

1  
2  
3  
4 STATE OF MISSOURI  
5  
6 PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
7  
8 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13 PUBLIC HEARING  
14  
15 SEPTEMBER 26, 2006  
16  
17 KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI 63552  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1       STATE OF MISSOURI  
2       PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
3       TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
4       PUBLIC HEARING  
5       SEPTEMBER 26, 2006  
6       KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI     63552  
7       In the Matter of Atmos Energy )  
8       Corporation's Tariff Revision )  
9       Designed to Consolidate Rules ) Case No. GR-2006-0387  
10      and Implement a General Rate )  
11      Increase for Natural Gas        )  
12      Service in the Missouri )  
13      Service Area of the )  
14      Company )  
15                               NANCY DIPPELL, Presiding  
16      DEPUTY CHIEF REGULATORY LAW JUDGE  
17      COMMISSIONER ROBERT CLAYTON  
18      COMMISSIONER STEVE GAW  
19      REPORTED BY: TONI K. RIEKEBERG  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1  
2 APPEARANCES  
3 REPRESENTING OFFICE OF PUBLIC COUNSEL:  
4 MR. MARC D. POSTON  
5 GOVERNOR OFFICE BUILDING  
6 200 MADISON STREET  
7 P.O. BOX 2230  
8 JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65102  
9 REPRESENTING ATMOS ENERGY CORPORATION:  
10 MR. JIM FISCHER  
11 ATTORNEY AT LAW  
12 101 MARKET STREET  
13 P.O. BOX 404  
14 JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101  
15 REPRESENTING PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION:  
16 MR. BOB BERLIN  
17 ATTORNEY AT LAW  
18 P.O. BOX 360  
19 JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

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

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: GR2006-0387 public

3 hearing in the Atmos Energy Corporation rate case.

4 This is a case in which Atmos seeks to implement a

5 general rate increase. The Missouri Public Service

6 Commission regulates the rates charged by investor

7 owned utility companies in Missouri to ensure that

8 those rates are just and reasonable. The Commission

9 also regulates the quality of service and the safety of

10 the operation of investor-owned utilities. My name is

11 Nancy Dippell. I am a Regulatory Law Judge for the

12 Missouri Public Service Commission, and I will be

13 presiding over today's hearing. As you can tell we are

14 videoconferencing this hearing from our office in

15 Jefferson City, so that myself, some of our staff, and

16 I believe at least one of the other Commissioners will

17 be joining us shortly. As you can see Commissioner

18 Clayton is there in Kirksville and we are also

19 streaming this video over our web site. So with me

20 today are Commissioner Steve Gaw, and there may be a

21 little bit of a delay in the streaming, so you may see

22 or hear things a little disjointed sometimes. The

23 Commission is made up of five Commissioners, and the

24 Commissioners are appointed by the Governor for fixed

25 terms, and confirmed by the Senate. Those

1 Commissioners employ staff, engineers, accountants,  
2 attorneys and financial analysts and other specialist  
3 in the field of utility regulation. In Kirksville we  
4 also have some of our staff there and we have Kevin  
5 Kelly with our information office. You probably met  
6 him already, and Mr. Tom Enhoff (phonetic), he is also  
7 with the Commission's staff. If you have questions  
8 after this hearing they would be happy to answer  
9 anything they can. We have, I believe, Mr. Poston is  
10 in Kirksville.

11 MR. POSTON: Yes, I'm here.

12 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Poston is with the  
13 Office of the Public Counsel. In addition, Atmos has  
14 some representatives present in Kirksville. Mr.  
15 Fisher, would you like to introduce yourself and some  
16 of the Atmos people?

17 MR. FISCHER: Yes, Judge, my name is Jim  
18 Fischer. I'm an attorney in Jefferson City and we  
19 represent Atmos Energy in this matter. I also have  
20 with me today Pat Childers (phonetic) who is Vice-  
21 President of Regulatory for Atmos, as well as Steve  
22 Green who does a lot of the Missouri operations. We  
23 also have a number of folks from the local Kirksville  
24 area. And to the extent that consumers have billing  
25 questions or quality of service problems, we can deal

1     with today, we would be very much appreciative if we  
2     could do that.

3     JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Mr. Fischer.

4     Also here in Jefferson City I have staff counsel Mr.  
5     Bob Berlin, and some other members of the staff as  
6     well. I would like to thank Truman State University  
7     for providing us a facility and just note that the  
8     comments and the statements made at this hearing today  
9     are not necessarily the opinion of the University.  
10    This is an official hearing of the Missouri Public  
11    Service Commission, and as such the statement and  
12    testimony will be recorded by a court reporter and will  
13    be taken down under oath or affirmation. In addition  
14    to this local hearing, a trial -type evidentiary  
15    hearing may be held later in November, starting on  
16    November 27 at the Commission's offices and the  
17    Governor Office Building. That hearing is a public  
18    hearing where the company attempts to show to the  
19    Commission why its plan is in the public interest. The  
20    purpose of this current hearing is to receive comments  
21    from the public regarding the rate increase. The  
22    company will not present witnesses and will not  
23    necessarily answer questions while we're on the record,  
24    though they are there to answer questions or offer any  
25    help that they may be able to after the public comment

1 session. This is your opportunity to comment to the  
2 Commission and your remarks will become part of the  
3 official record in the case. If you wish to testify  
4 and you've not already done so, you can let Mr. Kelly  
5 know to put your name on the sign-up sheet. Otherwise  
6 after we've gotten through the witnesses who have  
7 signed up, I will ask if there's anyone else that would  
8 like to speak. When your name is called please forward  
9 to the microphone and spell your name for the court  
10 reporter. I will swear you in and I will ask you your  
11 name and address and whether you're a customer of  
12 Atmos. Then you can give your comments to the  
13 Commission, and there may be some questions for you  
14 from some of the Commissioners, or from some of the  
15 attorneys present. So I will ask you to stay at the  
16 microphone until I excuse you.

17 At this time I would ask the attorneys to  
18 make entries of appearance. Let's begin with Mr.  
19 Berlin here in Jefferson City.

20 MR. BERLIN: Bob Berlin appearing on  
21 behalf of the staff of the Missouri Public Service  
22 Commission, Post Office Box 360, Jefferson City,  
23 Missouri 65102.

24 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Mr. Poston?

25 MR. POSTON: Thank you. Mark Poston

1 appearing for the Office of the Public Counsel.

2 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Fischer.

3 MR. FISCHER: Yes, my name is James

4 Fischer with Fischer & Daugherty, P.C. Our mailing

5 address is 101 Madison Street, Suite 400, Jefferson

6 City, Missouri, appearing today on behalf of Atmos

7 Energy Corporation.

8 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton,

9 would you like to make any opening remarks?

10 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: That would be

11 great, Judge, if you would just indulge me for a few

12 minutes. I wanted to welcome everyone that's here

13 today. My name is Robert Clayton. I'm a member of the

14 Missouri Public Service Commission. I have been to

15 Kirksville many times, and it's always a privilege to

16 come to Truman State University. I want to thank the

17 Truman staff that are here today and also our own IT

18 Specialist, Todd Craig, for making this hookup work.

19 The hookup is working very well. You are coming in

20 very clearly, Judge, and we are glad that the

21 technology is working with us, because that doesn't

22 always occur, so thank you gentlemen for being here.

23 We have, I know, two people that are signed up at this

24 time. We are right in the middle school and parking

25 may be an issue out there, so we may want to wait just



1 a little bit to see if anyone else comes in. Having  
2 said that, I appreciate everyone being here today and,  
3 Judge, I will go ahead and tell you there are two  
4 members of the public that would like to testify, and  
5 it was suggested that maybe they could come up together  
6 and introduce themselves. I think their issues are one  
7 and the same, and if there's no objection from you, of  
8 course. Their names are Ms. Nellie Smith and Ms. Irene  
9 Weber.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: That's fine. Ms, Smith  
11 and Mr. Weber, if you would like to come forward.  
12 Thank you for coming today. If I could get  
13 you to raise your right hand.  
14 NELLIE SMITH AND IRENE WEBER,  
15 having been sworn by the Judge, testified as follows:

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Could I get each of you  
17 to give us your name and spell it?

18 MS. WEBER: My name is Mrs. Irene Weber,  
19 W-e-b-e-r.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Ms. Smith.

21 MS. SMITH: My name is Nellie, N-e-l-l-i-  
22 e, Smith, S-m-i-t-h.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: And could I get each of  
24 your addresses?

25 MS. SMITH: It's the same 912 West

1     Burton.

2     JUDGE DIPPELL:   Okay.   And that's in

3     Kirksville?

4     MS. SMITH:   Yes.

5     JUDGE DIPPELL:   Okay.   If you could go

6     ahead then with your comments.

7     MS. SMITH:   Well, the only thing, since

8     no one else is here, an issue would be for elderly and

9     fixed income people.   If they continue to raise the

10    utilities that would be a concern for the fixed income

11    people.

12   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Okay.   And so you're

13   saying that that would be a concern for the both of you

14   as well?

15   MS. SMITH:   Yes.

16   MS. WEBER:   I'm concerned that it could

17   force people in my position out of our homes, when we

18   are able to take care of ourselves but not able to meet

19   our utilities.   If they continue to rise, that is a

20   real concern for me.

21   JUDGE DIPPELL:   Okay.   Thank you.

22   Commissioner Gaw, would you like to ask any additional

23   questions?

24   COMMISSIONER GAW:   Good afternoon.   How

25   are you?

1 MS. SMITH: Fine, thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Can you hear me okay?

3 MS. SMITH: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER GAW: Just a couple of

5 things to follow up on what you both have just said.

6 Would it be possible to give a little bit of detail on

7 how you think people dealing with fixed incomes are

8 impacted today with the prices of fuel and gasoline and

9 electricity? And just, particularly, if you know of

10 anyone that is having some difficulty making ends meet

11 or have specifics about having to make difficult

12 choices regarding things that most people consider

13 necessities?

14 MS. WEBER: I know that people in my

15 position have cut back on travel and various things

16 connected to that because utility costs continue to

17 rise and fixed incomes don't. I am past working age.

18 COMMISSIONER GAW: Yes, ma'am. Well, do

19 you have friends who are also in your position

20 regarding being on a fixed income and having

21 difficulties with the expenses that you are seeing

22 today?

23 MS. WEBER: The only people that I have

24 visited about this, have told me how much they have cut

25 back on the time they spend going places in their car.

1     That's the only thing, which --

2     COMMISSIONER GAW: I see. Did you see

3     anything in -- I'm sorry. I might have interrupted.

4     MS. SMITH: No.

5     COMMISSIONER GAW: Did you see anything

6     last winter, in particular, that was a concern to you

7     with regard to your gas bills, to your home heating

8     bills?

9     MS. WEBER: Well, I was working last

10    winter.

11    COMMISSIONER GAW: I see.

12    MS. WEBER: So I was struggling to keep

13    up, but I was keeping up.

14    COMMISSIONER GAW: So now you think that

15    you are in a more difficult position with your income?

16    MS. WEBER: Yes. My income and my age.

17    COMMISSIONER GAW: And you think that --

18    and you know there are other people out there that are

19    in a similar position?

20    MS. WEBER: Yes. We have not discussed

21    it, but yes.

22    COMMISSIONER GAW: Is there anything else

23    you would like to add along that line? And if not I

24    will stop for now.

25    MS. WEBER: (Shakes head).

1 MS. SMITH: (Shakes head).

2 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Thank you both

3 very much.

4 JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton, did

5 you have anything additional?

6 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Thank you, Judge,

7 I do have a couple of questions if our witnesses would

8 be patient with me. I kind of got them to come up here

9 and say what was on their mind, and I appreciate you

10 all making yourself available. The first question I

11 wanted to ask you, you are both customers of Atmos Gas.

12 Is that correct?

13 MS. SMITH: It's in her name, but I'm

14 secondary because we're at the same house.

15 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. You're at

16 the same address. So you're both customers of Atmos.

17 What do you think of the quality of service with Atmos?

18 Are you satisfied with the level of service that they

19 give you?

20 MS. SMITH: I think they do well, yes.

21 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Have you ever had

22 any cutoffs or difficulties with --

23 MS. SMITH: No.

24 MS. WEBER: No.

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Have you ever had

1     any problems with billing, with maybe an error being on  
2     your bill, maybe something not being -- your meter not  
3     being read properly? Have you ever had any billing  
4     problems?

5     MR. SMITH: We just had a question, but  
6     they have worked with us on it about the estimation,  
7     which I had mentioned. But that was the only thing  
8     we've had lately.

9     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You all are on an  
10    estimated, kind of a budget billing program?

11    MS. SMITH: Yeah, budget billing, but  
12    when they don't read it and estimate, that was a  
13    question. But I think that would probably be --

14    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Are you satisfied  
15    with how they do the budget billing?

16    MS. SMITH: Yes. I understand. I did  
17    have some questions. They answered those questions,  
18    but it --

19    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did it change at a  
20    time when you didn't anticipate that it would change?  
21    Did it go up when you thought it was going to go down,  
22    something like that?

23    MS. SMITH: Yes. But that's because they  
24    have explained that to us that it's because of history.  
25    But yes, it did. It went up when we expected it to go

1 down.

2 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: How often do they  
3 change it? Is it twice a year, once a year?

4 MS. SMITH: I think pretty much -- what  
5 they are trying to avoid, which they have told us, is  
6 that the shock, you know, that you get when you have  
7 your make-up month, your catch-up month, they were  
8 trying to avoid that, and there's some validity to  
9 that, but --

10 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: But gas prices  
11 these days, it's hard to avoid that shock, isn't it?

12 MS. SMITH: Yes. And so that was the  
13 concern, but I think they have explained it  
14 satisfactorily.

15 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Have you  
16 ever -- you mentioned you contacted Atmos Energy and  
17 you spoke with their Customer Service Department. Is  
18 that who you talked to?

19 MS. SMITH: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And were you  
21 satisfied with the way they treated you?

22 MS. SMITH: I was not satisfied with  
23 their explanation, with the Customer Service  
24 Department. I didn't feel that they did as well as the  
25 local people did.

1 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Where did you go  
2 first? Did you go to the local folks or --  
3 MS. SMITH: No, we didn't have a local  
4 contact.  
5 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: It's hard to find  
6 an Atmos Energy phone number in the book, isn't it?  
7 MS. SMITH: Yes.  
8 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Yeah.  
9 MS. SMITH: So we contacted the 800  
10 number.  
11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.  
12 MS. SMITH: And no, I was not, to be  
13 honest, totally satisfied.  
14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. When you  
15 say you weren't satisfied, you weren't satisfied with  
16 the answer because you didn't believe the answer, or  
17 were they not answering your question? Can you  
18 elaborate? Was it just the answer you weren't  
19 anticipating, or did they do something wrong?  
20 MS. SMITH: They didn't -- well --  
21 MS. WEBER: They didn't understand.  
22 MS. SMITH: I don't think that they  
23 didn't understand it. They didn't explain it fully to  
24 me. I was the one that talked to them on her behalf,  
25 and they didn't explain it to me as fully so that I



1     could understand it --

2     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   Okay.

3     MS. SMITH:   -- and agree with it.   What

4     they said I do not -- I did not feel comfortable with

5     what they said.

6     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   Did you get a

7     satisfactory answer at some point, perhaps at the local

8     level?

9     MS. SMITH:   Yes, I did.

10    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   When did that

11    occur?

12    MS. SMITH:   After I talked to the local

13    people.

14    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   I see.

15    MS. SMITH:   I don't necessarily know that

16    I agree with everything, but I do understand it and I

17    understand their point of view.

18    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   Okay.

19    MS. SMITH:   And I think they are -- they

20    are not trying to be unfair and they are trying to be

21    fair, so I will say that.

22    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   Okay.

23    MS. SMITH:   But I did get satisfaction

24    from the local office.

25    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:   And it was a lot

1 easier working with someone face-to-face or at least  
2 close by?

3 MS. SMITH: Close by, uh-huh, yes.

4 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did you know the  
5 employee that you spoke to?

6 MS. SMITH: It is some -- we used to pay  
7 our bill -- that's another thing that we have concern.  
8 We can't -- it's hard. We don't have a local office,  
9 you don't have local contact if there's a problem, and  
10 this person had been a person we contacted before when  
11 we paid our bill, and so yes we did. It turned out  
12 that that is the person that we had paid. She had gone  
13 in, mom had gone in and paid.

14 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Are you aware, or  
15 are either of you aware of anyone who's had their  
16 service cut off?

17 MS. SMITH: No.

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Are either of you  
19 aware of services that are available for not  
20 necessarily you, but people that you may know that  
21 would be on fixed incomes, perhaps lower fixed incomes  
22 that have difficulty paying their bill?

23 MS. WEBER: We have investigated that.

24 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. And you're  
25 aware that there are some programs that are out there

1 to help people? There's a Low Income Program, there's  
2 a Weatherization Program. How knowledgeable are you?  
3 Do you know they exist, or do you want more  
4 information?

5 MS. SMITH: They do -- they exist and  
6 they help later on, but not right now. They don't  
7 start until October. They don't help people on the  
8 budget -- you know, if your budget billing gets higher,  
9 then your monthly project will handle, but it's not  
10 available, the way I understand it. Now, maybe I don't  
11 understand.

12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

13 MS. SMITH: But the gas company does work  
14 with you on that.

15 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Who is your  
16 electric service with in Kirksville?

17 MS. SMITH: Ameren.

18 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Ameren is?

19 MS. SMITH: Yes.

20 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. And can I  
21 ask who your phone service is? Do you mind if I ask  
22 that?

23 MS. SMITH: AT&T, Southwestern Bell.

24 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You all live in  
25 town.

1 MS. SMITH: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay, okay.

3 Great. Well, thank you for answering my questions. Is  
4 there anything else that I've missed or anything else  
5 that you want to add?

6 MS. SMITH: (Shakes head).

7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Thank you  
8 all very much for coming, and I don't know if there are  
9 any other Commissioners, Judge, who are there. I have  
10 no further questions.

11 JUDGE DIPPELL: That's all the  
12 Commissioners, but let me ask really quick to see if  
13 there are any questions from the attorneys. Mr.  
14 Berlin, did you have any questions?

15 MR. BERLIN: I have no questions, Judge.  
16 Thank you.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Mr. Poston,  
18 did you want to ask anything?

19 MR. POSTON: No questions. Thank you.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Fischer.

21 MR. FISCHER: No thank you. I have no  
22 questions.

23 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you both very much  
24 for coming and for testifying. We appreciate it.

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Thank you, ladies.

1 JUDGE DIPPELL: Has anyone else arrived  
2 that might like to testify.

3 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Mr. Kelly's just  
4 handed me a sheet that Ms. Sylvia Macauley of  
5 Kirksville has signed up to testify.

6 JUDGE DIPPELL: Okay. Ms. Macauley, will  
7 you come forward?

8 SYLVIA MACAULEY,  
9 having been sworn by the Judge, testified as follows.

10 JUDGE DIPPELL: If you could give us your  
11 name and spell it and give us your address?

12 A. Sylvia, S-y-l-v-i-a, Macauley, M-a-c-a-u-  
13 l-e-y.

14 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Could you  
15 give us your address?

16 A. 92 Meadow Road, Kirksville.

17 JUDGE DIPPELL: And are you a customer of  
18 Atmos.

19 A. Yes, I am.

20 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. If you could  
21 give us your comments, please.

22 A. I am concerned about the proposed  
23 increase, because last year there was another increase  
24 as I was made to understand, and I first -- I found out  
25 about that from the shocking increase in my bill that I

1 got last winter. And like the people who just  
2 testified before me, that shock sent me calling that  
3 800 number to find out what happened. And like they  
4 testified, I also was not happy with the response that  
5 I got from them. But last week I went to the local  
6 office and spent quite a bit of time with the lady. I  
7 don't remember her name, but it was a lady who took  
8 some time to explain the reason for the sharp increase  
9 in the bill that I got. And this was after I had  
10 compared notes with my neighbors, and they were also in  
11 shock, you know, with the bill that they got. So  
12 anyway I went to the local office and the first thing  
13 that the lady told me was that there had been an  
14 increase in the per unit charge, and so all that  
15 combined with the harsh weather contributed to the  
16 sharp increase that I was seeing. And she pointed out  
17 to me that the per unit charge had increased from like  
18 \$.29 to something like \$.79, which is like 150%  
19 increase. And that was just last year. So when I got  
20 this notice in the mail about another increase, I was  
21 really concerned, because ever since last year -- I  
22 mean most of the homes in Kirksville are older homes,  
23 and I live in one such older home, which would not, at  
24 the time they were built were not well-insulated. And  
25 so since that shock last year I have also gone to the

1 budget billing plan. And I mean, I am not an elderly  
2 person by any means. I am in a much better position  
3 than the senior citizens who just testified, but it is  
4 also affecting me financially. I work here at Truman,  
5 but it's affecting my bottom line. For the last four  
6 or five years or so we went, we at Truman went without  
7 any increase in our salary because of the budget crisis  
8 in the state. And we had to still find ways to make,  
9 you know, our bottom lines meet. Prices were going up  
10 all around us, but we were not getting any increase.  
11 And after about four or so years, this year we got like  
12 a 3% increase. So I mean, how does that square off  
13 with 150% increase in the energy cost for last year.  
14 And now we're facing another potential increase. So  
15 those are my concerns.

16 JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you Mr. Macauley.

17 I'm just going to briefly kind of make a statement  
18 here. And I apologize, I'm not a technical person.  
19 Mr. Enhoff is there from our staff can explain this  
20 better, but the part of your rate increase that the  
21 Commission has control over is the basic cost of doing  
22 business, and that is the part of your rate increase  
23 that the Commission regulates. The actual cost of the  
24 natural gas is not regulated by the Commission as such,  
25 and that I believe is the cost that you saw go up so

1       drastically last year. Those costs are sort of based  
2       on the market and the Commission unfortunately does not  
3       have control over those fluctuations. So this is a  
4       separate increase, that standard monthly charge and the  
5       basic cost of the company doing business. So I just  
6       wanted to state that to try to give a little bit of  
7       explanation. And again, our staff that are there can  
8       explain it a lot better to you than I'm doing, but I  
9       appreciate you coming and giving your testimony.

10      Commissioner Gaw, did you want to ask any questions of  
11      Ms. Macauley?

12      COMMISSIONER GAW: (No audible response).

13      JUDGE DIPPELL: Commissioner Clayton, did  
14      you have questions?

15      COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Commissioner Gaw  
16      is going to pass on questions?

17      JUDGE DIPPELL: He said he might if he  
18      has something after you.

19      COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Ms.  
20      Macauley, thank you very much for coming here today.  
21      Did you say you were an employee of the University?

22      A. Yes.

23      COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: So parking wasn't  
24      an issue for you, was it?

25      A. Right.



1 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You were already  
2 parked?  
3 A. Right.  
4 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You've got a  
5 parking place somewhere.  
6 A. Yes.  
7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: As opposed to some  
8 of us who had to go like three or four blocks away.  
9 A. Yes, but our, you know, all of that is  
10 based on the cost of living on where you live.  
11 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I understand. I'm  
12 just complaining because I had to walk three blocks and  
13 that's my problem. But I appreciate your being here.  
14 It makes it easier for a University employee to  
15 participate. I guess I want to thank you for allowing  
16 us to use this facility. I wanted to ask you about  
17 your perspective regarding customer service and quality  
18 of service. First of all, are you satisfied with the  
19 quality of service that you get from Atmos Energy?  
20 A. Yeah.  
21 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Does it work and  
22 works when you want it to work, and if it doesn't work,  
23 do people fix it promptly?  
24 A. Yeah.  
25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. And you

1     mentioned that you have spoken with the Customer  
2     Service people at Atmos Energy at least on one  
3     occasion?

4     A. Um-hmm.

5     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And would you --  
6     were you satisfied? Perhaps you are not happy with the  
7     gas prices, but were you satisfied with the quality of  
8     the customer service that you received?

9     A. Not the national 800 level, but with the  
10    local, yes.

11    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Why were you not  
12    happy with it? Were they dismissive? Were they --  
13    tell me why you weren't happy and why you were happy at  
14    Kirksville.

15    A. Okay. Initially like I said, the shock  
16    of the bill was what sent me calling. And I was trying  
17    to get answers to help me understand why the huge  
18    difference. And for whatever reason it didn't seem  
19    like the person on the other side of the line was, I  
20    don't know, understanding what I was trying to ask.  
21    And at some point I started to feel like this person  
22    was just being hostile, like I got the impression like  
23    this person thought I was just being a difficult  
24    customer, and I was just trying to understand why this  
25    huge increase, because I'm somebody who keeps up with

1     my bills every month, month to month. And it's not  
2     just with Atmos, but all of my bills.

3     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Were they -- you -  
4     -I'm trying to understand. Was it in the tone of their  
5     voice? Did they say something that would suggest that  
6     you were just looking for trouble or something like  
7     that?

8     A. No, they didn't say something. I guess,  
9     you know, it probably was just in the tone, but I, you  
10    know, I got off that phone and I was not happy.

11    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

12    A. And that's when I went to the local  
13    office.

14    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And how did you  
15    find the local office?

16    A. I just remembered that I had seen a  
17    building with a sign that said Atmos somewhere in town,  
18    and so that's how I went back and retraced my steps to  
19    find them.

20    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: You retraced your  
21    steps because you remembered seeing a building?

22    A. Um-hmm.

23    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And you just went  
24    in the front door and spoke with somebody there.

25    A. Right.

1 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And how was their  
2 attitude with your inquiry?

3 A. Like I said, the lady was, she was  
4 helpful and, you know, almost sympathetic, you know, to  
5 my concerns. She was explaining that, you know, she  
6 had the same problems too. But the bottom line is, she  
7 was able to take the time to go through step by step to  
8 explain to me, and she was the one who actually pointed  
9 out that first of all, part of this sharp increase had  
10 to do with that increase in per unit cost, so I was  
11 able to understand that.

12 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

13 A. So even though I wasn't happy with the  
14 rate increase, at least I was able to understand why it  
15 happened.

16 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: I understand.

17 Okay, that is helpful. Can you -- are you satisfied --  
18 you're on budget billing now.

19 A. Right.

20 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And are you  
21 satisfied with how budget billing has worked for you,  
22 or was it explained to you? Has it worked the way you  
23 anticipated? Have there been any surprises?

24 A. Initially yes, because it wasn't, it  
25 wasn't very clear, because the way it works, it's, you

1     know, as I found out later, there's some delay in it.  
2     And so that confused me for the first couple months.  
3     But again, when I went back to the local office, you  
4     know, we had a whole printout, and again the lady was  
5     very helpful there --

6     Q. Okay.

7     A. -- in trying to explain that.

8     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Have you had any  
9     other problems with the bill that you received, any  
10    other billing issues or problems or meter reading  
11    problems that you are aware of?

12    A. No, no.

13    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay.

14    A. See, my main concern about another  
15    increase, whether it's with a unit cost or a day to day  
16    cost, it's just another increase in the cost. Because  
17    like I said, I had to take a number of steps last year,  
18    and I'm not alone. Like I said, you know, a number of  
19    my immediate neighbors, who are senior citizens, are in  
20    that position. And some of the things that I have done  
21    was to get a loan to change my windows, for instance.  
22    Just yesterday I had more insulation blown into my  
23    attic, and I'm heavily in debt now for that. And I'm  
24    here hearing about another increase, so these are the  
25    reasons why I'm concerned.

1 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Do you believe  
2 that -- are there places where you can find more  
3 information, or that you did find information how to  
4 make your home more energy efficient or more  
5 weatherized? Did you do that on your own?

6 A. Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Did you call the  
8 company and ask for suggestions?

9 A. I did all that on my own.

10 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Do you have any  
11 suggestions of things that the Public Service  
12 Commission could do to help educate people? You don't  
13 need to be educated because you've taken the steps, you  
14 have taken a number of important steps to try to reduce  
15 the usage in your home. Is there more activity that  
16 the Commission could do to help people make those  
17 decisions or answer questions that they might have?

18 A. I don't know. I mean you can provide the  
19 information all you want, but if you don't have the  
20 wherewithal to carry them out, it's still not going to  
21 help you, especially if you're facing another increase,  
22 you know. Like I said, now I'm having to pay back that  
23 loan when my bank just told me a month ago that the  
24 rates also are going up on those loans.

25 COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: And I got one of

1       them too.

2       A. Right. So it's just the cumulative

3       effect. And now I'm hearing about another increase.

4       That's the reason for my concern.

5       COMMISSIONER CLAYTON: Okay. Ms.

6       Macauley, thank you for your testimony.

7       A. You're welcome.

8       JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you. Commissioner

9       Gaw, did you have any additional questions? Ms.

10      Macauley, could you wait just one moment?

11     A. Sorry.

12     COMMISSIONER GAW: Hi, Ms. Macauley.

13     A. Hi.

14     COMMISSIONER GAW: Thank you for coming

15     today. I would like to just ask a couple things.

16     First of all, it is good to hear that some people are

17     working on their houses, although it would be nice if

18     there was concerted effort to provide some direction

19     and assistance for a lot of people to do that, some

20     incentives, maybe some reduced interest loans for that

21     purpose --

22     A. Exactly.

23     COMMISSIONER GAW: -- because that would

24     benefit all of us. There is one proposal in this case

25     at the current time by the staff that suggest that some

1 of the areas that Atmos serves be combined together for  
2 purposes of pricing, as I understand it. And I  
3 believe, in particular, they are proposing that  
4 Kirksville, Hannibal, Canton, Bowling Green and Palmyra  
5 all be merged together. Has anyone talked to you about  
6 that and how that might impact your particular area,  
7 Kirksville?

8 A. No, nobody has talked to me about any  
9 such proposal.

10 COMMISSIONER GAW: Okay. Well, it is a  
11 proposal that if those areas are averaged out there  
12 will be some that might be paying some more than they  
13 would otherwise paid, all other things being equal, and  
14 some that might be paying less. And it might be  
15 worthwhile if you want to before you leave, to inquire  
16 of staff as to how that impacts Kirksville, in  
17 particular.

18 A. Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: And of course this, as  
20 I understand it, this is all subject to the  
21 Commission's ruling, but it is a proposal that is out  
22 there. The rates that you saw last winter, did you  
23 talk to others about how that impacted them --

24 A. Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER GAW: -- the increase in



1 rates?

2 A. Right.

3 COMMISSIONER GAW: What reaction did you

4 see? Was it mixed, was it pretty universal in that

5 regard?

6 A. I would say from the people I spoke with

7 it was pretty universal.

8 COMMISSIONER GAW: And what was that

9 opinion?

10 A. Shock.

11 COMMISSIONER GAW: Because of the amount

12 of the increase?

13 A. Right.

14 COMMISSIONER GAW: Does -- do you know if

15 Atmos serves throughout the city limits of Kirksville,

16 and does it go outside of the city limits; are you

17 aware?

18 A. I have no idea.

19 COMMISSIONER GAW: Are you living in the

20 city limits?

21 A. I am.

22 COMMISSIONER GAW: I very much appreciate

23 you coming again to talk to us today, Ms. Macauley, and

24 all of the things that are being said today are being

25 transcribed for others to read as well, so it is

1     important that you were here. And we all have very  
2     busy lives and I know it's difficult to get away to do  
3     these kinds of things, and it's always impressive to me  
4     when people take the time to do it. So thank you.

5     A. You're welcome.

6     JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Berlin, do you have  
7     any questions?

8     MR. BERLIN: No questions, Your Honor.

9     JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Poston?

10    MR. POSTON: No questions. Thank you,  
11    Judge.

12    JUDGE DIPPELL: Mr. Fischer?

13    MR. FISCHER: No questions, thank you.

14    JUDGE DIPPELL: Thank you, Ms. Macauley.

15    We do appreciate your taking the time to come testify.

16    COMMISSIONER GAW: By the way, Ms.

17    McCauley --

18    A. Yes.

19    COMMISSIONER GAW: -- you are at my alma  
20    mater so --

21    A. Oh.

22    COMMISSIONER GAW: -- I have an extra  
23    appreciation for that fact.

24    A. Thank you.

25    JUDGE DIPPELL: Has anyone else arrived

1     that would like to testify?

2     COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:  Judge, let me just  
3     make a statement.  I'm looking over at Mr. Kelly.  He  
4     says no one else has signed their name and I'm not sure  
5     if anyone has come in.  Is there any other member of  
6     the public that has any desire to testify on the Atmos  
7     energy case?  Now is the time to speak up and come on  
8     forward.  I'm seeing none, Judge.

9     JUDGE DIPPELL:  Adequate time to fight  
10    the parking?

11    COMMISSIONER CLAYTON:  We'll be talking  
12    about that parking issue, Judge.

13    JUDGE DIPPELL:  Okay.  Well, I believe  
14    then that we will go ahead and conclude the hearing  
15    since no one else is there to testify.  I appreciate  
16    again those of you who came and the Commissioners do  
17    take your comments seriously and will be -- the other  
18    Commissioners who were unable to be here will be  
19    reading them.  So thank you for coming and this  
20    concludes the hearing.  We can go off the record.

21    - - -

22

23

24

25

1	I N D E X	PAGE
2	NELLIE SMITH.....	8
3	IRENE WEBER.....	8
4	SYLVIA MACAULEY.....	2
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		