

GPSC News

Volume 5 Issue 4

Summer 2006

Commission Approves New Electric Fuel Rates

**No increase for Savannah Electric customers
*Georgia Power customers will see a \$5 per month increase
*Georgia Power and Savannah Electric merger approved
New Fuel Case to be filed September 2006

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The Commission June 15 unanimously approved new rates for Georgia Power and Savannah Electric and Power Companies to allow these utilities to pay for forecasted fuel prices for the year beginning July 1, 2006 as well as recover fuel costs that have been under collected since approval of fuel rates last year. These cases are filed under Docket Number 22403-U. The Commission approved a settlement signed by the Commission staff, the Consumers' Utility Counsel, the Georgia Industrial Group and the Georgia Textile Manufacturers

Association. Savannah Electric customers will see no change in their total electric rates while the average Georgia Power customers will see their average monthly bills increase by about \$5. The increase for Georgia Power customers is about \$4 a month lower than the rate the Company originally proposed. These numbers are based on an average monthly residential usage of 1200 kilowatt hours. The agreement reduces the Companies' forecasted fuel costs by \$200 million. In addition, the stipulation re-

quires Georgia Power to file new fuel cost recovery rates every six months beginning September 30, 2006. As part of the stipulation, the Commission also approved the Companies' request for approval of several items related to the upcoming merger of Georgia Power and Savannah Electric in Docket Number 22202-U. As part of the agreement, Georgia Power must submit an accounting to the Commission by January 31, 2007 of all one-time costs associated with

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Consumer Education Plan Gets Go Ahead

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The Commission July 18 approved the amended Atlanta Gas Light Company natural gas consumer education plan. The innovative plan will partner AGLC, the Commission, the Consumers' Utility Counsel, the natural gas marketers and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service in a collaborative effort to provide a state-wide education program

for natural gas customers in the AGLC delivery areas. The plan includes: hiring Extension Service personnel to be used exclusively for educating natural gas customers in the AGLC service territory; using existing County agents to provide face to face customer education; and using traditional media relations and advertising components.

Commissioner David Burgess said, "This is a unique plan with face to face consumer education, a key component which is vital to improving consumers' experiences with natural gas resources. This plan will be the key to jumpstart the natural gas market in Georgia and is one of the most important con-

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Consumer Tips

The Commission urges consumers to begin preparations for the winter season before the cold weather hits. With higher energy prices likely this winter, it's time now to consider ways to reduce your energy costs by taking the following steps:

1. Conserve energy. Consumers can control their energy costs by using energy wisely and more efficiently. Proper insulation around doors and windows, buying energy-efficient appliances and installing programmable thermostats are some of the measures consumers can take. For more information, see the Consumer Corner section on the Commission website,

www.psc.state.ga.us.

2. Enroll in budget billing. Consumers can spread out their natural gas utility payments over a 12-month period by signing up for budget billing through their utility provider or natural gas marketer. Plans vary by marketer and may include a true-up adjustment during the year to reduce the variance between the budgeted amount and actual charges or at the end of 12 months.

3. Financial assistance. The Commission recently provided funds to allow the Salvation Army to assist consumers based solely on need.

If you have a story for the next GPSC News, please send to Bill Edge, bille@psc.state.ga.us. Next issue deadline is October 15, 2006.

For more information contact the Salvation Army at 770-441-6200 or 1-800-257-4273. Low-income consumers may qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, as well as other assistance programs. For more information, consumers can call the Department of Human Resources at 1-800-869-1150 or 404-657-3425. Recently, the LIHEAP program received funds to help pay for summer cooling bills.

4. Enroll in Senior Citizen Discount plans. Low-income senior citizen customers are eligible for monthly discounts of \$7.50 from Atmos Energy and up to

Fuel Rates

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the merger. As a result of the merger, Savannah customers avoided a potential \$10 per month increase in their bills. Georgia law allows electric utilities to recover their fuel costs, prudently incurred, on a dollar for dollar basis.



Consumer Tips

\$14 from the Atlanta Gas Light base charges. The AGL discount can save an eligible consumer up to \$168 a year. Contact Atmos or your natural gas marketer to sign up for this valuable discount.

4. Check out marketers' plan offerings. There are over 50 different rate plans offered by natural gas marketers. A fixed rate plan might be appropriate for consumers in the Atlanta Gas Light

Company delivery area who like the security of knowing the rate they will pay for gas. The natural gas marketers' price list compares the annual cost of an average user who consumes 880 therms of gas and has a 12 months fixed rate contract. However, consumers have the option of paying the marker rate which varies from month to month.

5. Regulated Provider. The regulated provider exists to

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AGL, natural gas marketers and Commission staff discuss consumer education

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sumer friendly actions this Commission has taken."

The Plan envisions providing customer education on how the natural gas market works, how to choose a natural gas rate plan, financial assistance and customer rights and responsibilities.

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Melvin Williams, AGL; Cynthia Johnson, Consumer Affairs Director; Dr. Jorge Atilas, the University of Georgia, following plan approval.

Commission Approves Georgia Power Accounting Order Request

The Commission June 22 approved an agreement to allow Georgia Power Company to record its costs incurred in developing, filing and obtaining permits and licensing costs for the possible development of new nuclear power generation in Georgia, Docket Number 22449-U. The Commission voted 4-1 to adopt the proposal which was agreed to by the Commission staff, the Company, the Georgia Industrial Group and the Georgia Textile Manufacturers Association.

This accounting measure will allow the Company to record costs for its activities related to pre-

construction and pre-licensing of a possible nuclear power facility and then seek Commission approval at a later date. However the Commission retains full authority to determine whether and how the Company will recover its costs and whether they were prudently incurred.

Commission Chairman Stan Wise said, "We do need to plan for the future. Just yesterday, Georgia Power hit a new peak in energy demand. They have added 46,000 new customers this year. It would be irresponsible not to consider the feasibility of adding new nuclear



generation units."

The Commission adopted an amendment proposed by Commissioner Angela Speir concerning energy conservation measures. The amendment requires the Company to file in its 2007 Integrated Re-

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New Natural Gas Marketers Approved

The Commission June 5 approved certificates of authority for two new natural gas marketers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) delivery area. The Commission granted the certificates to MxEnergy, Inc. of Stamford, Connecticut, Docket Number 22253-U, and Dominion Retail, Inc. of Richmond, Virginia, Docket Number 22535-U.

MxEnergy, Inc. has received a certificate with plans to purchase the customers currently receiving service from Shell. MxEnergy, Inc. currently supplies natural gas to customers in 10 states but its largest customer base is in Michigan, New York, New Jersey, and Ohio.

Dominion Retail is currently supplying natural gas to cus-

tomers in Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ohio. With the addition of these two marketers, there are now 12 certificated natural gas marketers in the AGLC delivery area. Atmos Energy, which serves customers in the Columbus and Gainesville areas, remains fully regulated by the Commission.

Hearing Set for BellSouth Merger

The Commission July 5 unanimously approved a schedule for filings, oral argument and a decision in the Commission's review of the issues surrounding the proposed merger of AT&T and BellSouth (Docket Number 22682). The schedule is as

follows:

- Initial comments due July 20, 2006
- Rebuttal comments due August 4, 2006
- Oral Arguments August 8, 2006
- Commission decision August 18, 2006



Comments should be filed with the Executive Secretary of the Commission. AT&T and BellSouth

filed their notice of the proposed merger with the Commission on March 31, 2006.

Commission Approves Settlement with AGL on Coal Tar Audit

The Commission June 6 approved an agreement with Atlanta Gas Light Company to resolve issues stemming from a Commission staff audit of the Company's Manufactured Gas Plant (MGP) Environmental Response Cost Recovery (ERC) Rider, Docket Number 4167. The audit covered the Company's spending through year 14 of the ERC Rider which ended June 30, 2005.

A majority of the Commission, by a 3-2 vote, approved the agreement which calls for the Company to credit \$600,000

to the ERC rider within 60 days of the Commission's written order approving the agreement. Commission staff, the Consumers Utility Counsel and the Company all signed the agreement before presenting it to the Commission. The original staff audit recommendation filed on May 8, 2006 called for the Company to credit \$664,760 to the MPG program. This agreement has no effect on the Commission's authority to audit any MPG program expenses incurred since July 1, 2005 or to re-examine expenses which fall under item 3



below.

Other items in the agreement include:

1. The Company will apply state of Georgia travel and expense guidelines for expenses incurred by contractors working the MPG program on an ongoing basis.

2. The Company will provide the Commission with an updated equipment inventory list with purchase prices and will use the best method available to dispose of equipment to obtain the best

market value to be credited to the MGP program.

3. This agreement settles all issues stemming from the staff audit of the MGP program through the end of June 30, 2005. However the Commission can re-examine and disallow any item if it finds fraud, concealment, criminal misconduct or failure to disclose a material fact.

AGLC customers are assessed a monthly surcharge, or rider,

to pay for the costs of clean up for the Commission approved program which started in 1992 to clean up environmental damage at 13 sites in Georgia and Florida owned by the Company. The monthly surcharge is currently set at \$1.20.

According to Commission records, the Company has spent more than \$256 million on coal tar remediation efforts since the beginning of the MPG program in 1992.

In a related issue, the Commission has established a notice of inquiry (NOI) related to Georgia ratepayers' payments for the clean up of the three Florida sites. **Commissioner Robert Baker** originally moved to suspend payments for those sites until the conclusion of a Commission investigation. The Commission approved the NOI at its July 18 Administrative Session under Docket Number 4167-U.

Business Group Honors Commissioner Burgess

The Atlanta Business League honored **Commissioner David Burgess** on May 23 at the group's 28th annual Chief Executive Officer Appreciation Luncheon. The League presented Commissioner Burgess with its Catalyst Award. The CEO Awards recognize leaders who make a



difference in the lives of Atlantans in all walks of life.

The Atlanta Business League's mission is to foster

the growth, creation and development of successful business enterprises owned, operated and managed by African Americans in metropolitan Atlanta.

Commissioner Burgess has served as a Commissioner since 1999. Prior to his term as Commissioner, he joined the Commission staff in 1981.

Audible Information Access Service Goes Live

The Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service (AUIAS) is now available to all blind and print disabled citizens. Under Georgia law, the Commission is charged with the responsibility to manage and administer this program. Following an open and competitive bidding process, the Commission selected the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) to operate this service.

The AUIAS provides blind and print disabled citizens the opportunity to listen to

newspapers and magazines by calling a toll free telephone number. To use the service, citizens must submit an application to the NFB and obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access the service, which is provided at no cost to eligible citizens. For information on the application process, call 1-866-316-3242 or e-mail at newsline@nfbga.org.

The AUIAS, under the law, is funded through a monthly surcharge assessed on each telephone access line. Effective August 1, 2006, the monthly surcharge will be \$.05 per line.

This surcharge also provides funding for the Georgia Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) and the Georgia Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) for speech or hearing impaired Georgians.

Commission Chairman Stan Wise noted, "This service will be of great benefit to our blind and print disabled citizens and will provide the opportunity to receive the latest information from national print publications."

"The NFB-NEWSLINE®, now the Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service, is more than just a way for blind and

print disabled Georgian's to read newspapers and magazines," says **Anil Lewis**, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Georgia. It is the means by which we, the blind or print disabled citizens of Georgia, can finally access timely detailed information about our community and the world we live in so that we can be informed, participating, contributing members of society."

House Bill 669, approved by the 2005 Georgia General As-

sembly, established the AUIAS and provided for Commission oversight of the program and funding through the telephone access line surcharge. The law limits the cost of funding the program to no more than \$.01 per month per telephone line as part of the TRS monthly surcharge. For more information on the AUIAS, citizens can call the NFB at 1-866-316-3242.

Customer Education

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The plan is funded through April 30, 2007 with \$1.2 million. The Commission allocated \$1 million annually through April 30, 2010 from the Customer Education component of the Atlanta Gas Light Energy Conservation Program established in the Atlanta Gas Light Company 2005-2010 Earnings Review, Docket Number 18638-U.

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sources Plan (IRP) a detailed assessment of the maximum achievable cost effective potential for energy efficiency and demand response programs in its service area. The amendment says the assessment will follow the detail used in the May 5, 2005 Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority Final Report

on Assessment of Energy Efficiency Potential in Georgia.

Consumer Tips

(Continued from page 2)

provide qualified low-income senior citizens with natural gas service at discounted rates and also to provide natural gas service to those who have been unable to maintain or obtain service from other marketers.

To sign up for the regulated provider, first contact the Department of Human Resources at 1-800-869-1150.

6. Consumer Protections. All consumers are entitled to fair treatment by state law and Commission rules. Natural gas customers must receive 15 days notice before their service can be disconnected and must be offered one payment plan in writing prior to disconnection.

Employee Recognition Day

The annual Commission Employee Recognition Day held July 18 is the agency's way to show its appreciation to Commission employees and provide some monetary benefits for exceptional service. Commissioners and supervisors recognized employees for their achievements during the past year and their faithful service to the state and the Commission. The employees receiving the Faithful Service Awards are:

Five Years: **Bill Edge, Angela Hwang, Sallie Kempton, Reece McAlister, Clare McGuire and William Upshaw.**; Ten years: **Dona Cucich and Claudette Willingham**; Twenty Years: **Bolin**



Commission staff enjoys lunch following Employee Recognition Day

Killings; Twenty-five years: **Danny McGriff, Robert Morgan and Michael Russell**; Thirty Years: **Lillian Johnson**. Those receiving the Extraordinary Achievement Incentive Awards are: **Lynn Buffington, Dan Cear-**

foss, Margie Conley, Ken Ellison, Winifred Gaines, O'tania Jenkins, Reece McAlister, Monique Pringle, Jason Smith, Veronica Thomas, deLancey Todd and Earnest Whatley.

New employees hired since the last event were also recognized: **Katrina Bond, Merline Brewer, Montrelle Caldwell, Julea England, Kelly Keevan, Betty Lucas, Clare McGuire, William Morgan, Mario Phillips, Antonio Sanchez, John**



MLK High School Saxophone Choir provided musical entertainment

Tucker, Robert West, James Youngs and Kyle Zimmerman.

The MLK High School Saxophone Choir provided musical entertainment during lunch. The members of the Choir are **Ian Cole Ingram, Thaddeus Taylor, Jasmine Gaston, Brandon Brown, Marcus Kernizan, Brandon Bogues.**

Commission Hosts International Visitors

Yet another group of foreign visitors stopped by the Commission June 12 to learn more about utility regulation here in the United States. They learned about the Commission's mission, its structure and its relationships with the utilities it regulates. The Georgia International Center for Visitors sponsored the group.

Stan Wise, Executive Director Deborah Flanagan and Public Information Officer Bill Edge.



Chairman Wise Greets visitors

Employee News

Ken Ellison retires



Commissioners David Burgess and Angela Speir wish Ken well.

17 years of service in state government. Ken was the Assistant Director of the Utilities Division. His co-workers gathered June 28 to bid him farewell and wish him well. This is really a second retirement for him as he previously retired from the U.S. Marine Corps after 20 years of service to his country.

During his time with the Commission he also served as Georgia Relay administrator since its inception and super-



Ken bids farewell

vised two sections (Internal Consultants and Facilities Protection). Ken will be missed by all.

Ken Ellison retired from the Commission June 30 after

Dennis Sewell departs for active duty

Our best wishes go to **Dennis Sewell** as returns to active duty. He returned June 26 following 4 1/2 years on active duty in the U.S. Army but then got word he was being recalled again to active duty to serve in Afghanistan for a year. Commission friends and co-workers hosted a farewell get together for Dennis on July 6.



Commissioner David Burgess joins co-workers to wish Dennis farewell

Congratulations

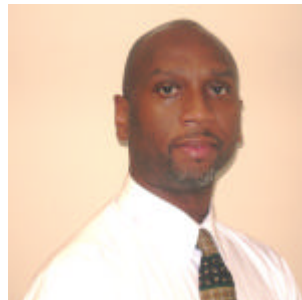
Congratulations to **John Kaduk** on his marriage May 6 to Katie Caruso. The couple were married at Saint Benedict's Catholic Church in Duluth and spent their honeymoon in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.



Sympathy

Our sympathy goes out to **Nakeisha Bowman** on the passing of her grandmother Mrs. Christine Hollinshed June 27. The funeral was held on July 1, 2006 at the St. Peter Missionary Baptist Church in Atlanta.

We extend condolences to **Ann McCullough** on the passing of her stepfather, Frank Bethea on July 18. The funeral was held in New Jersey on July 22.



state government with the Board of Regents and the Department of Technical and Adult Education. He also served 10 years in the Air Force.

New Employees

J a m e s Y o u n g s joined the Commission July 3 as Budget and Fiscal Officer. James has 11 years in



Merline Brewer joined the Commission July 10 in the Transportation Section. She worked at the Department of Driver Services and has worked

Commission News

Georgia State Holidays For 2006

New Year's Day	January 2
Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	January 16
Confederate Memorial Day	April 24
Memorial Day	May 29
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September 4
Columbus Day	October 9
Veterans Day	November 10
Thanksgiving	November 23
Robert E. Lee Birthday	November 24
Christmas	December 25
President's Day	December 26

Commission Calendar



August

4-Administrative Session
10-Committees
15-Administrative Session
31-Committees

September

4-Holiday
5-Administrative Session
14-Committees
19-Administrative Session
28-Committees

October

3-Administrative Session

Commission Calendar

9-Holiday
12-Committees
17-Administrative Session
November
2-Committees
7-Administrative Session
16-Committees
21-Administrative Session
December
5-Administrative Session
14-Committees
19-Administrative Session

NARUC

Annual Convention 2006
November 12-15, 2006
Miami, FL

Winter Meeting 2007
February 18-21, 2007
Washington, D.C.

Summer Meeting 2007
July 15-18, 2007
New York City, NY

SEARUC

Annual Meeting 2007
Date TBD
Little Rock, Arkansas

GPSC ONLINE:
www.psc.state.ga.us



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