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Attached Direct Testimony
is not in electronic format.

October 23, 2007

Filing 3

Ms. René Jenkins
Secretary, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Re: Case No. 07-478-GA-UNC
Utility Service Partners
Testimony of Timothy W. Phipps

Dear Ms. Jenkins:

Please find attached an electronic copy of the Testimony of Timothy W. Phipps
on behalf of Utility Service Partners, Inc. in the above entitled matter.

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Stephen M. Howard

Attorneys for Utility Service Partners, Inc.

SMH/jab

Enclosures

cc: All parties of record - with enclosures

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**BEFORE THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO**

**In the Matter of the Application of)
Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc. for Approval)
of Tariffs to Recover Through An)
Automatic Adjustment Clause Costs)
Associated with the Establishment of an)
Infrastructure Replacement Program)
and for Approval of Certain Accounting)
Treatment)**

Case No. 07-478-GA-UNC

**TESTIMONY OF TIMOTHY W. PHIPPS ON BEHALF
OF UTILITY SERVICE PARTNERS, INC.**

1 **Q1. Please state your name and address.**

2 A1. Timothy W. Phipps, 321 Hickory Way, Thornville, OH 43076.

3 **Q2. Please describe your current position, your business and your educational**
4 **background.**

5 A2. My name is Timothy W. Phipps and I am employed by Utility Solutions of Ohio
6 (“USO”) Inc. as Owner Operator, President. I started this business in January,
7 2003 and have been involved in numerous gas related activities. I am certified by
8 the Department of Transportation to repair and replace external natural gas
9 service lines.

10 **Q3. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

11 A3. I am filing testimony to express and support Utility Service Partners, Inc.’s
12 (“USP”) objections to Columbia Gas of Ohio, Inc.’s (“Columbia”) request in Case
13 No. 07-478-GA-UNC, to assume responsibility for the maintenance, repair and
14 replacement of customer-owned service lines and to own new and replaced
15 service lines.

1 **Q4. Where do customer service lines generally leak?**

2 A4. Customer service line leaks generally occur in metal pipelines that have been
3 underground for several decades. In my experience, leaks are generally caused by
4 corrosion and metal fatigue due to lack of cathodic protection on bare steel lines.
5 Plastic lines also leak, but leaks generally occur due to damage from shifting in
6 the ground causing a sharp object to be pushed into the line. This can be
7 prevented by the use of clean fill to backfill these lines.

8 **Q5. Do you repair or replace customer service lines for USP?**

9 A5. Yes. I have repaired and replaced many customer service lines for USP in Ohio.

10 **Q6. How do you find out about a customer service line leak related to a USP**
11 **customer?**

12 A6. A USP customer service representative notifies me of a customer service line that
13 must be repaired or replaced.

14 **Q.7. Do you contact the USP customer after USP notifies you of the needed repair**
15 **or replacement?**

16 A.7. Yes. After USP contacts me, I contact the customer within one hour to
17 communicate with them that we have been assigned a work order to make the
18 repair or replacement to their facilities. Normally we will have all repairs done
19 within 24 hours. There are things out of the control of USP or USO that can delay
20 the process such as locating all of the underground facilities, consulting with the
21 gas company on meter locations, customers' schedules, etc. To ensure good
22 customer service, I work around the customer's schedule. In the initial contact we
23 discuss any concerns the customer may have involving the line repair.

1 **Q.8. What type of equipment is required to repair or replace a customer service**
2 **line?**

3 A.8. A backhoe is the largest piece of equipment required. Because customer service
4 lines are required to be buried 18” deep, in some situations a new trench is dug
5 using a backhoe or trencher. Every attempt possible is made to do an insert so we
6 would only dig a hole at either end of the service line and insert the new line
7 through the old line.

8 **Q.9. What other steps do you take to ensure the landowner is satisfied with your**
9 **work?**

10 A.9. The most important step is to communicate with the landowner about the job. I
11 make sure the landowner knows when we will be on the property and how long
12 the job will take. Other steps we take are to contact all necessary entities to locate
13 other utilities to ensure that their services are not interrupted. After repairs are
14 made we follow up with the customer to make sure they have gotten their service
15 restored so we can return to do a backfill. We also rake, seed and straw all
16 excavations. Our goal is to leave the property in as good a condition as possible.

17 **Q.10. Why is it important to communicate with the landowner?**

18 A.10 Because landowners are often very anxious about their gas service being
19 interrupted, it is vital that we have good communications to assure them that we
20 will make repairs and get their gas re-established as soon and as safely as
21 possible. We are in the business of providing a service to landowners who
22 happen to be natural gas customers and customer satisfaction is very important to
23 repeat business and referrals.

1 **Q.11. What are the safety issues in repairing a customer service line?**

2 A.11. Very few in regards to natural gas. In my experience, the Local Distribution
3 Company (“LDC”) has already turned off the gas prior to my coming on the
4 property. With the natural gas turned off at the curb, there are no issues as to
5 natural gas. Any safety issues are related to safely operating the equipment used
6 in the repair and ensuring the area is secured to prevent any injury to bystanders.

7 **Q.12. Why is it important to be certified by the Department of Transportation?**

8 A.12. DOT OQ (Operator Qualified) assures the customer that the person making the
9 repairs is certified and competent to do the work as was the gas company
10 employee who turned the gas off. The DOT OQ also sets a standard for all
11 contractors who do gas type work.

12 **Q.13. Does this conclude your testimony?**

13 A.13. Yes, it does.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a copy of the foregoing Testimony of Timothy Phipps was served upon the following persons by electronic mail and by first class U.S. mail, postage prepaid this 23rd day of October, 2007:

/s/

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Summary: Testimony Utility Service Partners Testimony of Timothy W. Phipps electronically filed by Stephen M Howard on behalf of Utility Service Partners, Inc.