

ILLINOIS
COMMERCE COMMISSION

2009 OCT 15 A 11: 08

CHIEF CLERK'S OFFICE

USESC EXHIBIT 5.6
(PART 1)

The Tricky Turkey Award



To the gas company that displayed "outstanding" customer DISservice in 2007:

U.S. Energy Savings

For proudly peddling not just bad—but *historically* rotten—deals in northern Illinois' natural gas market, and still having the nerve to include "savings" in its name.

As winter approached, this unregulated gas company preyed on fears of high heating prices and offered to lock consumers into a \$1.14 per therm price for four or five years. Absent from the pitch was the fact that prices have only reached that level **ONCE** in Illinois history. Its recently "reduced" price (\$1.09 per therm) still ranks as Illinois' most expensive. Even worse, many customers report that salespeople claim CUB endorses U.S. Energy. **(We don't endorse gas companies.)**

Based on hundreds of complaints CUB got in 2007, there are too many frustrated Illinois consumers who sank their teeth into these turkeys and walked away with a whole new meaning to the term "gas pains."

This award is presented by the Citizens Utility Board.



E-Newsletter

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SUBJECT LINE:

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CUB hands out "Turkey Awards"

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Happy Thanksgiving on behalf of CUB! In honor of the holiday, we're giving out "Turkey Awards" to some of the electric, natural gas, and telephone companies that annoyed customers in 2007.

Cue the drum roll! Envelope please!

The 2007 Turkey Awards go to...

1. Ameren and ComEd, for their efforts in 2007 to gobble up more and more of their customers' money.

With the enthusiasm of a football team at a Thanksgiving buffet, Ameren and ComEd just kept coming back for more in 2007. Soon after being forced to serve up a billion dollars in customer refunds and go cold turkey on an electric-pricing system that led to huge rate hikes, the power companies filed for new increases totaling \$608 million. No matter how you carve it, in 2007 Ameren and ComEd proved yet again that when it comes to big rate hikes, they are definitely birds of a feather.

2. U.S. Energy, for marketing some of the most expensive natural gas offers in Illinois history, leaving many unfortunate customers in 2007 feeling a bit like the Thanksgiving turkey: plucked (of savings) and roasted.

U.S. Energy sparked hundreds of consumer complaints this year. In addition to locking customers into rates that were well above market prices, many people, including CUB's very own Associate Director Pat Clark reported that sales reps claimed the company was endorsed by CUB and/or the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) and/or the utilities. (Not true!) Like a bad turkey dinner, U.S. Energy gave whole new meaning to the term "gas pains" in 2007.

3. MCI, for pitching the ultimate "overstuffed turkey" of calling plans: "The Neighborhood," which charges too many consumers an arm and a leg for calls they'll never make and calling features they'll never use.

Most people simply don't make enough calls to justify paying a plump monthly fee (about \$50) PLUS another 20 percent in taxes and surcharges for an unlimited calling plan like this. In 2007, CUB saw far too many callers bite off more than they could chew on "The Neighborhood." This plan may be gravy for MCI, but it's trouble for a lot of callers.

Talk turkey about these and other electric, phone, or gas companies on CUB's blog, and find out how you can save money on your phone bill at CUB's Local Phone Cost-cutter.

+++++

David: Please link "CUB's blog" to:
<http://www.citizensutilityboard.org/blog/>

Please link "CUB's Local Phone Cost-cutter" to:
The cost-cutter

+++++

Give thanks to CUB
Please consider making a donation to support all the FREE services we provide— from our award-winning website, to CUB experts who cut your phone bills, to a legal team that's fighting to protect you from more than \$700 million in new utility rate hikes planned for 2008. We've saved Illinois consumers more than \$10 billion over the years, but we can't do it without you. A donation today will support our mission: Saving you money.

+++++

Please link: "Please consider making a donation" to: the donation page.

Please link "A donation today" to: the donation page.

Jim Chilsen

From: Jim Chilsen [chilsen@citizensutilityboard.org]
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2007 12:41 PM
To: 'randyfritz@mac.com'
Subject: RE: Turkey awards

You too, man.

-----Original Message-----

From: Randy Fritz [mailto:randyfritz@mac.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 21, 2007 12:41 PM
To: Jim Chilsen
Subject: Turkey awards

Chilsen:

Turkey Awards??? You're just mean.

Have a good thanksgiving -

Randy

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```
UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'CUB announces "Turkey Awards"' WHERE page_string =  
'/blog/index.php/2007/11/21/cubs-turkey-awards-announced/';
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[HAPPY THANKSGIVING!! »](#)

CUB announces "Turkey Awards"

Check out [the top of CUB's website](#), where we talk turkey about some electric, natural gas, and phone companies.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, November 21st, 2007 at 8:30 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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Turkey Award



In honor of Thanksgiving, CUB is giving out "Turkey Awards" to some of the electric, natural gas, and telephone companies that annoyed customers in 2007.

U.S. Energy

For marketing some of the most expensive natural gas offers in Illinois history, leaving many unfortunate customers in 2007 feeling a bit like the Thanksgiving turkey: plucked (of savings) and roasted.

U.S. Energy sparked hundreds of consumer complaints this year. In addition to locking customers into rates that were well above market prices, many people, including CUB's very own Associate Director Pat Clark, reported that sales reps claimed the company was endorsed by CUB and/or the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) and/or the utilities. (Not true!) Like a bad turkey dinner, U.S. Energy gave whole new meaning to the term "gas pains" in 2007.

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- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)
- [December 2007](#)
- [November 2007](#)
- [October 2007](#)
- [September 2007](#)
- [August 2007](#)
- [July 2007](#)
- [June 2007](#)
- [May 2007](#)
- [April 2007](#)
- [March 2007](#)
- [February 2007](#)
- [January 2007](#)
- [December 2006](#)
- [November 2006](#)
- [October 2006](#)

- [September 2006](#)
- [August 2006](#)
- [July 2006](#)
- [June 2006](#)

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- [AG Lisa Madigan \(3\)](#)
- [All Categories \(462\)](#)
- [All categories \(429\)](#)
- [Ambit \(2\)](#)
- [Ameren \(74\)](#)
- [Ameren \(70\)](#)
- [AT&T \(45\)](#)
- [AT&T \(46\)](#)
- [Barack Obama \(1\)](#)
- [cable \(16\)](#)
- [cell phone \(47\)](#)
- [Cell phone \(51\)](#)
- [CFLs \(28\)](#)
- [Chicago Cubs \(1\)](#)
- [Com Ed \(68\)](#)
- [Comcast \(17\)](#)
- [ComEd \(73\)](#)
- [Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs \(21\)](#)
- [Consumer Alert \(27\)](#)
- [Consumer Complaints \(4\)](#)
- [Consumer Tips \(17\)](#)
- [Customer Service \(2\)](#)
- [David Kolata \(26\)](#)
- [Digital TV \(1\)](#)
- [Do Not Call \(3\)](#)
- [Do Not Call List \(4\)](#)
- [Don't Get Shocked Tour \(213\)](#)
- [DSL \(3\)](#)
- [electric \(142\)](#)
- [Electric \(128\)](#)
- [energy efficiency \(56\)](#)

- [Enron](#) (1)
- [environment](#) (57)
- [Environment](#) (44)
- [exelon](#) (18)
- [Exelon](#) (18)
- [FERC](#) (3)
- [EON](#) (1)
- [Heating Oil](#) (1)
- [ICC](#) (1)
- [Illinois-American](#) (3)
- [Integritys](#) (1)
- [iPhone](#) (3)
- [Jajah](#) (1)
- [Join CUB](#) (5)
- [Lt. Gov Pat Quinn](#) (6)
- [Money-Saving Tips](#) (8)
- [natural gas](#) (111)
- [Natural Gas](#) (96)
- [Net Neutrality](#) (37)
- [Nicor](#) (40)
- [North Shore Gas](#) (20)
- [Northern Illinois Engery Project](#) (1)
- [Peoples Energy](#) (12)
- [Peoples Gas](#) (26)
- [Phone Bill Clinics](#) (45)
- [Phone-bill Clinics](#) (48)
- [Pioneer Telephone](#) (10)
- [Propane](#) (1)
- [Randy Fritz](#) (6)
- [Real-Time Pricing](#) (3)
- [Super Pets](#) (2)
- [telephone](#) (82)
- [Telephone](#) (80)
- [U.S. Energy](#) (7)
- [Uncategorized](#) (27)
- [Uncategorized](#) (4)
- [Unregulated Gas Companies](#) (15)

- o VOIP (3)
 - o water (7)
 - o Water (4)
 - o Wind Power (2)
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Jim Chilsen

From: Citizens Utility Board [actionnetwork@citizensutilityboard.org]
Sent: Wednesday, April 26, 2006 2:01 PM
To: chilsen@cuboard.org
Subject: CUB Issues Consumer Alert: Watch Out For Misleading Gas Marketer

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Dear Jim,

CUB Issues Consumer Alert

Watch Out For Misleading Gas Marketer

On Monday, CUB issued a consumer alert, warning Chicago-area natural gas customers to beware of a gas supplier going door-to-door using deceptive sales tactics to convince consumers to lock in natural gas prices for the next five years. CUB has asked state regulators to put a stop to U.S. Energy Savings Corp.'s shady practices and to allow customers to switch back to their original gas company without penalty. If you've been a victim of U.S. Energy, call or e-mail CUB and forward this message to your friends and family.

Record \$100 Credit On Peoples Energy Bills To Begin This Month

A record \$100 million refund will be showing up on all Peoples Gas and North Shore gas bills beginning this week. Peoples Gas customers will see a credit of \$100, while North Shore Gas customers will see a credit of \$21. The refund is the result of a legal settlement between the company, the Illinois Attorney General, the City of Chicago, and CUB. But it was evidence of a secret deal between Peoples Energy and Enron—evidence uncovered by CUB—that formed the basis for the settlement. CUB revealed that consumers overpaid because of the deal during the winter of 2000-2001, when gas prices skyrocketed.

Put Your Phone Bill On A Diet

CUB kicks off the first leg of its statewide "Put Your Phone Bill on a Diet Tour" this month with phone bill clinics in Moline and Rock Island. May brings the tour to Centralia, Mt. Vernon, Charleston, Champaign, Elk Grove Village, and Schaumburg. At the clinics, consumers will receive a free, individual analysis of their phone bills to help them find ways to save money.

Become A Consumer Champion

All of the important work CUB does is made possible by the support of our members. I hope you'll consider joining the 100,000 Illinois consumers who are taking a stand against high rates and abusive practices by the big utility companies. If you're already a CUB member, thank you for your support. It makes a big difference in the work we do at CUB.

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'CUB guides give you facts on alternative gas suppliers' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2008/08/19/cub-guides-give-you-facts-on-alternative-gas-suppliers/';
```

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[AT&T refuses to honor promotional pricing](#) »

CUB guides give you facts on alternative gas suppliers

Natural gas prices are going through the roof and northern Illinois consumers might be tempted to jump to an unregulated natural gas supplier. You can get the facts on the latest prices in our special guides for [Nicor customers](#) and [Peoples/North Shore Gas customers](#). Even though the utilities' prices are falling in northern Illinois, a lot of unregulated companies are offering better prices this month. Until now, most of the deals had been losing customers money. Just remember that the utility prices in northern Illinois are falling. So unregulated deals that seemed good the last few months may turn bad. A good example is U.S. Energy's offer to lock in customers at \$1.09 per therm. When the company began to offer it months ago, the price was much higher than Nicor's rate. Of course, that rate beat the utility offer the last few months, as prices approached \$1.50 a therm.

Now, that offer is a money-loser again in Nicor's territory where the regulated utility is charging \$1.08 per therm. So these unregulated offers have been saving money in the summer, when usage is down and gas bills aren't as high.

This entry was posted on Tuesday, August 19th, 2008 at 4:11 am and is filed under [Nicor](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [natural gas](#), [All Categories](#), [Unregulated Gas Companies](#), [Natural Gas](#), [All categories](#), [Peoples Energy](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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[CUB counselor thanked for 'working her butt off'](#) »

The ICC does NOT endorse gas marketers

At CUB we hear stories all the time about marketing ploys used by alternative gas suppliers—the companies that come to your door implying they can save you money on your gas bills. Well one of them, U.S. Energy, was out in my neighborhood the other day. When I inquired what they were up to, the sales rep told me he had been “sent out by the ICC.” The ICC, he told me, “works for the consumers.” Of course, these companies are not endorsed by the ICC (the Illinois Commerce Commission) or by CUB or by any public-interest organization that we know of. The vast majority of people who sign up with alternative suppliers end up losing money—despite what their salespeople might tell you. Unfortunately, there’s no magic bullet to help cut your gas bills. It’s buyer beware in the gas market, but, with CUB’s help, you can make sense of it all. Check out CUB’s fact sheet for [Peoples customers](#) and our fact sheet for [Nicor customers](#) for more guidance on northern Illinois’ natural gas program.
Pat Clark, CUB associate director

This entry was posted on Thursday, August 16th, 2007 at 3:27 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'Natural gas "deals" in northern Illinois' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2007/06/29/natural-gas-deals-in-northern-illinois/';

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Natural gas "deals" in northern Illinois

Nicor Gas charged 88 cents per therm in June, Peoples Gas charged about 82 cents per therm, and North Shore Gas charged about 87 cents per therm.

Compare what unregulated companies offered in June to [Nicor customers](#) and [Peoples/North Shore customers](#). The difference is sometimes shocking, as with U.S. Energy's \$1.14 per therm rate, and one of Nordic Energy's rates, \$1.145 per therm. A few times the prices beat the utilities, but more often than not they're more expensive, as you can see in our [Gas Market Monitor](#).

Jim Chilsen, CUB Communications Director

This entry was posted on Friday, June 29th, 2007 at 3:29 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'A good deal? U.S. Energy charges whopping \$1.19 per therm' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2006/11/07/a-good-deal-us-energy-charges-whopping-119-per-therm/';

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[How does she do it?](#) »

A good deal? U.S. Energy charges whopping \$1.19 per therm

In November, Nicor Gas is charging 55 cents per therm and Peoples Gas is charging 72 cents per therm. So why is U.S. Energy, a competing gas supplier in northern Illinois, offering a whopping \$1.19 per therm for four or five years? Because it and other unregulated suppliers can charge whatever they want. U.S. Energy's price is about as high as gas prices ever got in the Chicago area. Prices would have to be at record highs for many months to make such an offer a good deal over the four or five-year contract. Maybe it could be a good deal, but how could anyone know without a crystal ball. That's quite a risk. Be careful of any company that comes to your door or solicits you by phone or mail. Never sign up for anything immediately. Take at least a day to consider the offer, and call CUB (1-800-669-5556) with ANY questions. Check out CUB's special publications for [Nicor](#) and [Peoples/North Shore Gas](#) customers. Also, check out the [Gas Market Monitor](#), which shows that 95 percent of current alternative natural gas offers are at the moment money-losers. Good grief!

Jim Chilsen, CUB Communications Director

This entry was posted on Tuesday, November 7th, 2006 at 10:38 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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'/blog/index.php/2007/01/11/report-from-the-natural-gas-front/';
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[Wal-Mart sees the light](#) »

Report from the Natural Gas front

CUB is still seeing people sign up for really bad natural gas deals in northern Illinois — the only place in the state where customers can choose to have a company other than the traditional utility supply them with natural gas.

The worst of these bad deals is U.S. Energy's \$1.19 per therm "deal" for four or five years. I can't believe the company is still getting customers to sign up for this! Compare U.S. Energy's price with Nicor Gas' 67 cents per therm price in January. Peoples Gas is charging about 83 cents per therm, and North Shore Gas about 85 cents per therm.

Jim Chilsen, CUB Communications Director

This entry was posted on Thursday, January 11th, 2007 at 2:46 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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```

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[Phone-bill Clinics Kick Off 2007 Tour with Savings »](#)

Consumer quote of the week

“Bryan, bless your cotton socks. Thank you!”

That’s the creative response a consumer gave CUB staffer Bryan McDaniel, after he answered her questions about U.S. Energy Savings Corp. U.S. Energy is an unregulated natural gas supplier that has been marketing an offer that locks customers into a \$1.19 per therm price for four or five years. (The current Nicor Gas rate is 67 cents per therm and Peoples Gas is offering about 83 cents per therm.)

Consumers who have questions or complaints about their natural gas, telephone, or electric service should call CUB’s Consumer Hotline, at 1-800-669-5556.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, January 31st, 2007 at 8:06 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'Shelling out green for the "green energy option"' WHERE page_string =  
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```

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[The morning papers on ComEd's rate-hike designs](#) »

Shelling out green for the "green energy option"

U.S. Energy today came out with a ["Green Energy Option" program](#). For a premium on their natural gas bills, people can choose to "offset their household's natural gas related greenhouse gas emissions with sponsored carbon reductions." The premium is \$4 per month for every 20 percent you choose to offset. So you could pay up to \$20 per month EXTRA.

Two things you should know:

1. U.S. Energy locks you into a \$1.09 per therm rate for four or five years. This is very high. [Nicor Gas](#) and [Peoples Gas](#) this month are charging about 68 cents per therm. The premium would be on top of this already high rate.
 2. You don't have to sign up for U.S. Energy and its high rate to help the environment. There are a lot of things you can do without ever leaving your regulated gas utility. Buy highly efficient lightbulbs. Buy a programmable thermostat. Etc., Etc., Etc. Check out [CUB's tips](#).
- Jim Chilsen, CUB director of communications

This entry was posted on Wednesday, October 17th, 2007 at 10:46 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'U.S. Energy Savings Corp. pitches to Chicago residents' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2007/08/06/us-energy-savings-corp-pitches-to-chicago-residents-2/';
```

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[Cell phone buying tips](#) »

U.S. Energy Savings Corp. pitches to Chicago residents

While staying home sick in bed on Thursday, I was awakened by my buzzer. After dragging myself out of bed, I answered the ringing and found that it was U.S. Energy Savings Corp. trying to sell me natural gas. I promptly said I was not interested and went back to sleep. However, later when I woke up, I realized many people might not know the facts about alternative natural gas suppliers. So, if you're one of these individuals...check out [CUB's natural gas page](#), which has all the information you need to make an informed decision about your natural gas supply.

This entry was posted on Monday, August 6th, 2007 at 9:27 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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```

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Where have you gone, Fuller Brush man?

I was on Rockford's WNTA radio this morning and a caller asked about U.S. Energy Savings Corp. The company had recently come to his door to try to sell him alternative gas service. It's all part of the Customer Select choice program and it's caused a lot of confusion among consumers. This gentleman did not sign up for the offer. Check out CUB's [fact sheet](#) on the program, including a listing of all the prices offered so you can compare what Nicor is charging (80 cents per therm) vs. what some of these alternative companies, like U.S. Energy (\$1.14 per therm), are charging. Here's a [fact sheet](#) for a similar program run for Peoples Gas customers.

Jim Chilsen, CUB director of communications

This entry was posted on Thursday, July 26th, 2007 at 3:35 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

No Responses to "Where have you gone, Fuller Brush man?"

1. [Citizens Utility Board Blog » Blog Archive » Thanks to all the CUB activists who e-mailed the FCC Says:](#)
[July 31st, 2007 at 10:00 pm](#) e

[...] On the eve of a key FCC vote, more than 1,600 people e-mailed FCC commissioners at CUB's request. Thanks! Today's vote was on an upcoming auction of a "slice" of the public airwaves that could help make high-speed Internet more affordable and accessible. It turned out to be a mixed bag. We won a key issue, thanks in part to consumer groups that sparked e-mail campaigns: On about one-third of the spectrum to be auctioned off customers will be allowed to use whatever phone and software they want. [...]

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'U.S. Energy stories' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2008/02/11/us-energy-stories/';
```

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« [Good for the environment, good for the economy, good for consumers](#)
[U.S. Energy update: '...It offends your moral sensibilities'](#) »

U.S. Energy stories

Since we posted blog entries inviting U.S. Energy stories, we've gotten the following response. If you have a complaint about U.S. Energy or any gas company, call CUB's Consumer Hotline, 1-800-669-5556. Remember, it's buyer beware. If the "gas company" comes to your door, give CUB a call before you sign up for anything. Check out [CUB's homepage](#) for more details.

1. "My daughter-in-law and son were duped into signing up for this, and when they were moving, they couldn't sign out. They had to pay a small fortune to them. It was posted to their Nicor bill and Nicor could do nothing to help them...."

2. "I also was approached by a salesperson at my home and he was telling me how great their company is and that Nicor Gas buys their gas from them. He said that the major gas companies jack up their prices and that by signing U.S. Energy Savings Corp. contract my gas prices would be cheaper....In fact, my gas bills are higher since I signed this contract. I had called the company about a month after I signed this contract to see if I could cancel this, but they told me this would cost me several hundred dollars. I told my wife, I'm sorry but we can't do it because it will cost us alot of extra money...."

3. "About two months ago, a man came to my door and introduced himself by name. He asked to see my current Nicor bill to see if I qualify for a five year rate freeze because he said gas rates continue to go up and up. He never mentioned the name US Energy Savings Corp and lead me on to believe he was a representative of Nicor. I showed him the bill and I qualified so he filled out a simple form for me to sign and that was it. A week or two later, I received a letter from Nicor saying I was switching to US Energy. I was a little surprised but unconcerned until I received the first bill and it was nearly double my usual amount. Now I heard on the news that I'm going to be charged a huge cancellation fee if I try to cancel. What can I do?"

This entry was posted on Monday, February 11th, 2008 at 8:18 am and is filed under [Nicor](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [natural gas](#), [All Categories](#), [Unregulated Gas Companies](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

CUBlog 2008/02/11/0000000000

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'Have you been approached by an unregulated gas company?' WHERE page_string = '/blog/index.php/2008/02/08/have-you-been-approached-by-an-unregulated-gas-company/';
```

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« [U.S. Energy's on the hot seat for sales tactics](#)
[Debunking decoupling](#) »

Have you been approached by an unregulated gas company?

CBS 2's [investigative piece](#) on U.S. Energy profiled a lot of people who had been lured into signing up for a much higher natural gas rate. One person got locked into a \$1.19 rate when the regulated gas company at the time was charging 66 cents per therm. Have you been approached by an unregulated company like U.S. Energy? Tell us of your experience. We'll put it up on the blog.

Jim Chilsen, CUB director of communications

This entry was posted on Friday, February 8th, 2008 at 6:10 am and is filed under [Nicor](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [All Categories](#), [Unregulated Gas Companies](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

3 Responses to "Have you been approached by an unregulated gas company?"

1. [dmar85](#) Says:
February 8th, 2008 at 11:43 am e

Yes...

I was approached back in September...at the time I thought it was a good money saving idea and being locked in at \$1.14 rate. A few months later, I had change the gas bill from my mom's name (who was deceased) to my name.

A letter was quickly sent to my mother's home (where I now live) stating that she would have to pay \$603.42 since she canceled the program. I called them to explain the situation and everything was straightened out. I was told in the beginning that I would have to pay a small cancelation fee, but people usually stay in the program and he could not tell me the amount right off hand.

I told a few friends about the experience and they told me that it was nothing but a scam...I did not believe them until I saw the

February 11th, 2008 at 9:49 am e

USES went down my block a 3 PM last September, ringing doorbells and promising big savings. The salesman asked to see my bill and after looking at it, he said that they could save me money. It looked like a good deal at first and the guy made it seem important to lock in gas prices before the heating season. The salesman pushed for a commitment right away. To complete the sale, the salesman must call the office on the customer's phone. The person at the office talks to the customer and confirms that the salesman is at the address. I did not OK the contract. I told the person at the USES office that I wanted to think about the contract before signing and the fine print said that I had 3 days to decide. USES decided for me and changed my supplier to them.

I did some research into their prices and determined that this was a bad deal. Next bill from Peoples Gas showed USES as my gas supplier, even though I never agreed to make the switch. This was similar to the "slamming" that phone companies do.

It took 2 months to sort this out. Even after I told Peoples Gas that I never agreed to switch suppliers, USES was still on record as my supplier. Peoples Gas had records of my calls, so it was clear early on that I didn't want USES providing my gas. After I complained more to USES and threatened to tell the Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission, USES finally gave up and I was switched back to Peoples Gas. They found the record of the phone call the salesman made to them in which I told them that I didn't agree to change suppliers. I got a letter from USES confirming that I was no longer their customer and that they let me out of the contract as a "courtesy", so they wouldn't charge me their outrageous cancellation fee. The real reason they couldn't charge me a cancellation fee was that I never signed a contract in the first place.

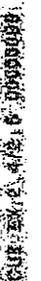
2 weeks ago, my doorbell rang and I found a USES salesman, clipboard in hand, on my front porch. I sent him away. U.S. Energy Savings should be driven out of business. They are completely unethical.

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```

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« [Join "Do Not Market" list to avoid gas pitches](#)

[Have you been approached by an unregulated gas company?](#) »

U.S. Energy's on the hot seat for sales tactics

Tough-talking TV investigator Pam Zekman set her sights on U.S. Energy in last night's investigative piece. According to her CBS 2 investigation, which sent a producer undercover to a U.S. Energy training class, trainees were told to compare a therm to a gallon of gasoline. Obviously, U.S. Energy's price of more than a dollar per therm is horrendously high, but it doesn't seem so bad when gasoline is more than \$3 a gallon. CUB Executive Director David Kolata called it "horribly misleading."

This entry was posted on Friday, February 8th, 2008 at 5:15 am and is filed under [Nicor](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [natural gas](#), [All Categories](#), [Unregulated Gas Companies](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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```

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Join "Do Not Market" list to avoid gas pitches »

TV probe to expose U.S. Energy's bad deal

CBS 2 did an undercover investigation of U.S. Energy and it's airing tonight. If you recall, U.S. Energy is the unregulated gas company that's been the source of hundreds of complaints to CUB. The company's \$1.09 per therm offer for four or five years is one of the worst deals we've ever seen in Illinois. There are plenty of other bad deals in the gas market. Read our warning posters, in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#).

Jim Chilsen, CUB communications director

This entry was posted on Thursday, February 7th, 2008 at 1:57 pm and is filed under [Nicor](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [All Categories](#), [Unregulated Gas Companies](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

No Responses to "TV probe to expose U.S. Energy's bad deal"

1. *johnh* Says:

[June 27th, 2006 at 11:47 pm e](#)

And I thought that spyware and viruses are bad now, just wait! No way would I participate in this program.

2. *David Kolata* Says:

[June 28th, 2006 at 3:07 pm e](#)

That's a good point johnh. The company will certainly need to address privacy and security issues to succeed with this model.

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'Feb. 1, 2008: The utility world as we know it...' WHERE page_string =  
'/blog/index.php/2008/02/01/feb-1-2008-the-utility-world-as-we-know-it/';
```

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« [The blog is back](#)

[CUB gives consumers all the credit](#) »

Feb. 1, 2008: The utility world as we know it...

Since our blog went down, a lot has happened for Illinois utility customers. Let me give you some highlights.

1. Telephone

CUB held 50 clinics last year, showing consumers how to save an average of \$200 a year. (How? Just check out our [Phone-savings Center](#).) We haven't slowed down in 2008, already holding phone-bill clinics in Northlake, Rock Island, and Rockford (despite blizzard conditions!). We're in Peoria on Monday to hold another clinic and let consumers know about a [CUB-negotiated \\$20 credit](#) for one of the best deals in the long-distance market: Pioneer Telephone's "Rate Buster" plan.

2. Natural Gas:

We continue to [warn customers](#) about bad deals peddled by unregulated gas companies in northern Illinois. The poster child of bad deals: U.S. Energy's offer of \$1.09 per therm for five years. On the bright side, our consumer alert actually prompted one company, [IGS Energy](#), to offer a plan that guarantees moderate savings. Meanwhile, CUB is fighting natural gas rate-hike requests of about \$99 million from Peoples Gas, \$67 million from Ameren, and \$6 million from North Shore Gas.

3. Electric:

Not long after getting their hands slapped by the governor and the General Assembly, [ComEd](#) and [Ameren](#) have their hands in the cookie jar again, asking for \$361 million and \$180 million in rate hikes.

In other news...

-CUB continues to fight Illinois-American's request for a \$33 million rate hike—one of nine such requests facing consumers across the state.

-We continue to get questions about AT&T's hidden \$10 DSL, so we have [links to helpful information on our website](#).

-CUB helped spark a campaign that left a proposed Cook County utility-tax increase up in smoke.

Jim Chilsen, CUB director of communications

This entry was posted on Friday, February 1st, 2008 at 2:04 pm and is filed under [Ameren](#), [AT&T](#), [ComEd](#), [Peoples Gas](#), [North Shore Gas](#), [electric](#), [natural gas](#), [telephone](#), [water](#), [All Categories](#), [Phone-bill Clinics](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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UPDATE wp_bas_pages SET page_label = 'Outrageously high!' WHERE page_string =
'/blog/index.php/2007/11/26/outrageously-high/';

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« [HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!](#)
[Beiser blasts Ameren rate hike](#) »

Outrageously high!

So says a consumer advocate about U.S. Energy's gas offers. Read [the Daily Southtown's article](#) about people who are mad at the company and its sales tactics. U.S. Energy currently locks customers into a \$1.09 per therm rate for four or five years, while Nicor and Peoples charge about 70 cents per therm and 78 cents per therm, respectively.

This entry was posted on Monday, November 26th, 2007 at 12:01 pm and is filed under Uncategorized. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site. [Edit this entry](#).

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