

1804 Blue Ridge Dr.
Lexington, KY 40505
December 15, 2003

KY Public Service Commission
211 Sower Blvd.
P O Box 615
Frankfort, KY 40602

KY PSC MEMBERS:

Would you, the members of the PSC, grant a rate increase to your electric power company, (KU, Lexington, KY) if they could not correct a problem they have had for at least five years?

I started charting in May of 1999 the number of times there has been an electric power outage at my house. I know that the outages have occurred at the neighbors also.

The information I have is for years 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2003. I, by error, threw away my record for year 2000.

In 1999 there was 12 power outages.
In 2001 there was 5 power outages.
In 2002 there was 4 power outages.
In 2003 there has been, so far, 10 power outages.

I have contacted the KU recorder on many of these outages.

The NINE day power outage due to the ice storm is not included in the record.

KU employees have told me they do not know what can be done to correct their problem.

I am enclosing an article from the Lexington Herald-Leader on Dec. 4, 2003 about the KU high-tech nerve center. I called KU when I read the story and asked if their new outage-management system pinpointed the outage at my house on Dec. 1, 2003. I was told it did not and could not because it can only go as far as a transformer.

I am of the opinion that KU does not deserve to have a rate increase until they can give better customer service by tracking down their own outage problems and providing customer with that great service they advertise. Of course, I pay for the ads also.

Stan Houston

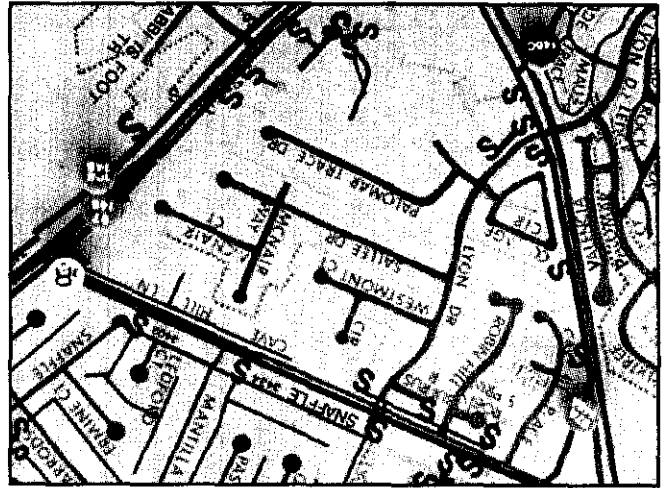
Stan Houston

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REGISTERED MAIL

With its new high-tech nerve center, KU will be able to pinpoint the power outages without the pushpins and paper

Kentucky Utilities' old system of paper map and pushpins was

DAVID PERRY | STAFF FILE PHOTO



DAVID STEPHENSON | STAFF FILE PHOTO

Six days after an ice storm crippled Lexington in February, a homeowner on Richmond Road pleaded for power.

KU | New system will pinpoint exact spot

From Page C1

Workers in the company's call center, in the meantime, had no way of telling customers whether their outage was being worked on or how long it might take to fix.

KU's low-tech approach, combined with the resulting vacuum of high-quality information, led to heavy criticism of the utility during the week-long power outage that brought Lexington to a frigid standstill early this year.

for company and customer alike, Freibert said.

For starters, the new software system can automatically predict the cause of a power outage, based on the number and location of calls received from customers.

Two complaints from customers served by the same transformer, for instance, suggests the transformer has gone bad. But add a few more complaints on a nearby street, and the system might tell dispatchers to send a repairman to a fuse serving the entire neighborhood.

A new mapping system would tell workers the exact back yard to enter to fix the fuse.

"It makes a lot of difference when it's raining in the middle of the night," Ely said. "You can tell them ex-

FEEES ON SIGNATURE TRANSACTIONS TOO HIGH, RETAILER SAYS

By Chuck Bartels

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Wal-Mart Stores Inc. will stop accepting signature debit cards issued by MasterCard starting in February.

Wal-Mart is the first major retailer to take such action since a lawsuit settlement freed merchants to pick which credit and debit card services they use.

The world's biggest retailer said yesterday that MasterCard's fees for the signature debit cards are too high. It will continue to accept Visa's signature debit cards.

A MasterCard spokesman didn't return a call for comment yesterday. The company released a statement to the Wall Street Journal in which MasterCard accused Wal-Mart of telling customers how they can pay. "It is surprising in today's environment for any merchant to make a conscious decision that will result in dissatisfied

Visa said it expects to keep its merchants on board.

When the change goes into effect Feb. 1, Wal-Mart doesn't expect many customers to be stopped dead at the cash register.

Wal-Mart spokeswoman Melissa Berryhill said yesterday that fewer than 1 percent of Wal-Mart transactions are under MasterCard signature debit cards, and more than 90 percent of the cards carry personal identification numbers that can be used instead of signatures.

Wal-Mart will continue to accept MasterCard debit cards if users key in their PIN numbers.

Berryhill said saving money is at the root of the move.

"We don't want to pass the costs associated with the signature debit on to our customers in the form of higher prices," Berryhill said.

Lloyd Constantine, the lead attorney for Wal-Mart and other retailers in the lawsuit against the two big card associations, said it appeared "Visa has made an extraordinary price concession to Wal-Mart and MasterCard has not."

Flue-cured market to shrink

ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH, N.C. — U.S. cigarette manufacturers said yesterday they will buy 29 million fewer pounds of domestic flue-cured tobacco in the coming year.

nounced by Dec. 15, also is determined by average tobacco exports and the amount of leaf needed to maintain a tobacco reserve.

Purchase intentions for 2004 are 254 million pounds, the US-