

PSC Consumer Connection



Informed Consumers, Quality Utility Services, and a Dedicated Organization for Missourians in the 21st Century

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Public Information & Education Department

LOCAL PUBLIC HEARINGS SET FOR NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

The Missouri Public Service Commission will hold local public hearings in November and December in a natural gas rate case filed by AmerenUE.

All hearings will begin with a question-and-answer session at 5:30 p.m. followed by the opportunity for customers to provide testimony to the Commission. Here is the local public hearing schedule:

November 22, 2010 - **Cape Girardeau:** John Glenn Auditorium, Dempster Hall, Southeast Missouri State University, Corner of Henderson and New Madrid Streets.

November 23, 2010 - **Wentzville:** Board Room, Wentzville School District Central Office, 1 Campus Drive.

November 29, 2010 - **Columbia:** Activity and Recreation Center, Meeting Room A, 1701 West Ash.

(See HEARINGS, page 2)

TAKE STEPS NOW TO GET READY FOR WINTER



prepare • conserve • save

www.beenergyefficient.org

Have the furnace checked and tuned-up, if needed.

Replace filters each month if they are dirty.

Caulk and place weatherstripping on

doors and windows that leak air.

Add attic insulation if necessary.

When not in use, make sure the fireplace damper is tightly closed.

Don't use your stove or oven for anything other than cooking (for instance, to heat your home, under any circumstances).

Don't use a space heater UNTIL you are sure it has been vented properly. If using a vent-free heater, make sure the automatic cut-off switch is operational.

Don't ever store household chemicals or combustible materials near gas appliances.

LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program to help eligible low income households meet their home **heating** and/or **cooling** needs.

The availability of LIHEAP assistance is not guaranteed. Applications are accepted in Community Action Agency offices throughout Missouri starting in October. Funds are limited. When applying for LIHEAP funds, you may need the following items:



- Recent copies of your utility bills.
- A recent payroll stub or other proof that shows your current gross income.
- Documentation showing income from Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, Pension Funds, Disability, etc.
- Final Utility Termination Notice (if you've received a shut-off notice from your energy company).
- Proof of present address (e.g., rent receipt, lease or deed, property tax bill).
- Proof of total members living in your household (e.g., birth certificates, school records, etc.). Social Security cards (or numbers) for all persons living in your household.
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residence.

There are 19 Missouri Community Action Agencies located throughout the state.

To find an agency that represents your county, please call 573-634-2969 or visit their website:

www.communityaction.org/CAAServiceAreas.htm

DON'T IGNORE A SHUT-OFF NOTICE

If you've received a shut-off notice from your utility company, please do not ignore it! Call your utility to see if you can work out a payment plan. Many utility companies have assistance programs available for its customers.

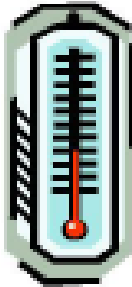
If you are unable to resolve the problem after contacting your utility provider, contact the Missouri Public Service Commission at 1-800-392-4211.

PSC's Cold Weather Rule Takes Effect November 1

The **Cold Weather Rule** was adopted by the Missouri Public Service Commission in 1977 to help protect consumers during the winter months. The rule applies to natural gas and electric utilities under PSC jurisdiction that provide heat-related service. Municipally operated systems, cooperatives, and those that provide propane delivered by truck are not under PSC jurisdiction. The rule does not apply to them.

The Cold Weather Rule

- Prohibits disconnection of service when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 32 degrees.
- Allows you to budget your payments over 12 months.
- Allows you to extend payment of pre-existing arrears beyond 12 months.
- Does not require a deposit if payment agreement is kept.
- Requires that you be notified by mail, with one notification attempt in person, before your service is shut off.
- Allows you to register with the utility if you are: 65 years of age or older; disabled to the extent that you have filed with the utility a form submitted by a medical physician attesting that your household must have natural gas or electric utility service provided in the home to maintain life or health; or if you have a formal award letter issued from the federal government of disability benefits.
- Requires you to be notified of possible financial help in paying your bill.
- Allows reconnection of your service for less than the full amount owed.
- Prohibits disconnection of registered low-income elderly or disabled customers who make a minimum payment.
- Additional provisions for natural gas customers: Allows customers who defaulted on a previous Cold Weather Rule payment agreement to make an initial payment of 50% of his/her outstanding balance or \$500, whichever is less, with the remaining amount deferred to be paid in a Cold Weather Rule payment agreement plan over 12 months.



Questions and Answers

- Q:** When is the rule in effect?
A: November 1 through March 31.
- Q:** What is the minimum payment a registered low-income elderly or disabled customer must make?
A: The customer must pay at least 50% of:
1) the actual bill for usage during that billing period, or
2) the level bill amount under his/her Cold Weather Rule payment plan.
- IMPORTANT NOTE:** The utility may recover unpaid amounts from those winter months by adjusting the customer's Cold Weather Rule payment installments after March 31.
- Q:** Who is considered a registered low-income elderly or disabled customer?
A: A customer who receives an income below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines and is registered with the utility company as an elderly or disabled customer.
- Q:** Is a customer required to pay the full amount owed to be reconnected if he/she broke a past Cold Weather Rule payment agreement?
A: No, the customer could be reconnected by paying 80% of the account balance owed.

HEARINGS (From page one)

November 30, 2010 - **Jefferson City:** Governor Office Building, Room 310, 200 Madison Street.

December 1, 2010 - **Mexico:** ITV Room, Telecommunication Community Resource Center, 2900 Dorelli Lane

AmerenUE filed its natural gas rate case on June 10, 2010 seeking to increase annual operating revenues by approximately \$11.9 million. According to the company, the average increase for residential customers would be approximately \$87 a year.

For printed materials regarding a number of consumer issues or copies of this newsletter, please call 573-522-2760 or email gregg.ochoa@psc.mo.gov

Who to Contact:

Missouri Public Service Commission
Consumer Hotline **1-800-392-4211**
or email: pscinfo@psc.mo.gov

Mail your inquiry or complaint to:

Missouri Public Service Commission
Consumer Services Department
P.O. Box 360
Jefferson City, MO 65102

