



Spring 2014



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# GPSC News

Volume 12 Issue 3

\*\*\*Resolution sent to Georgia Congressional Delegation

\*\*\*Urges Action on DOE Letter

\*\*\*Set Nuclear Waste Fee to zero

## Commission Passes Resolution Urging Congress to Act on Nuclear Waste Fee

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## Next Issue June 2014

The Commission March 18 unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Georgia Congressional Delegation to act immediately to accept the Department of Energy (DOE) recommendation to adjust to zero the current fee charged to Georgia Power Company ratepayers for the Nuclear Waste Fund. The Commission action follows the November 19, 2013 U.S. Court of Appeals for Washington, D.C. decision that mandated the Secretary of Energy to submit a proposal to



Congress to adjust the current Nuclear Waste Fund fee to zero until such time as either the DOE resumes work toward the Yucca Mouny project or until Congress provides for an alternative waste management

plan. Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. made the motion to adopt the resolution. "Georgia ratepayers have paid over \$1 billion, which includes interest, into the Nuclear

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## Commission Approves Release of Request for Proposals for the Georgia Power Advanced Solar Initiative

The Commission on April 1 took another step forward in solar energy development in Georgia and unanimously approved the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to solicit bids for the development of 495Megawatts (MW) of solar generation to go on line in 2015 and 2016. The RPF is posted on the

web site of Accion, Inc., the Independent Evaluator, at

[www.gpasi.accionpower.com](http://www.gpasi.accionpower.com). Interested bidders should apply through this web site through April 30, 2014.

The Commission is expected to make a decision regarding this RFP by December 16, 2014. This RFP seeks 495 MW

of utility scale solar resources, of which the Commission approved 425 MW on July 12, 2013 as part of the 2013 Georgia Power Company Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) and approved 70 MW as part of Georgia Power Company's Advanced Solar Initiative

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## Legislature Ends Session, Commission Gets Extra Funding

The Georgia General Assembly adjourned sine die on March 20, 2014, the earliest adjournment for Georgia lawmakers since 1996. Before leaving town however, legislators passed the Fiscal year 2015 budget which sets out the state's spending plan beginning July 1, 2014.

Included in the FY 2015 Budget is \$90,000 in funding for the Commission to hire an additional Utility Analyst to help with oversight of the Plant Vogtle Nuclear Construction Project.



## Nuclear Waste Resolution

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Waste Fund since 1983, and have nothing to show for it," McDonald said. "Once Congress acts this Commission will move to adjust the Fuel Cost Recovery Tariff to reflect the reduction and end the double payments by Georgia ratepayers until the federal government has a plan in place," McDonald added. McDonald has a vital interest in this issue as he serves on the Nuclear Waste Subcommittee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).



"This is an important issue for all ratepayers

across this nation," said Commissioner Stan Wise, who seconded the motion to adopt the resolution. "Our national organization, NARUC, has taken an active role in this issue and in fact filed supporting briefs in the D.C. Court decision." Commissioner Wise is a past president of NARUC.

"I hope that other public utility commissions from around the country will follow the lead of the Georgia PSC and ask Congress to do the same," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "The backlog for waste removal is causing any possible nuclear renaissance to sputter," Echols added.

The resolution states the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 required the DOE to enter into contracts to dispose of spent

## Nuclear Waste Resolution

nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear plants in return for payment of fees by the generators or owners of the fuel. It further states that DOE has failed to meet the mandate of law to begin accepting nuclear waste by 1998 and that currently Georgia Power customers pay about \$0.17 per month as part of the company's Fuel Cost Recovery Tariff.

The full text of the resolution

can be found at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/newsinfo/NewsReleases.aspx>.

In other action, the Commission approved a joint settlement in Docket Number 37024 between the Commission and the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) to settle allegations of violations of the Georgia Utility Facilities Protection Act. AGLC will contribute \$25,000 to the Georgia Association of Fire Chiefs for its Georgia Pipeline Emergency Responders Initiative at the Geor-

gia Fire Academy in Forsyth, Georgia.

The Association will use the funds to offer six of the Pipeline Emergency Courses at the Academy.

According to the Association, 82 students from 40 agencies across the state have attended this training.

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 June 1, 2014.

## Solar RFP

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(GPASI) on November 20, 2012.

There are a number of requirements in order for bids to meet the RFP specifications:

1. The procurement of the 70 MW (ASI) will follow the guidelines from the Commission's November 29, 2012 Order and projects will be limited in size from 1 MW to 20 MW. The bid

price plus the costs for any required improvements to the existing transmission and distribution system must not exceed one hundred twenty dollars per MWh (\$120/MWh) on a levelized basis. These projects are to come online in 2015.

For the procurement of the 425 (ASI Prime) MW, 210 MW is to be in service by the end of 2015 and 215 MW is to be in service by the end of 2016. The procurement

of the ASI-Prime will follow the guidelines as approved by the Commission in the Final IRP Order in that it will be open to all bidders (including the Southern Company and its subsidiaries), consider any and all financial structures, and that consideration must be given to projects which have a meaningful economic impact on the Georgia economy, including projects

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## Commission Congratulates National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners on its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Commission congratulates the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners on reaching a milestone 125-year anniversary this year. "NARUC provides an innumerable amount of services for its members, from education to networking to sharing best practices. The lessons we learn from our colleagues across the country help us make better and more informed decisions here in Georgia. NARUC provides the foundation that lets this happen," said Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton.

"Importantly, the organization also provides Georgia regulators with a strong voice in Washing-



ton. This means ratepayer concerns in Georgia are heard when Congress or the White House considers new policies on utility regulation. Our consumers are well-served by our participation in this important organization," added Eaton. "Happy anniversary NARUC—my colleagues here in Georgia are proud of our long association and participation," Eaton added.

NARUC is the national association representing the state public service commissioners who regulate essential utility services in their states. NARUC members are responsible for assuring reliable utility service at fair, just, and reasonable rates. Founded in 1889, the Association is an invaluable resource for its members and the regulatory community, providing a venue to set and influence public policy, share best practices, and foster innovative solutions to improve regulation.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS

## Commission Reminds Georgians that April is National Safe Digging Month

Commissioners and staff joined Governor Nathan Deal on April 10 to remind all Georgians that April is National Safe Digging Month and that anyone who plans to excavate where underground utilities are located must call 8-1-1 before they dig. Taking part in the presentation of the annual Safe Digging Proclamation were



**Commissioners Doug Everett and Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. as well as Fiscal Officer Terry Pritchett.**

Damage from excavation activities to gas and water pipelines, along with sewer systems and buried distribution power lines, remains a

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## Commission Holds Workshop on Interruptible Tariff

The Commission Natural Gas staff, Atlanta Gas Light Company representatives and representatives of industrial and commercial interruptible gas customers held a day long workshop here on February 19.

The Commission and the parties mentioned held the



workshop to discuss the AGLC Interruptible Tariff and its application following the recent extremely cold winter temperatures and to discuss the reported failure of some interruptible customers to terminate natural gas service upon request.

## Commissioners Applaud Signing of Federal Loan Guarantee for Nuclear Power Plant Vogtle Construction Project

Commissioners **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** and **Doug Everett** on February 19 applauded the U.S. Energy Department's finalization of \$6.5 billion in federal loan guarantees to assist Georgia Power with the construction of two new units at its Alvin W. Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant. Both Commissioners joined with U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz; Georgia Power



President and CEO Paul Bowers; Chairman, President and Southern Company CEO Tom Fanning; and U.S. Congressman John

Loan Guarantee signing: Left to right: Georgia Power President Paul Bowers, Commissioner Everett, Congressman Paul Broun, Secretary Moniz, Commissioner McDonald, Southern Company CEO Tom Fanning

Barrow, House of Representatives, 12th District of Georgia, for the formal signing ceremony yesterday at Plant Vogtle in Waynesboro, Georgia.

"There has been a lot of conversation about this loan for the past several years and we are pleased it has been finalized," said Commissioner McDonald. "This loan will be a great benefit to consumers and Georgia Power ratepayers. We were quite pleased that Secre-

tary Moniz mentioned the role of this Commission in approving and monitoring the construction at Plant Vogtle," added McDonald.

"The signing of this loan guarantee means savings for ratepayers," said Commissioner Everett. "This action is another positive step forward for the Plant Vogtle project," added Everett.

Georgia Power officials say the loan will save its customers about \$250 million. The utility is building two new units at Plant Vogtle

alongside the existing two units in partnership with Oglethorpe Power, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and City of Dalton Utilities. The first unit is scheduled to begin producing electricity in December 2017. Commissioner McDonald is in the final year of his six-year term on the Georgia Public Service Commission. He was elected in 2008. He was first appointed to the Commission in 1998 and served until 2002. Prior to

serving on the Commission he spent 20 years in the Georgia House of Representatives where he chaired the Appropriations Committee for eight years. See his full bio at: <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/lauren-mcdonald-jr/?tab=2>.

Commissioner Everett is in his 12<sup>th</sup> year on the Commission. He was first elected in 2002 and



The CA20 module is placed onto the Unit 3 Nuclear Island at the Plant Vogtle construction site on March 10, 2014

re-elected in 2008. Prior to his election to the Commission, he served six years in the Georgia House of Representatives and also as Mayor Pro Tem of the City of Albany. Commissioner Everett's full biography is found at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/content.aspx?c=/commissioners/doug-everett/?tab=2>.

## Commission Recognizes Georgia Power Efforts in Restoring Electricity to Customers Affected by Winter Storms

The Commission February 18 publicly recognized Georgia Power Company for its extraordinary work in restoring power to more than 700,000 customers who were left without electricity as a result of the winter ice and storms in January. Commissioners applauded the Georgia Power crews who worked around the clock during the three day event to



Georgia Power Emergency Operations Director Aaron Strickland is recognized by the Georgia Public Service Commission. From left to right: **Commission Chair Chuck Eaton, Commissioner Tim Echols, Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr., Strickland, Commissioner Stan Wise, and Commissioner Doug Everett**

restore customers affected by power outages. Georgia Power's Emergency Operations Director Aaron Strickland appeared before the Commission during today's Administrative Session on behalf of the Company. Strickland directed Georgia Power's electric power restoration efforts during the storm crisis. "Georgia Power crews left the warmth of home and their families while it was snowing and sleeting. They

were up in buckets doing a dangerous business," said **Commissioner Stan Wise**. "One of the unknown and unrecognized people (involved in this) is Aaron Strickland. He is recognized all over the country as an expert that other utilities look to as to how they monitor and how they establish their storm centers and their response. I want to thank you and all those who work with you on behalf of ratepayers, the company and the Commission for restoring power in the state," Wise added.



Strickland said, "We had people (repair crews) out as long as two weeks. They worked tirelessly for hours in this crazy

weather and I salute them." Strickland is a 35 year veteran of the Georgia Power Company. In addition to managing the Company's Emergency Operations Center, he also directs the Company's mutual aid program which provides assistance to utilities outside the state of Georgia who request aid in times of emergencies.



### Safe Digging Month

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leading cause of utility incidents resulting in death or injury. The Commission enforces the state's underground utilities damage prevention programs and enforces federal pipeline safety standards under an agreement with the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The Commission's

program is rated one of the top five in the nation and serves as a model for other states to follow in reducing damages to underground utilities. Commission Chairman **Chuck Eaton** said, "We are pleased to join with Georgia 811, our federal partners, and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in working together to prevent damages from occurring to the

state's underground utility facilities. Our common goals are to prevent the disruption of utility services and personal injuries that result from accidents which damage underground facilities." Commission Vice-chair **Doug Everett** said, "I want to remind anyone who excavates to call before you dig by placing a call to 8-1-1. It's free and it's the law. By calling before you dig,

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## Commissioners McDonald and Echols Brief Federal Officials on Georgia Progress in Solar Energy

**Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** briefed White House energy advisors on February 11 on the Commission's approval of additional solar power generation capacity into the state's electric system without placing upward pressure on rates or using ratepayer subsidies. The Commission last year approved an additional 525 Megawatts of solar capacity in Georgia Power's 2013 Integrated Resource



Left to right: **Commissioner Echols, Commissioner McDonald, Shane Owl-Greason, Scott Thomassen, Rick Duke, Dan Simon, Rohan Patel, Dan Utech, Franz Hochstrasser.**

Plan (IRP). This decision brings the total solar capacity that will be on line in Georgia by the end of 2016 to 800 Megawatts. "I was quite pleased with the discussion with these energy policy advisors at today's meeting. I related to them that with the support of my colleagues on the Commission we have been able to provide for additional capacity using solar power while maintaining conservative principles," said McDon-

ald," with no upward pressure on rates and no subsidies. I hope this meeting is the beginning of a constructive dialogue between this Commission and the White House on how to implement renewable energy sources in a responsible and conservative fashion."

Joining Commissioner McDonald in the Washington meeting was fellow **Commissioner Tim Echols**. White House officials taking part in the briefing were Rohan Patel, Associate Director, White

House Council on Environmental Quality; Dan Utech, Special Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change; Bob Simon, Office of Science and Technology Policy; Rick Duke, Associate Director for Energy and Climate Change; and Franz Hochstrasser, Deputy Associate Director for Public Engagement, Council on Environmental Quality.



### Safe Digging Month

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we can prevent the disruptions and economic losses that can occur when underground utilities are damaged."

"Calling 8-1-1 is the best way to prevent damage to our underground utilities," said **Commissioner Stan Wise**, "When underground utilities are damaged, everyone loses."

"Excavators are only as good as

the marks on the ground," said **Commissioner Tim Echols**. "That is why calling before you dig is so important."

Commissioner **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** added, "For those states that do not currently have a damage prevention program, I would issue a challenge to follow Georgia's lead and begin such a program because it is the right thing to do."



### Solar Energy RFP

*(Continued from page 2)*

which propose to use assets owned by Georgia Power. No bids shall be accepted which exceeds Georgia Power's projected levelized avoided cost for the term of the purchase power agreement which varies by contract term and in-service date.

"Solar power continues to make enormous strides in Georgia," said Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. "Since the projects must be located in

Georgia, this solar initiative will have a positive economic impact on Georgia," McDonald added.

"Commissioner McDonald's leadership with solar is garnering national attention," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "Georgia is doing solar right--without a subsidy or a burdensome portfolio standard."

More information on the Solar Initiative is found on the Commission's web site under Docket 36325.

# Employee News

## Congratulations

To **Brianna Moore**, 8 year old granddaughter of Public Information Officer. **Bill Edge and Debbie Edge**. Brianna's third grade class at Oak Harbor Elementary School, Oak Harbor, Washington, won the reading competition for the elementary school best team on Whidbey Island.



**Brianna Moore** (back row last on left) and her classmates display the books they read to win the championship!



To **Sarah Fink**, who will graduate in May from Georgia State University magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology. She has been accepted to Clemson University where she is a candidate for the Master of Education degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.



## Farewell

To **William Morgan**, who retired on March 21, 2014 after 12 years of service with the Commission and the state. William came to the Commission in 2005 from the Department of Motor Vehicles. He has been in Consumer Affairs for the past few years up until his retirement.



To **Katelyn McAlister** on being selected as Homecoming Queen at the University of North Georgia on February 1, 2014.

Katelyn is the daughter of Executive Secretary **Reece McAlister** (also in the photo) and Ellen Harkins McAlister. Katelyn is a senior at North Georgia, which is also her Dad's alma mater.



**Reece and Katelyn McAlister**



# McDonald Takes Part in Opening of Covington Green Fuel Facility

**Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** participated in the grand opening and ribbon cutting April 4 of the City of Covington Green Fuels Facility.

McDonald told the group gathered just off Interstate 20 and Alcovy Road in Covington that the facility was the result of years of planning and would benefit their children and grandchildren.



**McDonald** with city, county and industry officials at ribbon cutting



**McDonald** speaks to group of city, county and industry representatives at ribbon cutting

# Commission News

## Georgia State Holidays for 2014

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

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

### Commission Calendar



#### April 2014

1-Administrative Session  
 10-Committees  
 15-Administrative Session  
 28-Holiday

#### May 2014

1-Committees  
 6-Administrative Session  
 15-Committees  
 26-Holiday

#### June 2014

3-Administrative Session  
 12-Committees

## Commission Calendar

17-Administrative Session  
 26-Committees

#### July 2014

1-Administrative Session  
 4-Holiday  
 10-Committees  
 15-Administrative Session

#### August 2014

5-Administrative Session  
 14-Committees  
 19-Administrative Session

#### NARUC

##### Winter Meeting 2014

February 9-12, 2014  
 Washington, D.C.

##### Summer Meeting 2014

July 13-16, 2014  
 Dallas, Texas

##### Annual Convention 2014

November 16-19, 2014  
 San Francisco, California

#### SEARUC

##### Annual Meeting 2014

June 5-8, 2014  
 Tupelo, Mississippi



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

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#### COMMISSIONERS

**Chuck Eaton, Chairman**  
**H. Doug Everett, Vice-Chairman**  
**Tim G. Echols**  
**Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.**  
**Stan Wise**

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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**Reece McAlister**