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Jean Jewell

From: ernie@niegel.org
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2007 1:57 AM
To: Tonya Clark; Jean Jewell; Gene Fadness; Ed Howell
Subject: PUC Comment/Inquiry Form

A Comment from Susan and Ernest Niegel follows:

Case Number: SPL-W-06-01
Name: Susan and Ernest Niegel
Address: 34204 N St. Joe Drive
City: Spirit Lake
State: ID
Zip: 83869
Home Telephone: 208-623-2392
Contact E-Mail: ernie@niegel.org
Name of Utility Company: Spirit Lake East Water Company
Add to Mailing List: yes

Please describe your question or comment briefly:
Idaho PUC Commissioners:

This is our opinion in response to case SPL-W-06-01 in Spirit Lake, Idaho. Our names are Susan and Ernest Niegel and we live at 34204 St Joe Drive, Spirit Lake, ID 83869. Our home phone number is 208-623-2392. We have lived in Spirit Lake East since May of 2003 and are customers of the Spirit Lake East Water Company, owned by Hansen Industries.

When we bought our property in 2001, Hansen still owned several pieces of property in Spirit Lake East - we know because we considered buying one of them. All those properties are sold now, so he no longer owns properties in our track. We believe that because Hansen no longer has a vested interest in Spirit Lake East, he now wants out of the water company, as it serves him no business purpose any longer.

We do not claim to be the water experts. We expect and pay the Spirit Lake East Water Company to be the experts and they are failing us drastically.

They have never asked for a rate increase during all their years of service to Spirit Lake East and Treeport homeowners, and the reason we know this is because our parents have lived on the property next to us for 20+ years and still do. Every time there's been a repair needed, they've done it as CHEAP as possible, and/or just applied a band aide fix. Now that the system is falling apart, they want us to pay for their neglect and incompetence.

We ask that you DO NOT grant the Spirit Lake East Water Company (aka Hansen Industries) a rate increase in our water until they have installed a workable backup pump generator that is capable of pumping water out of the well when there is no electrical power to our area. As of now, whenever the power (provided by Kootenai Electric) is out in the area of the pump (owned by Spirit Lake East Water Co), then we have no water supplied to the 250+ homes and families in Spirit Lake East and Treeport. THIS IS UNACCEPTABLE.

The absolutely worse example of this was in October of 2005 when we went for 10 days without water because the water pump failed. NO POWER WAS LOST AT ALL during this 10day water outage. It took Spirit Lake East Water Company 10 days to install a new pump and restore water to our 250+ homes. Simplified...this was the catalyst to the DEQ and the PUC becoming involved in this case and to why the water company is requesting a rate increase due to repairs in the pump that were required by the DEQ.

This by no means has been the only time our homes have been without water. Many times we've been without water due to power outages of our entire area, and many times when the power has been out in the area of the well, but not where our home is located. The last time this happened it was for approximately 30 hours. When this happens, we have plenty of electricity, but no water to drink, bath in, flush toilets, wash clothes, brush teeth,

wash dishes, etc.

The Spirit Lake East Water Company (Hansen Industries) should also be required to fix the leaks in the pipes and bring the water system up to the State, Federal and County standards before being granted any rate increase. They should also be required to install a hydrant at the well so that tankers could refill with water in the case of a fire.

It is not our fault that Spirit Lake East Water Company has never put money back into the water system before it failed completely. The homeowners of Spirit Lake East and Treeport, should not have to pay for their total neglect of the water system. We have no problem being charged more a month for our water, as long as we have QUALITY WATER AND SERVICE EVERY DAY.

Here is a list of what we ask you require of the Spirit Lake East Water Company before a rate increase is granted to them:

1. Install a workable backup pump generator that is capable of pumping water out of the well when there is no electrical power.
2. Fix the leaks in the pipes so that all the water is delivered to the homes, and we have adequate water pressure.
3. Bring the water system up to the State, Federal and County standards.
4. Install a hydrant at the well so that tankers could refill with water in the case of a fire.

The PUC has the power right now to make these requires of Spirit Lake Water Company because of their request for a rate increase. Please do not fail us too.

Thank you,

Sue and Ernie Niegel
34204 St Joe Drive
Spirit Lake, ID 83869
208-623-2392
ernie@niegel.org

The form submitted on <http://www.puc.idaho.gov/forms/ipuc1/ipuc.html>
IP address is 216.255.192.8
