



GPSC

# GPSC News

*Making Business and Safety Decisions Affecting Tomorrow*

Volume 2 Issue 3

Winter 2003

## New Commissioners Take Office

### New Commissioners

H. Doug Everett  
Angela Elizabeth Speir

Elected 2002  
Serve through 2008

Speir: First woman elected to PSC

Everett: First Republican elected from Southwest Georgia to the PSC



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Angela Speir takes the oath of office as her parents, Jack and June Speir and family friend Michael Peek look on

H. Doug Everett is sworn in by Governor Roy Barnes. Everett's wife Janice holds the bible for the oath

Commissioners Angela Elizabeth Speir and H. Doug Everett took office January 1, 2003 as the newest members of the Georgia Public Service Commission. Both took the oath of office in ceremonies at the State Capitol with Governor Roy E. Barnes administering the oath. Speir is the first woman elected to the five-member Commission. Everett is the first

Republican from southwest Georgia elected to the Commission. Both won election to six-year terms in the November 2002 elections. They took part in their first Administrative Session

## Legislature Convenes, Budget Top Issue

The 2003 Session of the Georgia General Assembly convened on January 13, 2003 for what promises to be an interesting and possibly contentious session. The top issue is the state's budget crisis as Governor Sonny Perdue told the Legislature that the state is facing a

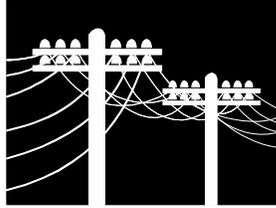
\$620 million shortfall in the 2003 budget year. He has already ordered state departments to look for further cuts in their budgets. Perdue's Fiscal Year 2004 budget contains no pay raises for state workers, University System employees or

teachers. In response to previous requests, the Commission has submitted more than \$550,000 in budget cuts for FY 2004. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have already started marking up the



## Lawmaker Introduces Bill On Electric Transmission Line Siting

State Representative Judy Manning (R-Marietta) is sponsoring legislation (House Bill 22) that would require the Commission to issue a certificate of necessity to electric utilities and transmission companies before the companies could construct new electric power transmission lines. The House Judiciary subcommittee on Commercial Law discussed the bill on January 30, 2003, and heard testimony from interested citizens groups, Georgia Power, Georgia Transmission Corporation, Municipal Electric Authority of



Georgia and the Commission. Commissioner H. Doug Everett and Utilities Director Tom Bond told committee members the bill as written would mean the Com-

mission would have to expand its staff and require more than \$3.7 million in additional funding for the Commission. The subcommittee will take up the measure for a vote later in the session.

Citizens groups in several areas of the state have complained that utilities should not have unchecked power of eminent domain. The utilities say the bill could impose an unneeded delay in meeting that Georgia's growing power needs.

The measure will be voted on by the Subcommittee and then go before the full House Judiciary committee.

If you have a story for the next GPSC News, please send to Bill Edge, [bille@psc.state.ga.us](mailto:bille@psc.state.ga.us). Next issue deadline is April 15, 2003.

## Commission Bids Farewell to McDonald, Sizemore

Commissioners Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. and Earleen Sizemore bid farewell to the Commission at the December 17, 2002 Administrative Session. McDonald had served on the PSC since 1998 while Sizemore had served since June 2002.

Commission Chairman David Burgess recognized his departing colleagues at



Commissioners Earleen Sizemore (l) and Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. take part in their final Commission session

the session. To Commissioner McDonald he said, "You've been a good colleague, a hard worker and the State of Georgia has benefited from your presence on this Commission." He noted that Commissioner Sizemore had taken the Commission's message out across the state to receive input from the public.

Commissioner Sizemore was the first woman to serve on the Commission.

## Commission Begins SQM Hearings

The Commission in late January 2003 held three days of hearings on Service Quality Measures for natural gas marketers, the regulated provider and electing distribu-

tion company. The Commission is required to set the standards for service quality measures under the Natural Gas Consumers' Relief Act approved during the 2002 Georgia General As-

sembly.

The Commission will publish the standards at a later date in accordance with rules adopted at the August 27, 2002 Administrative Session.

## Commission Decisions



### Commission Approves Aid For Low-Income Gas Customers

The Commission on February 4, 2003 unanimously approved sending \$5 million from the Universal Service Fund to the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) for energy assistance to low-income consumers. Specifically, \$3 million will be used to assist low-income senior citizens in paying their winter heating

bills while the remaining \$2 million will go to assist other low-income consumers. Commissioner David L. Burgess, who sponsored the measure, said, "This Commission, out of a sense of dignity, ought to reach out to those in need in this state." The Commission action is in accordance with the Natural Gas Consumers' Relief Act that authorizes the Commission to use the Uni-

versal Service Fund to assist low-income residential consumers in times of emergency.

DHR will distribute the funds through the various Community Action Agencies located throughout the state. Consumers wishing to apply for assistance with their energy bills should contact DHR at 1-800-869-1150.

### Baker Takes Helm As Commission Chair

Commissioner Robert Baker, Jr. will serve as Commission chairman during 2003. Commissioner Doug Everett will serve as Vice-Chairman. Baker has been a member of the Commission since 1993 following his election as the first Republican elected to a statewide office since Reconstruction. He was re-elected in 1998. Baker grew up in DeKalb County and graduated



from Oglethorpe University with honors. He received his law degree from the University of Georgia. In 1994 Baker became the first Republican to serve as Chairman of the Commission. In 1998 he served

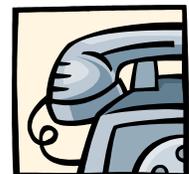
his second term as chairman. During his tenure on the PSC he has worked aggressively to develop competitive markets for utility services, reduce regulation and expand toll free calling in Georgia. He is a member and director of the Peachtree-Atlanta Kiwanis Club. He and his wife Joselyn live in DeKalb County.

### Commission Names Telecommunications Equipment Vendor

The Commission on January 22, 2003 approved the selection of the Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired of Atlanta as the vendor to administer the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program.

This program provides for the distribution of certain items of telecommunications equipment to hearing or speech disabled persons subject to medical and financial eligibility screening. The distribution program is the result of

House Bill 1003 passed during the 2002 General Assembly.



# Commission Holds Regulated Provider Workshops

## “You Don’t Have To Be Without Gas This Winter”



by **Bernard Cameron**

The Regulated Provider was born out of House Bill 1568, the Natural Gas Consumers’ Relief Act, to serve three groups of consumers: low-income, low-income seniors and those who were unable to secure gas from the certificated marketers. However, to ensure the success of the Regulated Provider, the Commission needed to publicize its existence.



Commissioner David Burgess welcomes workshop participants

To augment the Regulated Provider’s publicity efforts to urge eligible customers to sign up for its services, the Commission held a series of workshops to train the people who had direct contact with the targeted audiences. The Commission’s Consumer Affairs Unit took the lead in developing the content, making contact with prospective attendees, scheduling and providing the

site for the workshop.

Four workshops were held over the course of three months (October through December). Cynthia Johnson, Director of Consumer Affairs, served as facilitator. The workshops were honored to have the participation of Commissioners’ Baker and Burgess at two of the sessions. More than 40 people attended the workshops representing organizations such as: the Sullivan Center, Latin American Society,



Community leaders, marketers and PSC staff take part in the workshops

Secumus Hose, Clayton County DFAC, Fulton County Human Services, HODAC, Inc., MUST Ministries, Georgia Council on Aging, H.E.A.T., Inc., Druid Hills Baptist Church, Green Forest Baptist Church, Georgia Natural Gas, Southern Company Gas, Walton EMC Natural Gas, Shell Energy, GasKey,

Infinite Energy and SCANA Energy. The workshop began with a welcome – followed by an introduction by each participant. The first presenter was Ms. Joyce Hull from the Department of Human Resources. Ms. Hull’s presentation centered on the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) qualifications that had to be met in order to be served as a Group 1 customer of



Commissioner Baker welcomes participants

the Regulated Provider. She mentioned other assistance that is available to low-income citizens to help keep their bills at a minimum, such as home weatherization assistance through the Department of Human Resources. At the end of her presentation, Ms. Hull answered questions from the audience.

Next, Paulette Hood, SCANA

## Regulated Provider Workshops



Regulated Division, spoke to the participants about the role of the Regulated Provider. She gave a brief history of how the commission selected SCANA to be the Regulated Provider (RP). She elaborated on the RP's deposit policy (noting that the deposit of \$100 was presently being waived for Group 1 customers), and the expedited disconnection process. She pointed out that low-income seniors who are served as Group 1 customers would be transferred to Group 2 rather than being disconnected. However, if they failed to stay

current as Group 2 customers, service could be disconnected. She also answered questions at the conclusion of her presentation. Finally, to "put the icing on the cake," Cynthia presented the audience with scenarios to reinforce the information that Joyce and Paulette presented. Many in attendance were surprised to learn that people who are employed as teachers, policemen, firemen, or even self-employed businesspersons may, in some cases, qualify for the services of the Regulated Provider as Group 1 customers.

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants filled out an evaluation form to determine the need for future enhancements for the workshops. The questions were: What did you expect to gain from the workshop? Was your expectation met? What would you recommend to enhance the workshop? Do you consider this training to be a good use of your time? All respondents stated they felt the workshop met their expectations and was a good use of their time. Suggestions

## Regulated Provider Workshops

for enhancing the workshop included requests for on-site workshops, having a follow-up workshop in the spring and including more information about organizations that provide assistance. The Rev. Lynn Westergard of Resource Service Ministries said, "This was excellent. You took a fairly complex and involved



issue and simplified it as well as could be."

If you know of an organization that would be interested in learning more about the Regulated Provider – even your church, civic or social group, please contact Consumer Affairs at 404-656-4501, press option one.

As of this printing, more than 12,000 customers in both

## Commission Denies Motion to Revoke Supra Interconnection Agreement

The Commission on January 7, 2003 voted 4-0 to deny a BellSouth motion to reject its interconnection agreement with Supra Telecommunications and Information Systems, Inc (Supra). The Commission

adopted its staff recommendation as modified by Commissioner David Burgess. The modification provides that the staff's recommended review of Supra's technical and financial capabilities be conducted on an expedited basis. This amendment further prohibits Supra from providing

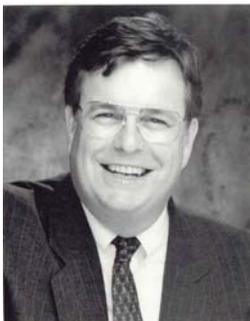
service in Georgia under the interconnection agreement except for testing purposes until the Commission confirms that Supra has adequate financial and technical ability. Miami-based Supra currently provides local telecommunications service in Florida to more than 300,000

## Commission News



### Wise Named To NARUC Post

Commissioner Stan Wise was elected First Vice-President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) at the Association's Annual Convention in Chicago, Illinois in November. After an annual nominating process, Wise, from Cobb County, should assume the NARUC presidency at the conclusion of the Association's Annual Convention here in Atlanta, November 16-19, 2003. NARUC, founded in 1889, is a non-profit corporation that



includes governmental agencies of all 50 states and of the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers. The role of NARUC is becoming increasingly important as many issues involve Congress and the federal regulatory agencies. Commissioner Wise won re-

election to his second six-year term on the Commission in November 2000 and served as Commission Chairman in 1997 and 1999. He was first elected to public office as a Cobb County Commissioner in 1990. Wise is a past President of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC) and serves on the Gas Committee of NARUC. He is also chair of the advisory council to the Gas Technical Institute. He currently serves on the Cobb Educational



## Coweta-Fayette EMC Receives Gas Marketer Certificate

The Commission on November 26, 2002 approved the application of Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, Inc. to be a natural gas marketer. Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, Inc. is a subsidiary of Coweta-Fayette Electric Membership Corporation (EMC), a consumer-owned utility serving 55,000 members in Coweta,

Fayette, South Fulton, Heard, Meriwether and Troup Counties.

Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, Inc. is the second EMC affiliate to receive a natural gas marketer certificate of authority under legislation approved during the 2002 Georgia General Assembly.

Georgia law requires an entity to obtain from the Commission a certificate of authority before providing natural gas service to residential and business customers.

Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, Inc.'s customer service representatives are

available at 1-877-746-4362 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Customers can also get more information from the Coweta-Fayette EMC Natural Gas, Inc. website, <http://www.utility.org/>

A complete listing of natural gas marketers in Georgia can be found on the Commission's



website: <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/gas/marketers.htm>.

The Commission approved Walton EMC's application last October as the first EMC

affiliate to enter the state's deregulated natural gas market place. Walton EMC serves more than 100,000 customers in northeast Georgia.

# Commission News



## Commissioners Celebrate Birthdays in January

Commissioners Stan Wise and Doug Everett hosted birthday celebrations in January as the new year got underway. Commissioner Everett served cake and other goodies in his office while Commissioner Wise hosted an early breakfast for staff and friends.



(above) Commissioner Everett supervises as Assistant Dona Cucich cuts the birthday cake



(left) Commissioner Wise greets Telecom Engineer Gilbert Bentley while the Commissioner's Assistant Sallie Kempton sets out the breakfast

## Epps Honored

Pandora Epps, Utilities Advisor in Utility Finance, was inducted recently into the Florence County South Carolina School District Three Alumni Hall of Fame. Inductees are nominated from graduates of the district and selected based on character and professional achievement. Congratulations Pandora!



## New Employees



### Mike Nantz

Mike joined the Commission on January 13, 2003 as the Assistant to the Director of Consumer Affairs for Enforcement. His most recent job was with the Kentucky PSC in Frankfort, Kentucky as an electric and gas safety investigator, rate analyst, "unofficial" Management Audit Branch staff member, and other duties as assigned. He has a

Bachelor of Business Administration in Management from Francis Marion University in Florence S.C.

His most interesting assignment involved working with the Armenian Energy Regulatory Commission as part of a program/partnership funded by the US Energy Association. This assignment involved four visits to Yerevan, Armenia. He is married to Debbie who is employed by Georgia Pacific as a Senior Product Supply Manager. They have one standard Poodle named Stoli. Mike enjoys traveling and sports.



### O'tania Jenkins.

O'tania is working as an administrative assistant in the Utility Protection Section assisting in the processing of GUFPA cases and the collection and input of reported violations into the database. Her boss, Gary Mason says O'tania has a great personality and is a great asset for the section. She is married, has two daughters, ages 3 and 1, and lives in Lithonia.

# Commission News



## Commission Calendar

### State Holidays For 2003

**News Year's Day**  
**Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday**  
**Confederate Memorial Day**  
**Memorial Day**  
**Independence Day**  
**Labor Day**  
**Columbus Day**  
**Veterans Day**  
**Thanksgiving**  
**Robert E. Lee Birthday**  
**Christmas**  
**President's Day**

**January 1**  
**January 20**  
**April 28**  
**May 26**  
**July 4**  
**September 1**  
**October 13**  
**November 11**  
**November 27**  
**November 28**  
**December 25**  
**December 26**

#### February

4-Administrative Session  
 11-12-MCI/WorldCom vs. Bell-South hearings  
 13-Committees  
 18-Administrative Session  
 27-Committees

#### March

4-Administrative Session  
 13-Committees  
 18-Administrative Session  
 27-Committees

#### April

1-Administrative Session  
 10-Committees  
 15-Administrative Session

## Commission Calendar

24-Committees

#### May

1-Committees  
 6-Administrative Session  
 15-Committees  
 20-Administrative Session  
 29-Committees

#### June

3-Administrative Session  
 12-Committees

#### NARUC

##### Winter Meeting

February 21-24, 2003  
Washington, D.C.

##### Summer Meeting

July 27-30, 2003  
Denver, Colorado

##### Annual Convention

November 10-13, 2003  
Atlanta, Georgia



#### GPSC ONLINE:

[www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us)



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#### COMMISSIONERS

**Robert B. Baker, Jr., Chairman**

**David L. Burgess**

**H. Doug Everett**

**Angela E. Speir**

**Stan Wise**

