

Why is U.E. asking for higher and higher rates?

Basically, U.E. keeps coming back to the trough for additional funds for their capital investments. They have announced plans to build the first nuclear power plant in Missouri--Callaway County near Fulton--and that baby will require \$550 million just for starters.

The public took no part in U.E.'s decision to go nuclear, but the public will bear the brunt of this decision in the form of higher and higher rates. Putting all safety and environmental questions aside, there are serious economic questions which can be raised on the merits of this decision. First and foremost, we can ask for whom the power plant is being built? U.E. already has almost 50% of its generating capacity sitting idle in winter months for lack of customers, and the push for conservation has resulted in a no-growth in demand for electric power for the first time in ten years. Why should Missouri customers pay higher rates to subsidize a capital investment program to ship power to other areas in the country?

And why has U.E. decided to go into a risky, expensive nuclear power program when uranium, the fuel for nuclear power plants of the type proposed to be built in the Fulton area, is in shorter domestic supply than oil? As a matter of fact, U.E. which burns almost 95% coal to produce its power, experienced none of the problems during the "energy crisis" of other electric utilities which burned natural gas or oil. You might even say that they profited from the "energy crisis" through higher export sales.