

STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
JEFFERSON CITY
September 20, 2001

CASE NO: GO-2002-50

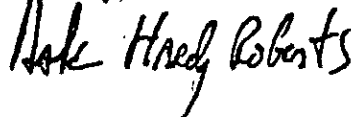
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Enclosed find certified copy of an ORDER in the above-numbered case(s).

Sincerely,



Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

**STATE OF MISSOURI
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

At a Session of the Public Service
Commission held at its office in
Jefferson City on the 20th day of
September, 2001.

In the Matter of Missouri Gas Energy's Application)
for Approval of Certain Matters Pertaining to Ongoing)
Cast Iron Main and Service/yard Replacement as a)
Part of its Safety Line Replacement Program) **Case No. GO-2002-50**

ORDER APPROVING APPLICATION

On July 30, 2001, Missouri Gas Energy (MGE), a division of Southern Union Company, filed an application asking the Commission to approve certain modifications to its ongoing cast iron main, and service line and yard line replacement, as a part of its Safety Line Replacement Program. This order approves that application.

The Commission issued an Order and Notice on August 1, giving notice of MGE's application to the County Commission of the counties in MGE's service territory, to the members of the general assembly who represent the counties in MGE's service territory, and to the newspapers that serve the counties in MGE's service territory. That order also directed that any person wishing to intervene should file an application to intervene no later than August 21. No applications to intervene were filed.

The requirement for a hearing is met when the opportunity for hearing has been provided and no proper party has requested the opportunity to present evidence.¹ Since

¹ *State ex rel. Rex Deffenderfer Enterprises, Inc. v. Public Service Commission*, 776 S.W.2d 494, 496 (Mo. App. 1989).

no one has asked permission to intervene, or requested a hearing, the Commission may grant the relief requested based on the application.

On September 6, 2001, the Staff of the Commission filed its Recommendation and Memorandum. Staff indicates that MGE's line replacement programs are referred to as its Safety Line Replacement Program, known by the acronym SLRP. MGE's past and current replacement programs for service and yard lines have resulted in the replacement of more than 230,000 service and yard lines. MGE's cast iron main replacement program resulted in the replacement of nearly 300 miles of cast iron mains, but the program ended in 2000. MGE's application includes a new long-term replacement program for cast iron mains, as required by 4 CSR 240-40.030(15)(D)2. In addition to cast iron main replacements, the application proposes a more comprehensive program that covers the repair of cast iron joint leaks and the replacement of copper service lines. The application also affects the inspection and replacement of protected bare steel mains and unprotected steel service and yard lines.

Staff indicates that it finds MGE's proposal to be generally acceptable. Staff does, however, recommend two modifications to MGE's proposal. The first modification is to delete the last sentence of subparagraph 11D on page 8 of the application. That sentence refers to efforts to eliminate Class 4 leaks over unprotected steel service and yard lines. Under Commission rule 4 CSR 240-40.030(14)(c)4, class 4 leaks are those that are confined or localized and are considered to be completely non-hazardous. The gas company is not required to take any further action regarding a class 4 leak. Staff indicates that the sentence in question incorrectly states that existing Class 4 leaks on unprotected steel service and yard lines will be re-classed to Class 3 and repaired within 5 years.

Instead, all unprotected steel service and yard lines that have existing leaks, including all leaks that are currently classified as Class 4 leaks, will be replaced no later than June 30, 2003. MGE proposes this repair schedule in subparagraph 11B on page 7 of the Application. For new leaks discovered on unprotected steel service and yard lines, MGE will no longer use the Class 4 leak classification. Such leaks will be classified as Class 3 or higher, meaning that they will have an established repair deadline.

The second modification proposed by Staff refers to an item that was inadvertently left out of the Status Report list in paragraph 14 on page 9 of the application. The item should have followed item J and should have stated "Number of cast iron main leaks cleared by pipe diameter." Staff states that the two modifications are agreeable to MGE, and on September 7, MGE filed a response indicating its agreement to the modifications.

Staff recommends that the Commission approve the application with the two modifications previously indicated. Staff also recommends that the Commission approve a modification of the waiver granted in Case No. GO-99-302, as requested in the application. Staff recommends that a copy of this order, or a notice to the case, or both, then be filed in Case No. GO-99-302 to reflect the change. Finally, Staff recommends that the Commission approve MGE's request that the Safety Line Replacement Program costs to be incurred as a result of the approved program be allowed deferral treatment pursuant to the Safety Line Replacement Program Accounting Authority Order granted by the Commission in Case No. GR-2001-292.

The Commission has considered the application filed by MGE, along with the Recommendation and Memorandum filed by Staff. The Commission concludes that

MGE's proposed changes to its existing Safety Line Replacement Program will enhance the safety of its gas distribution system. The application should be approved.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

1. That the application filed by Missouri Gas Energy, a division of Southern Union Company, on July 30, 2001 is approved with the following modifications:

- a. The last sentence of subparagraph 11D on page 8 of the application is deleted; and
- b. The following item is added to the list of information, found in paragraph 14 on page 9 and 10 of the application: "Number of cast iron main leaks cleared by pipe diameter."

2. That the waiver granted in Case No. GO-99-302 is modified as requested by Missouri Gas Energy in paragraph 11 of its application filed on July 30, 2001.

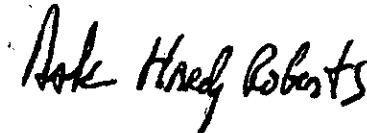
3. That a copy of this order shall be filed in Case No. GO-99-302.

4. That the costs associated with replacements and rehabilitations called for under the provisions of paragraphs 10, 11, and 12 of the application filed by Missouri Gas Energy on July 30, 2001, are eligible for deferral under any Accounting Authority Order granted by the Commission to Missouri Gas Energy, including the Accounting Authority Order granted by the Commission in Case No. GR-2001-292.

5. That the deferral approved in paragraph 4 of this order shall not be construed as requiring the Commission to grant an Accounting Authority Order with regard to Missouri Gas Energy's Safety Line Replacement Program in the future. Nor shall it be construed as requiring the Commission to permit subsequent rate recovery of Safety Line Replacement Program costs deferred through issuance of an Accounting Authority Order.

6. That this order shall become effective on September 30, 2001.

BY THE COMMISSION



**Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge**

(SEAL)

Simmons, Ch., Murray and Lumpe, CC., concur
Gaw, C., dissents

Woodruff, Senior Regulatory Law Judge

ALJ/Sec, etary: Woodruff/Boyer

Date Circulated 9-14 CASE NO. 60-2002-50

KS ?
Simmons, Chair

cm
Murray, Commissioner

AS ?
Lumpke, Commissioner

7/12/01
Gaw, Commissioner

Commissioner

9-20
Agenda Date

Action taken: 3-1 AS (GAW)
Must Vote Not Later Than ND

STATE OF MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

I have compared the preceding copy with the original on file in this office and I do hereby certify the same to be a true copy therefrom and the whole thereof.

WITNESS my hand and seal of the Public Service Commission, at Jefferson City, Missouri, this 20th day of Sept. 2001.

Dale Hardy Roberts
Dale Hardy Roberts
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge

