

St. Louis Friday

UE Planned Fright Tactics, Environmentalists Say

By JON SAWYER

of the Post-Dispatch Staff

A Union Electric Co. statement prepared for presentation at a state hearing on the utility's request for relaxed air-pollution rules was used to frighten the public and then withdrawn at the last moment to avoid cross-examination on its merits, the coalition for the Environment charged Thursday night.

The coalition made the charge after the close of three days of hearings in Clayton by the Missouri Air Conservation Commission on U.E.'s petition for a permanent relaxation of state air-pollution standards.

U.E. Executive Vice President Earl K. Dille, who prepared the statement, denounced the coalition charge as a lie when recalled at his news Thursday night. Dille said the coalition is living on its reputation for news-hungry tactics.

In his prepared testimony, which was first made public in January and published again at the start of this week's hearing, Dille suggested that compliance with the regulations would force the utility to choose between bankruptcy and power blackouts. Refusal by the state to relax the standards, he said, would subject U.E. to federal penalties of \$20 million a year, which "would completely wipe out the company's assets."

U.E.'s attorney, James J. Virral, said the coalition's charge was "a lie."

The coalition said "it is significant that U.E. withdrew all of the items in its petition in January and again in March by pretending that bankruptcy and power blackouts were the only alternatives to a permanent relaxation of state air-pollution standards."

"It is in the only U.E. official who claimed that unless such permission was granted the company would be subject to monstrous penalties that would wipe out the corporation. These claims are a lie. They are entirely false. They are a classic attempt to mislead the people of St. Louis and the commission. They are an attempt to mislead the people of St. Louis and the commission."

The most significant thing that happened at this hearing was what didn't happen. Mr. Dille was unwilling to subject himself to cross-examination on these claims.

"There's a lie," Dille said after hearing the statement. He said that he and another U.E. witness were taken out of the hearing simply to speed the hearing along. He said evidence was needed in the hearings because Lewis C. Green, general counsel to the commission, and Elton Amant Attorney General George Ford "were changing their suit accommodations."

The coalition and the state of Missouri intervened in the hearings as opponents of the requested variance, which has been approved annually ever since the late 1950s. The commission ordered the hearing in December when it rejected its own staff's recommendation that the variance be granted.

"The statement had every right to subpoena me if they wanted to. They had every right to cross-examine me," Dille said.

At Thursday's hearing the commission heard testimony on the health effects of sulfur dioxide and its byproducts, quality of the St. Louis metropolitan area.

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Arnold and the study was intended to determine whether the seven-county, basin metropolitan region is properly designated as an air quality management area for suspended particulates and sulfur dioxide, and to determine the nature and extent of existing or projected particulates and sulfur dioxide pollution.

The study, conducted under the direction of the Illinois EPA with an \$18-million assistance from the Missouri Division of Natural Resources, is scheduled to be completed in May. The results will be reported to the major departments of state government by next January. But U.E. Air Conservation Commission Chairman John G. Lewis said that neither he nor any other commission member has ever been informed of the study's results.

If this week's hearing accomplished an other purpose, Lewis said, it would be to succeed in long as they brought an end to poor communication between Missouri air quality officials and the commission's Illinois and the federal EPA.

Parties to this week's hearing will have 30 days in which to prepare final briefs, which means the commission will not begin formal consideration of the request until June.

By that time results of the air quality study should be available. Results could render irrelevant much of the testimony and evidence presented. The commission is not permitted to consider the study results in making its decision on the variance.

Another complicating factor in the federal EPA's responsibility for enforcement of air emissions regulations. The EPA filed suit against U.E. for violation of its standards in January last year, and the utility refused to seek an injunction against the EPA in federal court.

A ruling on that injunction request, by the federal court, would be pending for nearly a month. Utility attorneys say that ruling might go either way, but that ruling might go either way, but that ruling might go either way.

It might have on the commission's deliberations.



WIDE LOAD: Trucks hauling a 16-by-34-foot prefabricated swimming pool down Delmar Boulevard to the Cervantes Convention Center for the annual Home Show, to be held tomorrow through March 19. (Post-Dispatch Photo by Lynn Spence)

Permanent County Clinic Sites Urged

By JAMES C. ROGAL

of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Permanent health care clinics for children should be set up to replace makeshift temporary clinics now run by the St. Louis County Department of Community Health and Medical Care, a report released today says.

The 36-page report by a department task force in County Superior Court Clerk Richard McNary's report said that makeshift permanent sites replace 11 of the 27 temporary clinics.

Three temporary clinics would remain. McNary said today that he favored all the recommendations and would take immediate steps to carry them out. The money for the program will require authorization by the County Council.

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It cited the need for adequate lighting, primary, plumbing, space, communication, cleanliness and patient-record availability.

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The temporary clinics—called "vacant clinic" clinics because the spaces must carry all medical supplies and equipment to the sites—have been criticized as seriously inadequate by doctors and nurses who have dealt with them.

They have complained that the temporary clinics lacked essential tables, waiting facilities, bright and privacy. In addition, the clinics suffer from lighting, overcrowding and bad building conditions, according to the report.

The report said that the estimated at more than \$21,000 in the first year and less than \$10,000 a year in subsequent years.

The Post-Dispatch first reported on the temporary clinics a month ago. McNary had proposed mobile clinics in addition to the existing permanent facilities.

The task force considered two types of mobile operation. The first, using three mobile clinics, would have cost more than \$60,000, the report said. The second, which would have had three trailer trailers and buses, would have cost more than \$200,000.

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