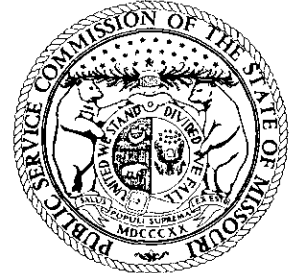
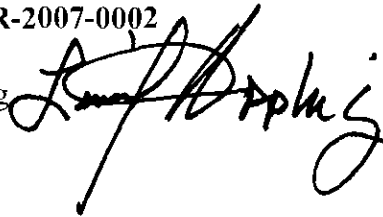


Notice of *Ex Parte* Contact

TO: Data Center
All Parties in Case No. **ER-2007-0002**

FROM: Commissioner Lin Appling

DATE: January 18, 2007



On January 18, 2007 I received the attached e-mail from Mr. Robert E. St. John regarding Ameren. The Commission is currently considering the issues discussed in this document in case **ER-2007-0002** which is a contested case. In contested cases, the Commission is bound by the same *ex parte* rule as a court of law.

Although communications from members of the public and members of the legislature are always welcome, those communications must be made known to all parties to a contested case so that those parties have the opportunity to respond. According to the Commission's rules (4 CSR 240-4.020(8)), when a communication (either oral or written) occurs outside the hearing process, any member of the Commission or Regulatory Law Judge who received the communication shall prepare a written report concerning the communication and submit it to each member of the Commission and the parties to the case. The report shall identify the person(s) who participated in the *ex parte* communication, the circumstances which resulted in the communication, the substance of the communication, and the relationship of the communication to a particular matter at issue before the Commission.

Therefore, we submit this report pursuant to the rules cited above. This will ensure that any party to this case will have notice of the attached information and a full and fair opportunity to respond to the comments contained therein.

cc: Commissioners
Executive Director
Secretary/Chief Regulatory Law Judge
General Counsel

Appling, Linward (Lin)

From: Robert E St. John [robert.stjohn@stvinc.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2007 9:45 AM
To: Appling, Linward (Lin)
Subject: Ameren

Attachments: Bridgeton Speech.doc



Bridgeton
Speech.doc (40 KB)

Lin,

I presented the attached as a public comment at the Bridgeton City Council Meeting last night. Later, during a recess, a George Kossel approached me and recommended that I send a copy to you. He recommended that I change it to be less Bridgeton specific, but I think the points are made adequately. I imagine that there is someone in each zip code in the St.Louis area that could deliver the comments with some simple edits. I imagine that it is equally effective as a comment to the Public Service Commission.

I do not know what your mission is. From the news it appears that you are interested in evaluating Ameren's request for a rate increase. I would like to think that you might have an interest in redirecting Ameren's priorities. I would also like to think that you have the ability to recommend punitive action if situations are not corrected.

Please read the attached and let me know what you think I can do to further my interests in the matter.

(See attached file: Bridgeton Speech.doc)

Robert E. St.John
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Thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

My name is Robert St.John. My family and I have resided at 3754 Red Hawk Court for just over six years.

We are very lucky to have moved to Bridgeton and we are very pleased with the services that Bridgeton provides.

At this time, however, we think that Bridgeton could be doing more to serve its citizens. When I say Bridgeton could be doing more, I fully recognize that I should be enthusiastically willing to participate in the process.

My proposal? To apply pressure on Ameren/UE to fulfill their contractual, financial and moral responsibilities

This is the fourth time since August that we've lost power. We have not had power for a total of two weeks out of the last 5 or so months. That represents almost 1 day in every 10 that we've been without power. That's 3 days per Month. I don't think that speaks well of Ameren's performance. I wish I could pick the 3 days a month not to have power.

Currently, Ameren's automated phone bank thanks us for our patience and understanding. That is patently patronizing. My patience is exhausted and since Ameren's performance is lower than some third world countries, I have no understanding.

Ameren cannot blame the bad weather, that's when we NEED utilities. It's easy to provide service in the spring and fall. In the summer we need ventilation, in the winter we need heat. I think Ameren should consider changing their slogan to "Ameren, your fair weather utility".

Someone told me they received an award for their repairs in December. My first thought was that the award was self bestowed by the PR department. My second thought was that while they may deserve credit for repairs, they must be in the bottom rankings for anticipating problems and proactively preventing or mitigating them.

We got a good laugh when we found out that it took them three months to write a 138 page report after the August disaster. That same writer armed with a chain saw would have been a far greater benefit.

Ameren needs to do several things to correct their performance. They are as follows:

- Fire the Strategic Planning and Engineering Staffs and hire competent people from the private sector.
- Tell those who are lobbying for a rate increase to find other meaningful careers
- Reassign spokespersons to other more vital roles. Anything said by Ms. Gallagher and Mr. Fox is self-serving and largely euphemistic.
- Assess the entire grid for historic performance and susceptibility to outages
- Identify areas with chronic outages (Don't worry about the reasons for now. My suspicion is that work performed in the 80's was thought out with a planned 20 year obsolescence. The infrastructure is crumbling. Ameren now has to pay for their shortsightedness.)
- Correct the most severe problems first.
- Use permanent solutions. (One has to wonder if the "fixes" employed in August and December were temporary.)
- Reduce the dividends paid to stockholders and reinvest the money into the crumbling infrastructure, by clearing lines, cutting back vegetation and replacing substandard components.

Bridgeton and other Communities need to provide encouragement to Ameren. We need to find new strategies. It will not be enough to say "we can't do that". We have to find ways to do it. New ideas may test conventional wisdom. That may be necessary. Changing tax policy may be necessary, difficult, but necessary.

Consider some of the following possibilities:

- Bridgeton could provide tree trimming services and backcharge Ameren. The work has to be done. (...or Change policy. Maybe the municipalities or homeowners should be the responsible party. If that's the case, then seek a rate reduction.)
- Bridgeton should backcharge Ameren for cooling and warming centers during times of outages. Why is it that Not for Profits, like Bridgeton feel compelled to pay for services that are necessitated by Ameren's poor planning?
- Require Realtors to disclose the number of times a property has experienced outages in the last two years. You can bet the Realtors Lobby and other businesses would put pressure on Ameren to correct deficiencies.
- Consider lowering taxes on properties that have experienced a historically higher number of outages and charge Ameren with the shortfall. I pay the same tax rate for a property that has reliable electrification 90% of the time that someone 3 blocks away pays for a property that experiences 100% reliability of service. That makes me a second class citizen of Bridgeton. My tax rate should be adjusted for the disparity. Had I known of the poor service, I may have bought property elsewhere. Ameren has made Zip Code 63044 an undesirable place to live, a full third of the subscribers lost power in August, December and this last week.
- Consider retaining a consultant to assess Ameren's infrastructure to determine the extent of repairs necessary. Forward the findings to Ameren and impose a deadline for making improvements subject to financial penalties. If they won't do it themselves, we can help.

What's the conclusion? There should always be a beginning, middle and an end. Once the lights were back on in August and December I slipped back into comfortable complacency. Not this time. I am angry, I feel used, and I want results. There is a problem. The features of the problem can be argued. What is necessary is broad and comprehensive solution. Ameren, Communities, Businesses and Homeowners need to work together to create broad based solutions. I am asking Bridgeton to help improve the quality of life of its citizens.