IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Case No. AVU-G-03-1, Order No. 29325

For Immediate Release / August 20, 2003

Contact: Gene Fadness (208) 334-0339

PUC schedules workshops on Avista Gas proposal

BOISE – Public workshops are scheduled for Lewiston and Coeur d'Alene regarding Avista Utilities' request for an average 2.5 percent increase in gas rates.

The Idaho Public Utilities Commission suspended the company's request to have the rate increase effective by Sept. 15 to allow time to conduct public workshops and receive written comments.

The workshops will be held Monday, Sept. 8, in Lewiston at the Nez Perce County Commission Brammer Building, 1225 Idaho Street in Lewiston, and on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at the Student Union Building of North Idaho College, 1000 W. Garden Avenue in Coeur d'Alene. Both workshops begin at 7 p.m.

The commission also opened a formal comment period for customers who want to submit written comments through Sept. 15.

Commission staff will attend the workshops to answer questions regarding Avista's proposal. If approved, residential and small-business customers using an average of 70 therms a month would see an average increase of $1.39 per month, or 2.5 percent. Larger commercial customers would expect to seen an average increase of 2.8 to 3 percent.

The company claims the increase is needed because of the rising price of gas on the wholesale market. The approximate $1.2 million in additional revenue from the rate increase would be used only to pay for gas, not to increase the company's profit margin.

Persons wishing to submit comments can do so via e-mail by accessing the commission's website at www.puc.state.id.us and clicking on "Comments & Questions." Fill in the case number (AVU-G-03-1) and enter your comments. Comments can also be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.

A full text of the commission's order, along with other documents related to this case, are available on the commission's website. Click on "File Room" and then on "Gas Cases," and scroll down to the appropriate case number.

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