



# GPSC News

Volume 7 Issue 3

Summer 2008

## Commission Settles SCANA Energy Case

\*First 50,000 customers receive \$25 credit  
 \*Credits issued in November  
 \*SCANA will notify customers using two bill inserts  
 \*SCANA will not object to issuance of new rules

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The Commission June 17 approved a consent agreement that resolved a Commission docket that charged natural gas marketer SCANA Energy with violating state law and Commission rules. The Commission voted 3-2 to accept the settlement proposed by Commissioner Stan Wise. SCANA representatives have accepted the agreement. The Rule Nisi hearings scheduled for June 17 and June 18, 2008 were cancelled with the acceptance of the agreement by both the Commission and SCANA.



The terms of the settlement include:  
 ✦ Affected SCANA customers up to the first 50,000 will receive a \$25 credit if they switched to another SCANA plan between March 1, 2007 and October 31, 2008. The total amount of credits will be capped at \$1.25 million. If more than 50,000 cus-

tomers sign up, the credits will be prorated.  
 ✦ Any remaining funds not credited to customers would be disbursed as the Commission determines.  
 ✦ All credits will be issued in November 2008.  
 ✦ SCANA will use bill inserts for two billing

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## Commission Opens Hearings on Atmos Energy Rate Case

The Commission held the first round of hearings June 30 and July 1 on the Atmos Energy request to increase rates \$6.1 million annually. This proposed rate would increase customers' average monthly bills by \$4.71. Nine Company witnesses testified why the Company is seeking this increase,

(Continued on page 5)



Atmos Vice President Pat Childers testifies

## State Revenues Flat, Budget Cuts Coming

Governor Sonny Perdue has directed all state agencies to reduce their budgets by 3.5% in the Amended FY 2009 budget which begins July 1, 2008. For the Commission, this means budget reduction of \$298,956 to \$398,608. State revenues for the fiscal year just ended, FY 2008, declined by 1.1%, meaning the state will have to dip into the reserve fund to balance the budget.

For FY 2010, state agencies must recommend a 4% cut in their base budgets. This cut would be more than \$400,000 in re-



ductions for the Commission. The Commission must submit its proposed FY 2009 Amended Budget and Fiscal Year budgets to the Office of Planning and Budget by September 2, 2008. This begins the annual appropriations process which continues with agency budget meetings in late



November or early December, the Governor's budget recommendations to the General Assembly and then finally the General Assembly passage of the Appropriations Bills for the Amended and Regular Fiscal Year Budgets.

### 2008 Primary Results

#### PSC District 1-Republican

Everett	64.8%	239,422
Collum	32.2%	129,865

#### PSC District 4 Republican

Davidson	47.7%	171,317
McDonald	52.3 %	188,192

#### PSC District 4 Democrat

Indech	14.7%	57,886
Powell	85.3%	336,079

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 October 15, 2008.

## Staff Visits Plant Bowen

Nine Commission staff members visited the Georgia Power Company H.L. Bowen Electric Generating near Cartersville, Georgia on May 22 to get a firsthand look at the Scrubbers which are being installed to reduce the emission of pollutants from the plants coal burning operations. Georgia Power is spending about \$2 billion over the next five years to



install scrubbers and other pollution control devices at its coal fired generating plants.

The four scrubbers are all expected to be operational by 2010. Plant Bowen consists of four supercritical units and a combustion turbine with a generating capacity of 3,200 megawatts per hour.

Plant Bowen has been operational since 1975.

Georgia Power employs more than 9,000 workers at Plant Bowen with a net income of \$842 million.

**(right) Outside of scrubber under construction**



**(above) Inside of scrubber**

# PSC Accepts First in the Nation \$100,000 Federal Grant for Utility Damage Prevention and Safety Enforcement; Governor Signs Proclamation for Dig Safely Month

The Commission May 28 accepted the first federal grant check for \$100,000 from the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) to expand the Commission's efforts in preventing damage to Georgia's underground utilities. This is the first federal grant of its type to any state for damage prevention, education and enforcement efforts since the passage of the federal PIPES Act of 2006. PHMSA Administrator Carl Johnson presented the



low Commissioners **Chuck Eaton and Stan Wise**. They were joined by representatives of the Commission staff, PHMSA, UPC, Georgia Utility Contractors Association, Georgia Power, Atlanta Gas Light, AT&T and other representatives of organizations involved in the prevention of

check to **Commissioner Doug Everett** who was joined by fel-

low Commissioners **Chuck Eaton and Stan Wise**. They were joined by representatives of the Commission staff, PHMSA, UPC, Georgia Utility Contractors Association, Georgia Power, Atlanta Gas Light, AT&T and other representatives of organizations involved in the prevention of damage to Georgia's under-

ground utility infrastructure. The grant recognizes the Commission's damage prevention program as a model for other states to follow in reducing damages to underground utilities by educating excavators and utilities in avoiding accidents that can cause expensive and often dangerous damage to buried utilities.

Commissioner Everett said, "We appreciate receiving these funds from PHMSA to assist us in our damage prevention efforts by

educating all individuals about calling before they dig. Working collectively toward a common goal to prevent damages and personal injuries from occurring is a continuous program that requires team work. Since the passage of the Georgia Utility Facility Protection Act in 2000, the state has built a damage prevention program second to none in the nation. I also want to express my appreciation for the hard work of our Facilities Protection Director Danny

McGriff in obtaining these grants. Danny's tenacity and perseverance during the application and submission process culminated in our receiving these grant monies."

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue also presented the group a proclamation naming May 2008 as Dig Safely Month in Georgia.



## SCANA Settlement

*(Continued from page 1)*

cycles to communicate to their legacy customers the opportunity for the credit and that they are offering other variable rate plans to which the customers

may switch.

★ SCANA will reformat customers' bills to include the name of the customers' natural gas plans on the bill.

\*SCANA will not object to the Commission's issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) to require that marketers provide notice to existing cus-

tomers when they create new pricing plans and when they retire existing plans.



## PSC Approves Consent Agreements Calling for Payments of \$30,000 Stemming from Cobb County Natural Gas Pipeline Leak

The Commission June 5 ordered Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) and Utility locator company STS, Inc. to pay a total of \$30,000 to resolve issues stemming from the April 8, 2008 natural gas leak in Marietta, Georgia. The Commission approved the two consent agreements, one between the Commission and STS, Inc. and one between the Commission and Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) as a final resolution of all issues stemming from the incident at

Sandy Plains Road and West Oak Parkway in Marietta.

Under terms of the agreement, STS, Inc. paid a fine of \$10,000 to the Commission. STS, Inc. is the contractor hired by AGLC to locate the underground facilities in the incident. AGLC has paid \$20,000 to the Utilities Protection Center Educational Fund in lieu of paying a fine directly to the Commission.

The Commission's investigation revealed that STS and AGLC failed to properly locate the natural gas pipeline facilities at

the intersection of Sandy Plains Road and West Oak Parkway in Marietta. The excavator struck a six-inch high pressure natural gas steel pipeline located in the middle of Sandy Plains Road. The ensuing leak caused the evacuation of nearby schools and businesses and shut down traffic in the affected area for



## Commission Approves Georgia Power Fuel Rate

The Commission May 20 approved new rates for Georgia Power Company which will allow the utility to pay for forecasted fuel as well as recover fuel costs that have been under collected since approval of fuel rates in the past year.

The Commission voted 3-2 to accept a staff recommendation to approve a proposed Stipulation with the Company that re-



duces the Company's request by \$7.1 million. The average monthly bill for a residential consumer using 1,000 kilowatt hours will increase by \$2.93.

The Commission delayed a decision on implementing seasonally adjusted fuel cost rates until the Seasonal Working Group issues its recommendations.

The Company's filing in Docket Number 26794 sought an increase in fuel costs of \$222 million over the Company's previously budgeted amount. Georgia law allows electric utilities to recover their fuel costs, prudently incurred, on a dollar for dollar basis. The utilities are not allowed to make a profit on their fuel costs

## Commission Chairman Eaton Meets the Press

Commission Chairman **Chuck Eaton** appeared on the WXIA-TV Atlanta public affairs program "Weekend in Depth" on May 4. Channel 11 veteran news reporter and anchor Denis O'Hayer hosts the weekly program. Also appearing on the broadcast was Bobbie Paul of Women of Atlanta for a

New Direction. The topic for the program was the "nuclear renaissance" which is sparking new interest in the construction of new nuclear power plants across the country. Georgia Power Vice-President Oscar Harper was also on the program but his interviews were not done in the studio.



## Commissioner Doug Everett Receives Award from Association County Commissioners of Georgia; Completes Year as Head of Utility Commissioners' Group

**Commissioner Doug Everett** recently received a 2008 Commitment to Public Service Award from the Association County Commissioners of Georgia. ACCG Executive Director Jerry Griffin and ACCG General Counsel Jim Grubiak presented the Award to Commissioner Everett. The Award recognizes Commissioner Everett's efforts in dealing with issues of local concern at the Commission. The **Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG)** is a nonprofit instru-



mentality of Georgia's county governments. Commissioner Everett is the first Republican elected to the Commission from southwest Georgia. He served as Commission Chairman in 2004.

**Commissioner Everett** recently completed his one year term as President of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC) for 2007-2008. SEARUC is a non-profit corporation for the advancement and education of commission regulation and the promotion of cooperation among the commissions of the 11 southeastern U.S. member states. Commissioner Everett turned over the leadership of SEARUC to Commissioner David Wright of the South Carolina Public Service Commission.

"The incoming President of SEARUC and our member Commissions will face numerous challenges in the coming year," said Everett. "We must consider additional power generation sources such as nuclear power, push for more energy efficiency, drill for more oil and natural gas and deal with fast paced changes in telecommunications."



## County Commissioners Honor Commissioner Wise

The Association County Commissioners of Georgia presented **Commissioner Stan Wise** the group's 2008 annual Wayne Shackelford Excellence in Public Service Award during the group's annual meeting in Savannah. Wise was recognized by ACCG for championing the removal of half the municipal franchise fees levied by cities from Georgia Power Company's rate base last year. The association presents this award to honor an individual now serving Georgians in a state or national office who has achieved a distinguished level of public service and has a background in county govern-

ment. Lamar Paris, 2007-08 ACCG Third Vice President and Union County commissioner, presented the award to Commissioner Wise. Wise has served on the Commission since 1995 and served as Commission Chair in 1997, 1999 and 2006.



## Atmos Hearings

*(Continued from page 1)* round is scheduled for mainly due to September 3 and 4, shrinking customer 208 in Gainesville at numbers and in- the Georgia Mountains creasing costs. Center. The Commis- The second round sion will issue its deci- of hearings are set sion in this docket at a for August 12 Special Administrative through 14 in At- Session on September lanta while the final 17, 2008.

## SEARUC 2008

**G**overnor **Sonny Perdue's** address highlighted the



Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia June 1-4. The Governor spoke to more than 200 commissioners, staff and industry representatives gathered at the Westin Harbor Hotel. Perdue said state commis-

sioners have tough jobs because "they need to make decisions at light speed" in order to meet today's challenges.

Perdue noted he was heavily involved with utility issues when he was in the Georgia legislature



**Commissioners Baker, Eaton, Everett and Wise** enjoy lunch with Governor Perdue

where he helped pass the 1995 Telecommunications Deregulation Act and the 1997 Georgia Natural Gas Deregulation Act. He noted the southeast states have a lot in common, in part, because natural gas, electricity and telecommunications "don't stop at the state lines." He contended the regulations in the various states should reflect a "commonality in purpose."

The meeting featured a general session on Climate Change, and breakout sessions on natural gas, nuclear energy and telecommunications issues.

The 2009 SEARUC annual meeting is scheduled for June 21 to 24, 2009 in Charleston, South Carolina.

## 2008 Awards and Recognition Day

**T**he Commission recognized staff members for their service to the state, welcomed new staff members and awarded Extraordinary Achievement and Incentive Awards to those employees nominated by their peers for outstanding service during the Commission's Annual Awards and Recognition Day July 15. Those employees receiving

Faithful Service Awards were: Five years: **John Kaduk, Michael Nantz, Angela Speir**; Ten Years: **Winifred Gaines, Lisa Taylor**; 15 years: **Robert B. Baker, Jr., Sheree Kernizan, Nancy Tyer**; 20 Years: **Rachel Perry, Philip Smith**; 30 Years: **Keith Blackshear, Bob Vaughan**.

Staff members receiving the Incentive Awards were: **Monique**

**Edwards, Keith Blackshear, Margie Conley, Billy Donaldson, O'Tania Jenkins, Gary Mason, Ann McCullough, Shaun Rosemond, Pat Welcome, Earnest Whatley**.

The New Employees recognized were:

**Heather Borst-Persson, Darren Dickenson, Nancy Gibson, Daphne Jones, Kelli Leaf, David Lewis, Michel Kerni-**

**zan, Alicia McBride, Allison Morris, Tauheedah Muhammed, Reginald Nelson, William Oquendo, Betty Jo Ridgeway, Russell Steen, Tara Surratt, Christopher Swann, Robert Trokey, Celeste Wharton, Valerie Wade.**



Commission staff enjoys lunch following the PSC Awards and Recognition Day

# Employee News

## New Employees

Welcome to the following new employees who

- have joined the Commission:
- Heather Borst-Persson**
- Tauheedah Muhammed**
- David Lewis**
- Alicia McBride**
- Allison Morris**
- Reginald Nelson**
- Betty Jo Ridgeway**
- Celeste Wharton**
- Valerie Wade**



## Welcome Back!

**Dennis Sewell** returned to the Commission June 16 following 6 1/2 years on active duty with the U.S. Army. Dennis spent his time with the U.S. Central Command visiting places such as Iraq and Afghanistan. He returned home in July 2006 but after two weeks had to return to active duty. Dennis is a Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.



## Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to **Carolyn Harrison** on the passing of her father, William Shuler, on June 21. The funeral was held in North Charleston, South Carolina.

funeral was held May 20. We also wish to extend our sympathy to **Tauheedah Muhammed** on the passing of her grandmother Marie Rambardan June 22.



We extend our condolences to **Joyce Johnson** on the death of her mother, Mattie Mae Brantley on May 17. The

Our condolences go to **Michael Russell** on the passing of his mother, Alene Russell, on June 30. The funeral was held July 5.



## Welcome Back!

**William Morgan** returned to work July 1 after his successful quadruple bypass surgery in April. William has been with the Commission's Transportation Unit since July 2005.



## Renee Shadix Celebrates Birthday



**Renee Shadix** celebrated her birthday here June 20 with her fellow co-workers.



**The gathering to help Renee celebrate!**

## Commission News

### Georgia State Holidays For 2008

**New 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 21**  
**April 28**  
**May 26**  
**July 4**  
**September 1**  
**October 13**  
**November 11**  
**November 27**  
**November 28**  
**December 25**  
**December 26**

### Commission Calendar



#### July

1-Administrative Session  
 10-Committees  
 15-Administrative Session  
 31-Committees

#### August

5-Administrative Session  
 12-14 -Atmos Hearings  
 14-Committees  
 19-Administrative Session  
 28-Committees

#### September

2-Administrative Session

## Commission Calendar

3-4 Atmos hearings  
 11-Committees  
 16-Administrative Session  
 17-Special Administrative Session

#### October

2-Committees  
 7-Administrative Session  
 16-Committees  
 21-Administrative Session  
 30-Committees

#### NARUC

#### Summer Meeting 2008

July 20-23, 2008  
 Portland, OR

#### Annual Convention 2008

November 16-19, 2008  
 New Orleans, LA

#### Winter Meeting 2009

February 15-18, 2009  
 Washington, D.C.

#### SEARUC

#### Annual Meeting 2009

June 21-24, 2009  
 Charleston, South Carolina



**GPSC ONLINE:** [psc.state.ga.us](http://psc.state.ga.us)

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**Robert B. Baker, Jr.**  
**H. Doug Everett**  
**Angela Elizabeth Speir**  
**Stan Wise**

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