

DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: COMMISSIONER KJELLANDER
COMMISSIONER SMITH
COMMISSIONER REDFORD
COMMISSION SECRETARY
LEGAL
WORKING FILE

INT-6-07-02

FROM: MARILYN PARKER

DATE: JUNE 12, 2007

RE: FORMAL COMPLAINT OF JIM WILLSON DBA CUSTOM TOWING & RECOVERY.

On May 24, 2007, the Commission received a "formal" complaint (attached) from Jim Willson dba Custom Towing & Recovery against Intermountain Gas Company. Mr. Willson disputes a rebilling in the amount of \$2,000.92 plus late interest charges for natural gas that Intermountain told him was used but not billed due to the Company's computer being programmed improperly. The billing error covered the time period of December 2003, when the meter was installed, until December of 2006 when the programming error was discovered (37 months). Mr. Willson was rebilled for 36 months as allowed by Utility Customer Relations Rule (UCRR) 204.01. Mr. Willson was unsatisfied with the outcome of the informal procedures to resolve his complaint and has filed this formal complaint.

BACKGROUND

On January 17, 2007, Mr. Willson called the Idaho Public Utilities Commission to discuss an issue he had with Intermountain Gas Company. Mr. Willson stated that he had received a telephone call from the Pocatello manager of Intermountain Gas informing him that he had been under billed since December of 2003. He was told by the Company that he had been billed for one-half of what he should have been billed due to a computer programming error. The bills are for a shop that Mr. Willson had constructed in 2003. Intermountain Gas offered Mr. Willson 36 months to pay the rebilled amount as required by UCRR 204.02; however, the customer indicated that an extra \$57 a month for 3 years was a hardship.

On February 23, 2007, the customer asked Intermountain to disconnect the service at his shop. Service was disconnected on the following working day (February 26, 2007). As of May 30, 2007, the total amount owing is for the original rebilled amount of \$2,000.92 plus three months of late interest assessed in February, March and April. The total amount owing is \$2,061.55, of which \$60.63 is late fees.

Staff's understanding is that the computer programming error that caused the incorrect billing was due to a foot drive error. In a foot drive error, the meter, index and ERT function correctly, but the programming necessary to prepare bills is not done correctly in the office. Most residential customers have a 1-foot drive meter, while customers with larger usage requirements may have a 2, 5, or 10-foot drive. A customer with a 2-foot drive meter that was incorrectly identified in the billing system as a 1-foot drive meter would have been billed for one-half the actual usage, as is the case with Mr. Willson.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Jim Willson of Custom Towing & Recovery was not satisfied with the outcome of the informal complaint. Consequently, he filed a formal complaint. *See* Rules 23, 25 and 54, IDAPA 31.01.01.023, .024 and .054. Staff recommends that the Commission issue a Summons to Intermountain Gas Company and direct the Company to file a response to the complaint.

COMMISSION DECISION

Does the Commission wish to accept Custom Towing's formal complaint?

Does the Commission wish to issue a Summons to Intermountain Gas, directing an Answer be filed to Mr. Willson's Complaint? Alternatively, does the Commission wish to proceed under Modified Procedure?


Marilyn Parker

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