could you state your
18 name, please?

19 MS. RAPP: My name is Neville Rapp.
20 N-E-V-I-L-L-E, R-A-P-P. Two P's like in Peter.

21 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Go ahead.

22 MS. RAPP: I want to say first, users of
23 electricity in the St. Louis area cannot afford a
24 rate increase. Salaries are not increasing and
25 other expenses are going up and up, increasing the

1 financial burden on low income families who are
2 becoming desperate.

3 But I also want to state that Ameren is stuck
4 in the 20th -- no -- the 19th century. Many other
5 more forward-looking states are making strides into
6 the future, converting to 21st century methods to
7 produce energy: wind, solar. They're shutting down
8 their coal burning power plants and working to
9 combat global warming but Ameren UE is still
10 planning to burn coal far into the future,
11 contributing big time to global warming and planning
12 to store more and more coal ash in the flood plains
13 in the St. Louis area.

14 They plan to give us more and more dirty air
15 with tragic effects on St. Louis residents who have
16 asthma and other respiratory diseases. It makes
17 absolutely no sense for the Public Service
18 Commission to continually allow Ameren UE to raise
19 their rates so they continue to use outdated methods
20 to produce energy and contribute to global warming.

21 Make Ameren UE come up with a new business
22 plan, one that considers the future of the planet
23 and the health of Missouri residents. Thank you.

24 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, ma'am. Any
25 questions?

1 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Thank you for your
2 testimony.

3 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. Next name
4 on the list is Mike Grimes. Good afternoon -- or
5 good evening.

6 Do you solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
7 you're about to give in this matter is the truth,
8 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

9 MR. GRIMES: Yes, sir.

10 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. Could you
11 state your name, please.

12 MR. GRIMES: Mike Grimes. And I live at
13 819 Gannon Avenue in University City. I'm also
14 president of Commercial Energy Consultants. We
15 represent the 25 suppliers available in the Illinois
16 space that help customers lower their electricity
17 and natural gas rates.

18 I would just like to point out a good example
19 of misinformation that's in this market. Ameren had
20 a graph up there that was reported to be a
21 17 percent decrease in rates. And, if you look at
22 that graph closely, the last part of the graph
23 states that they charge 8.7 cents a kilowatt for
24 power and got a 17 percent decrease to get there.

25 You may not know, but I'll tell you, the

1 default rate in Illinois, Ameren Illinois, is 4.5
2 cents. Any low income housing person, any
3 corporation, any consumer can get a 4.5 cent rate
4 versus a purported 8.73 rate. Why is that? Since
5 you're not commenting, I'll tell you.

6 In Illinois, in 1997, they voted to bring in
7 competitive suppliers. That same year Missouri
8 voted not to. Missouri's rates have doubled.
9 Illinois rates have gone -- actually, are in half
10 because of one simple concept and it's called
11 competition.

12 And here's my question: Who's going to
13 educate the public to understand energy
14 deregulation? Who's going to educate this room to
15 know the difference between a competitive supplier
16 or a default rate, a regulated case or a case made
17 from market rates?

18 I think it's incumbent upon the Commission or
19 maybe the Public Service -- the attorneys that
20 represent the consumers, to bring out a concept that
21 can take the default rate for customers from 8.73 to
22 10 miles from here 045, 4 and 1/2 cents. And if
23 that concept is as simple as deregulating the State
24 of Missouri and letting those customers that are in
25 this room pick a supplier on their own, not have to

1 deal with a monopoly, I think the time has come.

2 Mike Grimes, Commercial Energy Consultants,
3 "Why pay more for the exact same power."

4 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Questions from the
5 parties? Ms. Tatro?

6 MS. TATRO: Thank you. Mr. Grimes, are
7 you the same Mr. Grimes that testified earlier today
8 at the public hearing?

9 MR. GRIMES: Yes.

10 MS. TATRO: Thank you.

11 JUDGE WOODRUFF: I do have a question
12 for you, Mr. Grimes. You've been comparing the
13 Ameren Illinois rate to the Ameren Missouri rates?

14 MR. GRIMES: Correct.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Isn't it true that the
16 Ameren Illinois rate is -- provides different
17 services than what the Ameren Missouri rate
18 provides?

19 MR. GRIMES: The exact same service.

20 JUDGE WOODRUFF: The Ameren Illinois
21 rate does not include the energy cost; is that
22 correct?

23 MR. GRIMES: The default rate for Ameren
24 is 4.5 cents.

25 JUDGE WOODRUFF: If you get that rate

1 from Ameren Illinois, what do you get?

2 MR. GRIMES: You get the power, you have
3 to also pay for the delivery. Now, that's 2.5 cents
4 and it equals 6 1/2 cents, that's light years better
5 than 8.73 cents.

6 JUDGE WOODRUFF: An Ameren Illinois
7 customer, would that be the only charge they would
8 have to pay?

9 MR. GRIMES: That's all they pay.

10 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay.

11 MR. GRIMES: Due to one reason:
12 competition.

13 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Thank you, sir.

14 MR. GRIMES: Thank you.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Next name on this list
16 is George Kossl.

17 Do you solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
18 you're about to give in this matter is the truth,
19 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

20 MR. KOSSL: I do.

21 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. And if you
22 could tell -- spell your last name for the court
23 reporter.

24 MR. KOSSL: Yeah. My name is George
25 Kossl, that's K-O-S-S-L and I live at 11873 Majella

1 Drive, Bridgeton, Missouri 63044.

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: What would you like to
3 tell us?

4 MR. KOSSL: I have a question. The
5 question basically, I discussed it before, in 19 --
6 no -- 2007, Ameren UE, yeah, get upgrades
7 \$400,000,000 and one of the representatives, and I
8 think it was at that time either a president or vice
9 president of the company, promised me because we had
10 the 2006, 2007 winter, we had -- I had three days of
11 power outage and others in that area right off the
12 airport we had people who had no power for seven
13 days and they promised us, they promised me, that
14 they're going to put the wire underground.

15 I'm an electrician. I became an electrician
16 in 1952 and I've been an electrician and I also run
17 a business of heating and air-conditioning. And
18 they even sent an engineer out -- first, I got the
19 letter that I have to put a conduit, which is their
20 wire come into the meter and I've got a 6-foot
21 ground where the ground below me and then the
22 concrete over, how would I put the conduit down
23 there? There ain't no way unless I dig the hole in
24 the back of our house.

25 So their engineer, when they come out and

1 talked to me and he actually showed me where he's
2 planning to put a transformer, he said, "We'll run a
3 conduit -- we'll run a conduit next to the telephone
4 pole because the 7200 part of it and we're going to
5 feed these three houses." There's three of us
6 coming off of that one transformer which I got.

7 They put up a big show. They went to
8 different high schools, put this -- bigger rooms
9 than this, what they're going to do, when they're
10 going to do it or how they're going to do it and all
11 that thing and then nothing happened.

12 Now, they had \$400 million. It doesn't cost
13 -- they tell me and I'm in the heating and
14 air-conditioning business and I run all over St.
15 Louis County and even in Illinois, I haven't seen
16 and I have been in almost every area because of
17 heating and air-conditioning service, I haven't seen
18 since 19 -- 2007, anywhere Ameren UE to have a crew
19 out there to put in conduit underground. They said
20 they're going to show me or tell me where it is and
21 I'm going to go out and talk to those customers to
22 find out but they're not as old of a customers as we
23 are right off the airport.

24 So my question is: Can the Public Service
25 Commission make them do those things? They got

1 \$400 million and they can't even put three wires
2 underground? I can't believe that. Well, that's
3 it.

4 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Any questions? Yeah, I
5 think you already mentioned that they might be able
6 to help you outside with -- the Ameren people with
7 the computers out there might be able to tell you
8 more of what their exact plans are.

9 MR. KOSSL: Well, they told me no plans.
10 They run out of funds on that.

11 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay.

12 MR. KOSSL: Well, that was in 2007 and
13 after that they got six more increases, so why do
14 they have to go downtown and put new transformer
15 stations in there when if the snow comes and it's
16 2-foot deep and all that thing and we're out of
17 power or a tractor or a car hits the telephone pole
18 on Natural Bridge and knocks it down and we're out
19 of power? And that's an old subdivision. I'm 78
20 years old and I still have to work.

21 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Well, you can
22 either talk to the Ameren people or if you want to
23 talk to our Staff people back there at the table as
24 you came in and give them the particulars they might
25 be able to help.

1 MR. KOSSL: A lady took my address.

2 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Very good.

3 MR. KOSSL: Thank you.

4 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Thank you.

6 JUDGE WOODRUFF: LaRae Jackson? Good
7 evening. Please raise your right hand. Do you
8 solemnly swear or affirm the testimony you're about
9 to give in this matter is the truth, the whole
10 truth, and nothing but the truth?

11 MS. JACKSON: Yes.

12 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. You may be
13 seated. Can you spell your name for the court
14 reporter?

15 MS. JACKSON: LaRae, L-A-R-A-E, Jackson,
16 J-A-C-K-S-O-N.

17 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Go ahead.

18 MS. JACKSON: Oh, let's see, I'm a total
19 disabled veteran. I'm on a fixed income and the
20 continual rate increases for Ameren exceed mine, and
21 I'm sure many other people's, cost of living. And I
22 would like to understand why they have continued to
23 increase their rates every year, which exceed our
24 increases every year, without the benefits coming
25 back to us.

1 Since I am single, I have no children, then I
2 don't qualify for any type of adjustments to my bill
3 because apparently I don't spend enough because I
4 don't have kids to spend it on.

5 Those -- I agree with what some of the other
6 individuals have stated so I'm not going to
7 reiterate all that again, I just wanted to be on
8 record that not just seniors are struggling to pay
9 these bills but the rest of veterans, disabled
10 veterans, those of us that can't work, that aren't
11 allowed to work.

12 And, unfortunately, this gentleman is 78 and
13 he has to work, you know, but it happens and I just
14 want to understand why and I don't feel that it's
15 justified for the continual annual increase that
16 Ameren requests every year and our income stays the
17 same basically and fewer of us qualify for any type
18 of rate adjustments. That's it.

19 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, ma'am. Any
20 questions?

21 COMMISSIONER STOLL: No, thank you for
22 your testimony though.

23 COMMISSIONER RUPP: Thank you for your
24 service.

25 MS. JACKSON: Thank you.

1 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Tom Wilson? Tom
2 Wilson? Glenda Fields? Glenda Fields? Ivonne
3 Harris? Keith Kallstrom? Good evening.

4 MR. KALLSTROM: Good evening.

5 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Please raise your right
6 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
7 you're about to give in this matter is the truth,
8 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

9 MR. KALLSTROM: I do.

10 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. And if you
11 could spell your name for the court reporter.

12 MR. KALLSTROM: Keith Kallstrom. Last
13 name is spelled K-A-L-L-S-T-R-O-M, as in Mary.

14 JUDGE WOODRUFF: What would you like to
15 tell us?

16 MR. KALLSTROM: I got two issues. One
17 is the reliability side and its related costs and
18 the other is the cost side.

19 According to the information sheet that was
20 passed out about Ameren, the first big bullet point
21 of their filing is they are claiming rising costs of
22 fuel used to generate electricity. I heard on the
23 news tonight, which, therefore, wouldn't be
24 reflected in this, that our fuel costs are down
25 50 percent and they're back to what we were paying

1 back in 2009. So I know that fuel is part of the
2 base rate and it's also part of the fuel surcharge.

3 I'm sure they would probably reduce the fuel
4 surcharge but how much of the base rate would get
5 reduced because of the reduced fuel expense or,
6 alternatively, adjust the rate increase request to
7 accommodate the lower fuel expense that they're also
8 going to be experiencing?

9 My second point is the -- what did I call it
10 before -- the reliability, liability part. On
11 October 31st, 9,000 Ferguson residents were without
12 part due to tampering. That tampering was on one
13 telephone pole where a switch was located by some
14 people in Ferguson that were having fun. They used
15 bolt cutters, cut the lock off because they were
16 able to reach the switch where the lock was at and
17 disconnected the switch and it lost its power.

18 The city did report that to Ameren and that's
19 how the linemen gave us the information about what
20 they had found. They found a broken lock at the
21 bottom of the pole. We then asked Ameren to review
22 all the other switches in the Ferguson area to
23 reengineer them to be elevated as what they changed
24 this particular switch to be once we had told them
25 about that problem. I don't know if Ameren did any

1 of that. I don't know if any of this charge
2 includes any of that cost because I'm looking at
3 that as an engineering error by Ameren, not a public
4 cost that needs to be stuck into a rate increase.

5 And then how much of the rest of North County
6 are these switches at a level where people can cut
7 the locks and turn off power to thousands and
8 thousands of people? That's the end of my comment.

9 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Any questions?
10 Commissioners?

11 COMMISSIONER STOLL: On your first issue
12 you might go to the folks at the table outside with
13 the Public Service Commission and they can inquire
14 out there. They may be able to help you with an
15 explanation of that.

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And I'm curious about
17 too, your second issue about the switch that was
18 accessible to the ground. Are you with the city or
19 something or how did you find out about it?

20 MR. KALLSTROM: I'm a city councilman of
21 Ferguson.

22 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Okay. Well, thank you
23 very much.

24 MR. KALLSTROM: Thank you.

25 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Norma Williams?

1 MS. WILLIAMS: My issues have already
2 been spoken to.

3 JUDGE WOODRUFF: All right. Thank you.
4 Sarah Daniel?

5 MS. DANIEL: I would like to not speak
6 at this time, please.

7 JUDGE WOODRUFF: That's fine.
8 Ms. Daniel was the last name on my list. Is there
9 anyone else here that would like to testify that has
10 not had a chance yet? I see a hand over here. I
11 saw her first and I'll come back to you.

12 Good evening, ma'am. If you could tell us
13 your name, please.

14 MS. FIELDS: My name is Glenda Fields.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: I missed you earlier.
16 You were on the list. Okay. If you want to raise
17 your right hand, I'll swear you in.

18 MS. FIELDS: All right.

19 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Do you solemnly swear
20 or affirm the testimony you're about to give in this
21 matter is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
22 but the truth?

23 MS. FIELDS: I affirm. I do.

24 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Have a seat and tell us
25 what you want to tell us.

1 MS. FIELDS: Well, like most of the
2 people here earlier spoke, I'm one of those people
3 that's on a fixed income. I have been out of work
4 for two years and I found a job working at -- for an
5 early childhood program. We don't make that much
6 money and the more my bills go up, my salary has not
7 gone up at all and I have to go back to school to
8 get another degree in order for me to maintain my
9 job.

10 So my job is contingent on children that we
11 have in our program, so if we lose children then we
12 lose hours, which means I lose money and I'm not
13 able to pay my bills like I really want to. The
14 more they increase the rates, the less money I bring
15 in and, you know, I'm having a hard time right now
16 trying to pay my bills.

17 So you know, it's very, very hard for me to
18 maintain like everybody else in this building
19 because there's no jobs, there's no money, I'm not
20 making enough. So it's very, very hard for me to
21 keep paying excessive amounts of electric bills. I
22 can't afford it. That's it.

23 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, ma'am. Any
24 questions?

25 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Thank you for your

1 testimony.

2 MS. FIELDS: You're welcome.

3 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you. I saw a
4 gentleman over here. Could you tell us your name,
5 please?

6 MR. FAULKNER: Curtis Faulkner.

7 JUDGE WOODRUFF: And what would you like
8 to tell us?

9 MR. FAULKNER: I'm going to say that, as
10 the last meeting, I'm going to ask you: Is this the
11 proper time? We're faced here, in particular in St.
12 Louis -- I'm a resident here in North County. I'm a
13 very involved resident here in North County. We're
14 facing a number of issues that we're going to have
15 to deal with in the next year or so regarding loss
16 of population, which is a statewide issue that
17 affects revenue, as you well know gravely.

18 And we're going to have to make a lot of
19 adjustments. We got five school districts out here
20 that educate about 60 percent of all black kids in
21 St. Louis County, all of which are struggling.
22 Money is not going to be dependable any longer from
23 the standpoint of the state with the last issues
24 we've had with Ferguson.

25 We are having to make some adjustments here

1 and in the city. I can't speak as directly for the
2 city because I don't live in the city but I know
3 that they're doing things as well. The city has
4 just increased fees for parking, for example, to try
5 to make up for loss revenue for the hundred or so
6 more policemen they wish to hire for \$8 million.

7 Here in North County, you know, we're going
8 to have to eliminate municipalities. We're going to
9 have to do rate adjustments for property taxes to
10 try to create a fair rate that will help sustain our
11 school districts. We may even have to actually have
12 some school districts develop plans to where we ask
13 for as much as \$2 a month from the residents to be
14 able to try to offset deficits that we currently
15 face and knowing that we can't apply and depend upon
16 performance any longer from the state.

17 So my question: Is this the right time for a
18 company like Ameren to do this? As you heard me
19 mention earlier, it's a domino effect. As these
20 people here often talk, you're talking about people
21 on fixed incomes and those who are not on fixed
22 incomes that are younger, are mostly unemployed.

23 As you heard me mention to Ameren, you know,
24 we have a societal situation that is grave. No
25 one asks, including the courts, if money that is

1 required is legal and so what you find yourself
2 creating in this situation of the constantly rates
3 increasing -- I haven't even touched on, yeah, right
4 now we're doing good with gasoline but is that going
5 to last during the time that this rate increase is
6 happening and gas is going up as well?

7 But my point being is, as a community person,
8 there are a number of issues and we're having a
9 difficult time trying to tackle them not only
10 locally but from the state, as you well know.
11 Biggest problem that we face, period, is how do we
12 reestablish our community? How do we reestablish
13 the viability of this state to be a good place to
14 live, work and play, to bring people back as opposed
15 to people saying I want to get out?

16 You know, we've got people that are
17 foreclosing their homes here in North County because
18 of Ferguson and moving -- you know, taking their
19 losses and moving to West County. We're going to
20 have to make some hard decisions as to how do we
21 sustain ourselves. How do we attract businesses?
22 That's a problem that the state has as well. How do
23 we attract businesses? The competition for that and
24 constantly increases of various kinds of utility
25 services is not going to help us make those

1 decisions any better or anymore effectively.

2 And so I can only ask that in caution that
3 this may not be a good time, as was not a couple of
4 years ago, to allow Ameren to do this. I understand
5 that they wish to provide a lot of different things
6 and I'm sure they're all good. Myself, personally,
7 there's something right across the highway here, I
8 don't know what you call but it's one of their
9 facilities that controls all of the electricity on
10 the grid for my home all the way to Christian
11 Northeast Hospital. It went down last year. It
12 took them three days to get it back up.

13 You know, and so I know that these things are
14 necessary but we're all, as a state and as cities
15 and municipalities, we're suffering right now
16 because we've got a bad brand and we've got to find
17 how to do that and sometimes these brands our
18 connected with our increased rates of utilities.

19 You know, we've got an argument about state
20 income tax being something that helps our brand also
21 be questionable about companies coming here,
22 individuals. So I'm just not sure that now is the
23 right time for us to consider adding another utility
24 rate.

25 And I'll close by saying this, the utilities

1 that you regulate are multiple, communications
2 companies, as I mentioned earlier, it's connected to
3 the same thing. When people who are on fixed
4 incomes and have limited capabilities of
5 entertainment even to pass the time of day, you
6 know, to be able to watch a TV show, a series,
7 becomes the most that they can possibly do.

8 And they're all connected. Everyone is going
9 up. Those rates are going up and I'm sure you
10 already know that. And I'll ask you too, look at
11 No. 13 in your upgrades now, in the upgrades for
12 AT&T. They're now asking in their policy change, as
13 of 11 -- January 11th of this year, in a couple of
14 days, to say that their customers can no longer
15 waive their rights to take them to small claims for
16 disputes for billing.

17 You and I know that those companies do a bait
18 and switch. They get customers in, every two or
19 three months you have got to renegotiate and, if
20 not, you're getting bigger bills. All of these
21 things are happening at the same time simultaneously
22 and we just can't afford it as a state and we sure
23 can't afford it as a community.

24 So, you know, until we have a chance to kind
25 of level out, get our sea legs under us in reference

1 to the transitions we're forced to make because of
2 Ferguson, I think that these particular increases
3 are not timely and I ask that you, in turn, disallow
4 it.

5 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir. Any
6 questions? I wanted to ask you, sir, are you part
7 of any organizations or speaking just for yourself?

8 MR. FAULKNER: Yes. Yes, I'm -- a
9 couple of organizations. I'm the founding director
10 for an organization called the Juneteenth Heritage &
11 Jazz Festival, which is an effort that was brought
12 here to try to help the state in creating new
13 revenue in heritage and culture tourism.

14 And I've been 16 years on the budget and
15 steering committee for the Hazelwood School
16 District. And so I'm very much involved in how do
17 we create and sustain North County and we've got a
18 multitude of challenges right now and all of which
19 are going to require revenue and there's not very
20 much to be had.

21 And so, to that point, any kind of assistance
22 we can get, in particular again here in North
23 County, if Ameren says, okay, we can help with some
24 of these things then it might sound a little bit
25 different but I don't know that they're going to do

1 any of that and so we have to depend upon you to, in
2 turn, help us make sure that we don't get
3 overburdened to the point where we can't even make
4 plans to be able to try and to sustain our own
5 communities.

6 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Well, thank you very
7 much for coming tonight.

8 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Was there anyone else
11 who wished to testify? Yes, sir. Tell us your
12 name, please.

13 MR. RAMIREZ: Daniel Ramirez.

14 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Ramirez?

15 MR. RAMIREZ: Ramirez. R-A-M-I-R-E-Z.

16 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Please raise your right
17 hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm the testimony
18 you're about to give in this matter is the truth,
19 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

20 MR. RAMIREZ: Yes.

21 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Go ahead. Just a
22 comment on service with Ameren. I've had good
23 experiences. I have had a technician go to my house
24 and actually go beyond the service that was asked of
25 him. He actually probably broke the rules of Ameren

1 to help me out.

2 In regards to the presentations Ameren
3 presented today though, every keyword I saw was the
4 word "investment," which the word investment means a
5 return. You know, people invest to gain a profit,
6 to gain. And, based on this increase that Ameren is
7 asking for, it seems like the way they presented it,
8 it's a gain for them and not for the customer,
9 ourselves of value.

10 I don't see any value added to us, as
11 consumers, in regards to this increase so I just ask
12 the Commission to do their due diligence and really
13 look into that because I'm fine with an increase but
14 if I can see value, to me, as a consumer.

15 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Thank you, sir.

16 COMMISSIONER STOLL: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 JUDGE WOODRUFF: Questions? Thank you.
19 Anyone else wishing to testify?

20 I don't see any other hands going up, so with
21 that, I'll thank you all for coming out tonight.
22 Stay warm tonight. We are adjourned.

23 - - - - -

24 (Public Hearing concluded at 7:48 p.m.)

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