

# No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing.

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## A letter from PHIL to the Missouri Public Service Commission

*NSN's Phil wrote a letter to the Missouri Public Service Commission after he got his dander up about RMU trying to hog-tie Intercounty into a deal. We thought we would share his letter with our readers.*

Missouri Public Service Commission  
P.O. Box 360  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102  
Phone: 1-800-392-4211

Dear Fellas:

Well, I read in the paper that the Rolla Municipal Utilities is asking you for permission to kick Intercounty Electric Co-Op out of that new southside area the city just annexed. It says if you give RMU the okay, they can provide electricity to the south side folks instead of Intercounty. Now I just want to let you boys know that throwing those poor southside people to the tender mercies of the "Royal" Municipal Utilities is like hiring Lizzie Borden to run a day care center. I want you to know some of the reasons why it just wouldn't be neighborly to do that to those unsuspecting folks down the road.

The paper said that you will set a price for the buy-out of Intercounty's facilities if you let the RMU add the southside to their kingdom. Well, it won't be too hard to price the poles, lines, and

such but I don't know how the hell you're going to put a price on all the good services Intercounty gives their owner-customers, and they get cash money back to boot! Surely, the quality of service you're going to swap here has to be figured in somehow? If not, it sure will be a shock to the southside people when they get a taste of what passes for electric service after you swap their Intercounty Cadillac for RMU's beat-up Yugo.

If you do set a price, you better find out first if RMU can pay the bill. Seems like I can remember when the utility cash reserves were around \$20 million but H. Dain and the good ole' boys have been dipping real hard into the reserves to give away millions to the city. Now they've only got about \$5 million left in case of an emergency. Like the one they're probably going to have one second after midnight on December 31.

I know that lawyer of theirs will blind you with numbers and figures but let me tell you how it looks from here. We're sitting here waiting for this Y2K to hit without the foggiest idea as to whether RMU has ever heard of a non-compliant chip not to mention whether they found any in that antique system of theirs. Just in the last ten months we've had a citywide, ten-hour blackout one cold day in January, another for 6 hours and since then too many rolling blackouts and water failures to count. I don't know whether to spend \$5,000 on the Deluxe Hunker-Down-They're-Comin-to-Get-Ya Y2K Survival Kit (AK-47 optional) or just take the wife to Florida and come back about May when RMU gets the power back on. My friends out in the county have been getting reports for over a

year on every little widget Intercounty's tracked down and replaced to protect their people. Has RMU sent you any reports on this thing? If they have we'd take it kindly if you would send us a copy. We're gettin' real nervous about some of the old folks in town.

There's another real good reason you should turn down RMU's request, no matter what that city lawyer of theirs says. Whatever they charge those south side people, part of it isn't really for electricity. It's just a fee they add on to our bills so they have extra cash to send through the city hall laundry to pass over to RCDC - that's the Rolla Community Development Corporation. Now the name fools you into thinking that's a city development committee but that's nowhere near the truth. The RCDC is a private non-profit corporation and they own Hy Point Industrial Park over by the city limits. That's right, city utility money goes directly to a private corporation. RCDC's stock is mostly owned by local bankers and chamber of commerce good ole' boys but here's your big surprise. The chairman of RCDC is H. Dain Ward, the very same guy who signed all those application papers of yours. First he overcharges us for electric and then he skims off \$600,000 annually (or sometimes a million or more) off our bills and while he's wearing his RMU Chairman hat he votes to send it over to the city as a "franchise payment." Sometimes they call it "Operating Transfers-City of Rolla" - sort of depends on which books you're looking at. Next he puts on one of his other hats like, Rolla Economic Developer or chairman of REDC, (that's the real city industrial development board) so he can make sure it gets put in the city budget for "economic development." Then he quick-like changes to his RCDC hat and the mayor hands the money back to him so he can spend it on some capital improvement project for his industrial park or they give it to one of the companies in his park for "rebates." They've got some secret contracts with these companies that say they get this big rate kickback and other

things taxpayers paid for like free buildings. I'm sure you know about the Missouri Constitution Article VI, section 23, which says it's illegal to give public money or credit to private persons or corporations. It'd be real helpful if you'd read that out loud to them during your meeting but first you'll have to get their attention with a good smack upside the head. They don't like to hear about that law one bit.

Something else their lawyer won't tell you is that H. Dain Ward isn't a legitimate member of the RMU board and he hasn't been for some years. Once those boys spit in the eye of the constitution and got away with it, it was real easy to break all the rest of the state laws. Like 97.470, the one that says the members of the public works board can't hold any other city appointment because if they do, their seat on the RMU board is "ipso facto" vacated. It says the same thing in our city ordinance - ipso facto and all. Mr. Ward doesn't have just one other city appointment he has two besides the utility board. The city council is scared spitless so they just keep appointing him and pretend they can't hear the sound of all those laws breaking. I figure all his city appointments and that ipso facto law might be a sticky problem for you fellas. What if people find out you granted a request by someone who, not only has conflict-of-interest oozing out his ears, but he signed your official state documents pretending to be on a public board that he "ipso factoed" himself out of years ago? If I were you I'd think about how much that signature of his is worth.

But, because we're living in the finest little pork barrel city in the Ozarks, ole' H. Dain is still right there on the city utility board bold as brass. No matter what the law says he's gonna cling to that utility seat like a barnacle at high tide. He and his RCDC buddies know if he's not on the RMU board their money pipeline will plumb rust out. So H. Dain just keeps right on having his secret meetings and raising our utility rates without public hearings. Wearing all those hats has puffed

up his head so much that I hear he told Intercounty they could keep their electric service on the southside on condition that..... Well, if you can get that slippery customer under oath ask him if he didn't offer to spare Intercounty all this bother, and they could keep their own property to boot, if they would just slip RMU an annual cash "contribution" the same as what RMU would have raked off the south side utility bills. That way H. Dain and his RCDC buddies could get the money without the bother of having to supply the electricity. Can you imagine Intercounty turning down a great deal like that? Well, they did, so H. Dain called it an "unsuccessful negotiation." That's not what we call it. Down here we shoot varmints that promise not to kill your chickens if you just let them suck the eggs dry. Now I ask you, are these the kind of money-skimming, law-breaking connivers you want to hand those poor people over to?

I about busted a gut laughing when I read RMU said "this action was being taken after numerous requests from residents in the area for RMU to provide electric service,..." That's not what I hear they said. The city and the utilities told all of us a pack of lies about how annexation wouldn't cost much but right after the dirty deed was done the real figures came out. Now if there's anything we know about RMU besides power failures, it's that they lie like bar girls pushing cheap whisky. For example, this year they've been running ads to tell us they're a non-profit corporation. The RMU manager, Dan Watkins was asked to produce these alleged incorporation papers. Caught flat-footed holding the lying bag, Watkins confessed they weren't a non-profit corporation but he said they were like an "agent" for the city. Uh-huh.

We don't know which genius came up with that honker but we do know why they're trying to give their image a face-lift. Just over a year ago a local resident, Robert Nash, started an on-line newsletter called "No Standing News." Last year

just after the mayor announced he would appoint H. Dain Ward to his third city position - this one with a salary - Nash published an article on the interlocking connections between the utility board, city hall and RCDC. That expose really got the mayor's knickers in a twist since the story starred his pal H. Dain Ward. Ward still got appointed but didn't get the salary.

Well, there is a lot more I could tell you, but NSN has all the details so I'll just send you copies and you can read all about our Royal Municipal Utilities and their wheels and deals. When you're done, it'd be right neighborly if you'd send them all over to the Attorney General.

Yours truly,

PHIL

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