

Kansas Corporation Commission

January 31, 2017

FEB 6 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

Office of Litigation Counsel

This letter is in response to your denial of our complaint against Westar Energy, Inc.. Your office said we did not supply sufficient evidence to prove Westar Energy was in fact over charging us since the installation of their new "Smart Meter". We were also told we did not provide suggestions or recommendations for remediation. Again, the electric bills, the charts and graphs of usage from Westar's website are in black and white. We did not make up these drastic increases but as anyone can see, our June bill was up 100%, the September bill was up 61% and the October bill was up 66%. When the Fall months came around and we were running no air conditioning or heat and still getting \$300.00+ bills, compared to last year's bill, which was \$187.00+. It sure makes you question Westar's new "Smart Meter". We suspect that our meter was switched out in June because that is when our bill went up 100% from the year before and you can look at the Westar website and their read index box is zeroed out. Since we last sent information about these increases, I have been told by a co-worker, that the sub-contractor who installed their "Smart Meter" (See attached copy of business card) stated that the electric companies are using daily "peak energy" charges to charge consumers instead of actual usage costs. As we look at the last page of the Certificate of Service you sent to us, we see that there are two representatives from Westar Energy arguing against us. We feel we are in a David and Goliath situation in which we are sure to be denied. We are here to tell you again when we started this process and contacted Westar it seemed our questions were met with stall tactics. We were put on hold, transferred from one person to another and it was like pulling teeth to find out where we could make a formal complaint. It seems to us they were well aware of what was going on with these rate increases. We were finally given the name of the Kansas Corporation Commission and were finally able to contact you for assistance.

We are not happy with the findings of the commission. It always seems that the consumer is backed into the corner, without a leg to stand on. You point out all kinds of laws that Westar is not in violation of. These are laws that give big corporations the ability to give rate hikes to their customers that are approved by this very KCC that oversees this hearing, so, do you think we think **you** will find Westar in violation of any wrong doing. Westar Energy has just been given the approval to give its customers another rate increase (See Attached) in 2017 which according to the article will be \$1.50 per month and is their 26th increase since 2009. Now tell me, do you know of any consumer who gets 26 raises in an 8 year time span.

You implied during our first call we had no remediation, so here is what we are asking for:

1. We want our meter to be checked if not replaced to make sure it is a correct "Smart Meter", residential and not business. We have also been informed that at some residences, business meters have been installed instead of residential ones. Also, why doesn't the customer have a say in which meter they want, and if we do we want our old analog meter back, we were doing just fine with it. Sure looks to us and a lot of other people the so called "Smart Meters" are just

a way Westar can get an additional rate increase toward its customers without legislative approval. They will probably get away with it as long as no one complains about it. Again **no** one ever came to our door or left a door knocker notice to inform us the meter had been installed. We **do** have a privacy fence, a **dog** and we are still in great awe as to how that person got through the gate. Our dog is very protective of her territory and we would really like to know how they were able to accomplish that feat without her attacking them. There is someone home most every day. So, when this meter is checked or replaced it is only to be done when one of us is **present**. We want to make sure that it is completely understood, we were adamantly told on the phone by Westar employees that we were informed when the new meter was being installed and that is absolutely false.

2. We feel we are entitled to be credited or refunded for the over charges that occurred during beginning in June and for at least the 5 months highlighted. Those months are extremely high compared to 2015. We came up with a difference over that 5 month period of time of \$584.73, we would like to see that credited back to us over the next 6 months or year. You know it also seemed very significant to us, once we complained to Westar about our bill we now receive weekly Westar Energy Reports. We had never received anything like that before. Disputing our electric bill is something we should not even have to be doing, but it always seems like the consumer is the one who gets taken advantage of at every turn. These corporations just think that we are supposed to sit back and take it, while they and stock holders profit. Aren't these companies still referred to as "Public Utilities"? We don't know who would be responsible for this but someone needs to make sure the customer is not being charged for "peak charges" and not the "actual charges" for electricity. Whether it is an oil company, electric company, pharmaceutical company, etc., nothing ever happens until something tragic happens. Big companies just continue to take advantage of the little guy anyway they can because they have all the money and the big lawyers.

3. If you feel so compelled then Westar can compensate us for our time and efforts in trying to rectify this situation by presenting our case to you. My salary as a Chaplain is \$17.86 per hour. My wife is disabled but she still tries to work one eight-hour day a week as a registered nurse. She makes \$26.50 an hour. We have probably spent 6+ hours on this plus all the aggravation that has gone in to dealing with it. We feel \$250.00 would be fair to help out with expenses, that could also be a credit on our bill.

We are including again a copy of our electric bills, printed off the internet this morning from Westar's website. We have circled the 5 months in question. Also, we are including pictures to show you how we try to conserve electricity and no matter what we do the bill just goes higher. We burn wood for heat in the winter, the thermostat is set at 68 degrees should the gas furnace have to kick on. We have LED light bulbs in our light fixtures, all new energy efficient appliances, we just moved into this house in July of 2014. Our home is an all brick, has Pella windows and doors and is well insulated.

So, we do our part to conserve. We only ask that Westar be fair to their customers. You as a commission need to listen to the customers of Kansas and think about them every time Westar is asking you to grant them a new rate hike. I don't believe Westar is suffering at all in this and don't believe they have had to take any pay cuts or tried to do anything to help the customer. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herbie & Phyllis Harris". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

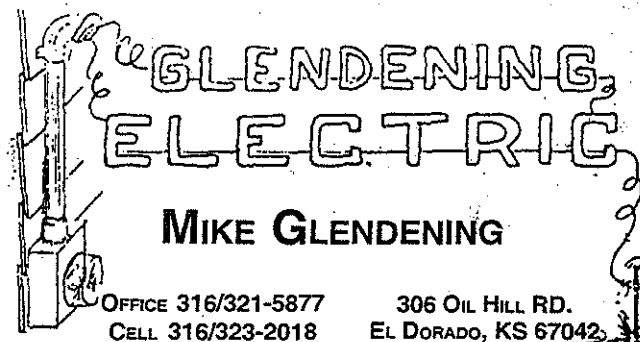
Herbie and Phyllis Harris

View meter history

Account 2347615581 - 2521 HAZLETT ST

Date	Days Used	Read Source	kWh	Read Index	Amount
01/09/2017	34	Remote Read	1022	00000	\$138.32
12/06/2016	34	Remote Read	840	00000	\$117.40
11/02/2016	29	Remote Read	867	00000	\$120.71
10/04/2016	32	Remote Read	2325	00000	\$303.21
09/02/2016	29	Remote Read	2589	00000	\$342.16
08/04/2016	29	Remote Read	3075	00000	\$404.89
07/06/2016	30	Regular Read	2734	00000	\$364.67
06/06/2016	32	Remote Read	1734	16356	\$226.88
05/05/2016	29	Remote Read	807	14622	\$117.98
04/06/2016	29	Remote Read	806	13815	\$114.82
03/08/2016	29	Remote Read	659	13009	\$94.23
02/08/2016	31	Remote Read	815	12350	\$112.86
01/08/2016	32	Remote Read	782	11535	\$108.92
12/07/2015	34	Remote Read	682	10753	\$95.39
11/03/2015	29	Remote Read	684	10071	\$89.94
10/05/2015	32	Remote Read	1544	09387	\$187.58
09/03/2015	29	Remote Read	1666	07843	\$204.95
08/05/2015	29	Remote Read	2283	06177	\$280.10
07/07/2015	32	Remote Read	2212	03894	\$271.45
06/05/2015	30	Remote Read	889	01682	\$113.00
05/06/2015	27	Remote Read	793	00793	\$102.09
03/09/2015	31	Regular Read	517	13627	\$71.42
02/06/2015	29	Regular Read	659	13110	\$87.53
01/08/2015	34	Regular Read	934	12451	\$118.33





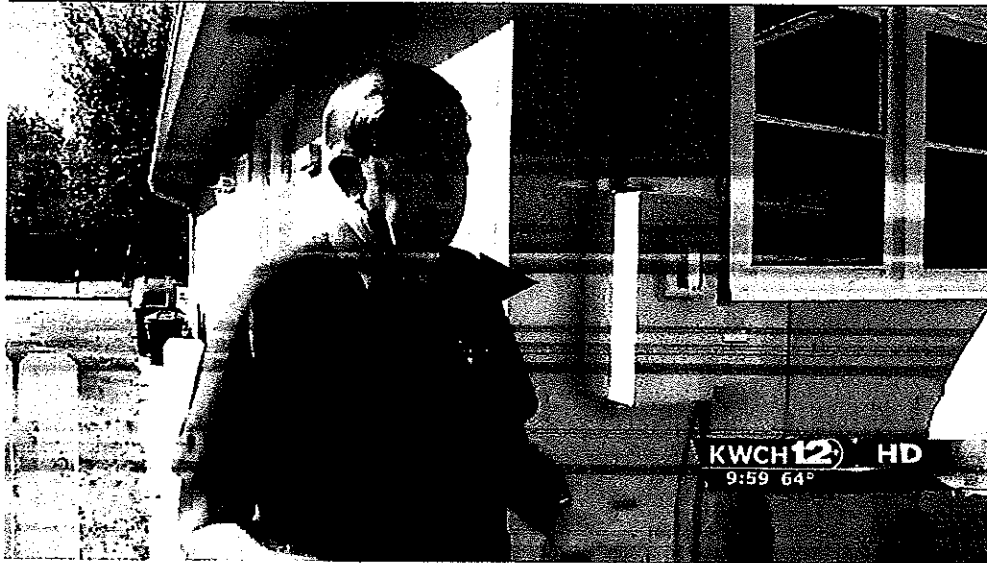
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FF12: \$400 bill makes woman question new "smart meter"

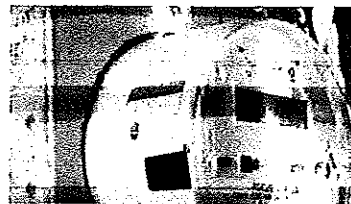


By Michael Schwanke | Posted: Thu 9:53 PM, Oct 27, 2016 | Updated: Thu 10:33 PM, Oct 27, 2016

EL DORADO, Kan. Lola Christenson had never seen anything like it before.

"Never a bill like \$400," says 89-year-old Christensen.

She lives alone and makes less than \$1,000 a month. That's why she was shocked to see her July bill from Westar that showed she owed \$410 for using 142 percent more electricity than the same month in 2015.



"No way. It takes half of my Social Security," Christenson says.

She first called Westar which put a new "smart meter" in during that billing cycle. She asked them to check her meter and bill. She was told it costs \$35.

"I said, 'In other words, you are going to charge me to see if you are overcharging me,'" Christenson says.

She called FactFinder 12 next. We called in Carlisle Heating and Air in El Dorado. Crews came to Christenson's house and checked her heating and air systems, appliances, and looked for anything that would cause her bill to more than double.

"In this case it seems unusual. Nothing changed but this meter. There's no real explanation as to what happened," says owner John Grange.

Westar initially told us that it was hotter this summer than last. We pulled the temperatures for the 32-day period in question. The average was 79.7 degrees in

*Same with us!
Nothing changed
but the meter.*

2015 and 80.9 degrees this year. It was slightly warmer, but not enough to explain the jump that Christenson experienced.

Grange says "smart meter" technology isn't bad. Overall he likes it and says it will be better for the customer.

"I think they'll be more accurate. Digital is better and in most cases you're going to get a more fair reading," says Grange.

But what if you don't get a fair reading or believe your meter is faulty? Who checks the meters for accuracy other than Westar?

"There is not a party that comes out to test, however the manufacturer tests all meters before they leave the facility and then we test them as well," says Gina Penzig with Westar.

Grange says while they are likely more accurate there could still be issues, and there's no one else checking these meters. He says a third party check would likely mean more costs for consumers.

Both Grange and Westar says old, analog meters can run slower over time. Christenson says she was initially told by a Westar employee that her old meter was slow.

Westar performed its own energy audit and found areas Christenson could improve including some duct work and a room where sun comes in. It found nothing wrong with the meter. The bill also shows the old meter was reading at about the same rate. Grange says there's still no explanation.

"That doesn't make sense unless she decided to put in a pool, hot tub and ran the air conditioning with the windows open," he says.

Westar stands behind its meter, but admits things could have been handled differently.

"There are times, especially in hindsight, that a little more attention to detail we would have made a better call the first time a customer reached out to us. This is one of those situations," says Penzig.

Because of that, Westar and Project Deserves helped take care of Christenson's bill. "Through our Project Deserve program and our Care Fund that bill was taken care of."

So what can you do if you suspect your bill is too high?

Grange says start with a call to a heating and air company for a check of your systems. He says the number one reason energy bills spike is because of a dirty air filter. Faulty air conditioners are often a culprit as well.

It's also important to point out that Westar has raised rates 26 times or 43 percent since 2009.

You can also call Westar, but it normally charges you a fee to check a meter.

We had our A/C serviced and checked before summer 2016. It passed the test as efficient.



Westar Energy requesting 1 percent rate increase



Posted: Wed 3:53 PM, Oct 26, 2016 | Updated: Wed 10:20 PM, Oct 26, 2016

TOPEKA, Kan. (KWCH) Westar Energy is asking for another rate increase.

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On Wednesday, the energy company filed a request with the Kansas Corporation Commission for a 1 percent increase, or \$17.4 million, that would go into effect in June 2017.



The rate increase would be about \$1.50 more per month for households.

The energy company says the request reflects the remaining costs of mandated environmental upgrades to comply with clean air regulations, life-extension improvements to Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station and investments to protect the grid against power outages.

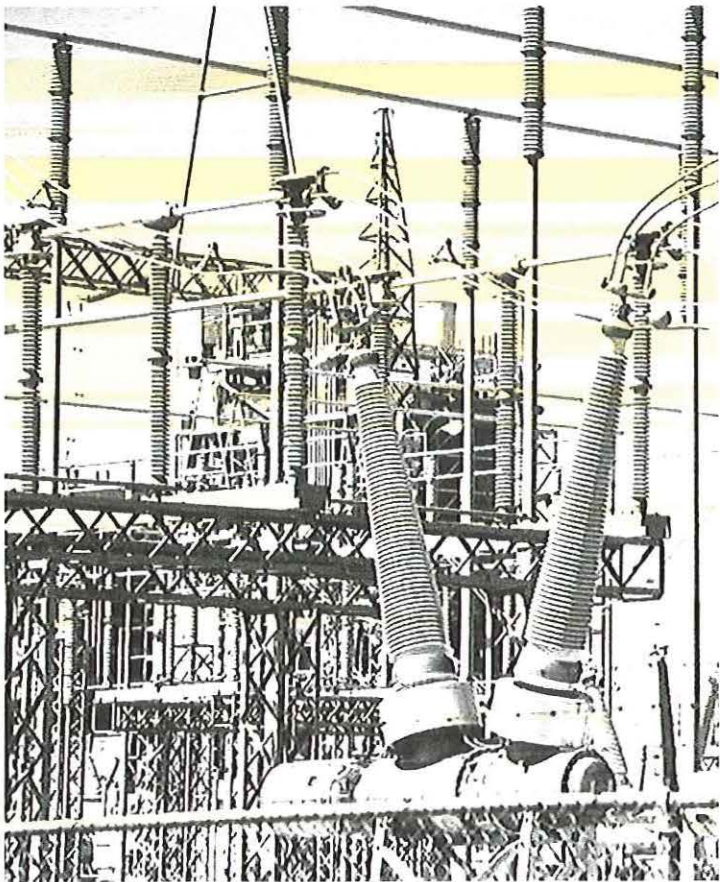
FactFinder 12 looked into recent rate increases imposed by Westar.

Between 2009 and 2015, the energy company increased its rates a total 25 times. The largest increases were in 2009 and 2012, totaling more than \$630 million through last year. This would be the 26th increase.

This current increase must still be approved by state regulators. Consumers will have representation at that hearing through the Citizens Utility Ratepayer Board, a group that represents residents and small commercial businesses in Kansas Corporation Commission cases.

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 11:01 AM

KCC approves Westar settlement; new rates will cost customers \$5 to \$7 a month



The revenue increase for Westar is slightly more than

half the \$152 million the company originally sought in the rate case. File photo

BY DION LEFLER
The Wichita Eagle

A \$78 million net increase in Westar Energy electric rates won approval from the Kansas Corporation Commission on Thursday.

The new rates represent about a 5.3 percent increase and will cost residential customers about \$5 to \$7 more a month for electricity, state and company officials have said.

The rates are included in a settlement reached in negotiations involving Westar, the KCC staff and the Citizens' Utility Ratepayer Board, the state agency that represents residential and small-business customers.

The revenue increase for Westar is slightly more than half the \$152 million the company originally sought in the rate case.

The bulk of the increase is to allow Westar to recover costs of mandatory environmental upgrades at the La Cygne coal-fired power plant and modifications to extend the service life of the Wolf Creek nuclear plant at Burlington.

The Wolf Creek extension will add 20 years to the life of the plant, pushing back its decommissioning from 2025 to 2045, Westar spokeswoman Gina Penzig said.

The company is legally entitled to recover those costs through its rates.

Westar is expected to come in next year requesting a much smaller rate increase, to sweep up some final costs from the projects that fell outside the time frame of the current rate review, said David Springe, chief consumer counsel for CURB.

Springe said CURB is very pleased with the agreement.

“Rates were going to go up regardless,” he said. “I think Westar was very reasonable and we’re happy we could get a settlement.”

Commissioners unanimously approved the agreement without comment, settling the case for the vast majority of customers.

The new rates will take effect Oct. 28, said Robert Vincent, litigation counsel for the KCC.

Vincent said the commission received more than 1,500 comments on the rate case.

Commissioners have broken off part of the case and ordered a separate proceeding on how much Westar can charge to provide service to the small number of customers who generate some of their own power with home solar panels.

Most solar customers are tapped into Westar power as backup when their panels aren’t generating enough electricity to meet their needs.

Solar advocates say they shouldn’t be penalized on their monthly service charge because they choose to generate some of their own

electricity. They say the higher monthly service charges Westar has proposed would strangle the home solar energy industry.

Westar argues that higher monthly charges for solar customers are justified because it costs the company as much to serve them as it does regular customers, but Westar recovers less of that cost because it sells less electricity to the solar customers.

The company claims that results in regular customers carrying an unfair share of the cost of running the distribution system and, in essence, subsidizing the solar customers.

Reach Dion Lefler at 316-268-6527 or dlefler@wichitaeagle.com.

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