

# THE GREEN WIRE

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## **Sen. Green Calls for Senate Investigation into AmerenUE Maintenance Budget**

JEFFERSON CITY – A St. Louis County Democrat wants to know why AmerenUE has not been trimming trees as it should for the past several years and in fact has a backlog in its tree-trimming program.

“If AmerenUE had been doing the preventive maintenance by trimming trees near power lines, damages to the St. Louis area would have been less, cleanup would have been accomplished faster and power restored to consumers sooner,” said Sen. Timothy Green (D-Spanish Lake). This criticism is aimed solely at the decisions made by AmerenUE executives, not the employees and linemen that deserve our sincere gratitude for their hard work in restoring electrical service to customers.

Following the last major storm affecting AmerenUE customers, the Missouri Public Service Commission filed a report investigating the response of AmerenUE to the storm that passed through St. Louis in August, 2005. After discussions between AmerenUE and the PSC, AmerenUE in a letter dated November, 2005 made a commitment to do better. However, as the report recognized, AmerenUE did not do enough preventive maintenance and continued to have a serious backlog of untrimmed trees near power lines.

In a letter today, Sen. Green requested that Senate President Pro-Tem Michael Gibbons expand the scope of the Senate Interim Committee on 21st Century Choice in Technology to investigate AmerenUE’s crisis management, maintenance plans and its tree-trimming program.

In 2004, AmerenUE agreed to take the following steps to address the backlog. First, AmerenUE said it would increase its tree-trimming budget from \$23.5 million in 2004 to \$30 million in 2005. Second, AmerenUE committed that its backlog of tree trimming would be eliminated on or before December 31, 2008.

“Preventive maintenance must occur prior to a severe storm to have any positive impact and AmerenUE’s tree-trimming budget has been severely lacking,” Sen. Green said. “AmerenUE consumers deserve to know why AmerenUE is requesting a 17.7% rate increase while AmerenUE’s maintenance plans and its tree-trimming program failed them.”

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