



Fall 2015



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# GPSC News

Volume 13 Issue 4

\*\$5 million over next five years  
\*Money allocated from Universal Service Fund  
\*Community Action agencies, Salvation Army and H.E. A.T. to administer program

## Commission Approves Assistance for Natural Gas Customers

The Commission September 1 approved \$5 million in grants over the next five years to enable three community service agencies to assist both low-income citizens and low-income senior citizens in paying natural gas bills and replacing or repairing natural gas furnaces and water heaters. The agencies who will actually administer these programs are HopeWorks, composed of six Community Action Agencies through their Emergency Program, The Salvation Army and the Heat Energy Assistance Team or H.E.A.T. The grants for assistance with natural gas bills are only available for customers on the Atlanta



Gas Light Company distributes under the 1997 Natural Gas Competition and Deregulation Act. Georgia law allows the Commission to allocate funds from the Atlanta Gas Light Company Universal Service Fund (USF), the USF for three main a fund the Commission

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## Commission to Review Southern Company and AGL Resources Merger

The Commission reacted to the August 18, 2015 announcement of the proposed merger between Southern Company and AGL Resources, both headquartered in Atlanta. Both companies have affiliates under the regulatory authority of the Commission, Georgia Power Company of the Southern Company, and Atlanta Gas Light Company and Georgia Nat-

ural Gas of AGL Resources. At this time the Commission has not received any filings related to the merger. If the Commission receives a filing, staff will review it to determine what action is needed. Among the issues the Commission may review in a proposed merger are what impact it could have on

the customers of the companies under the Commission's jurisdiction, what impact it could have on the public interest generally, and whether it complies with all applicable laws and rules of the Commission. "While I will withhold final judgment until the commission has an opportunity to

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## Commission Approves Assistance

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purposes: 1. Ensure natural gas is available in areas served by natural gas marketers; 2. Extend natural gas service to under or unserved areas; and 3. Assist low-income residential consumers in times of emergency as determined by the Commission under O.C.G.A. §46-4-161.

Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton said, "These programs help to ensure the most vulnerable low-income citizens on AGLC's system have natural gas heating during the winter."

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 January 15, 2016.

"Today's action continues this Commission's long standing tradition of assisting low-income Georgia natural gas customers with their heating bills and enabling them to stay warm this winter," said Commission Vice-chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald.

"When the Georgia legislature deregulated natural gas in 1997, they tasked the Commission with being a steward of the Universal Service Fund created as a part of the legislation," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "Today's action of the Commission to disburse funding for low-income heating assistance through HopeWorks, The Salvation Army and H.E.A.T. will benefit the

poorest in our state."

The HopeWorks Emergency Program will provide grants to replace and/or repair natural gas furnaces and water heaters for low-income senior citizens in their respective areas. The six agencies involved in the Emergency Program are:

- Central Savannah River Coastal Ga. Area Community Action Authority
- Gainesville 9<sup>th</sup> District Opportunity, Inc.
- HopeWorks (Formerly Resource Service Ministries)
- Middle Georgia and Heart of Georgia Community Action Agency
- Tallatoona CAP, Inc.

"I would like to thank the Com-

mission for their vision and their compassion for low-income senior citizens here in the state of Georgia and their vote of confidence for continuing this much needed program," said Michael Kimsey, Executive Director of HopeWorks. You can contact HopeWorks at <http://hopeworks4us.org> or by calling 404-872-0167.

The Salvation Army will provide grants to low-income customers on the Atlanta Gas Light Company distribution system. The Sal-

vation Army will receive \$200,000 a year for five years beginning in 2016. Since 2011, The Salvation Army has distributed more than \$900,000 to over 12,000 households in Georgia from USF grants provided by the Commission. To contact The Salvation Army, call 1-800-25-SHARE or visit their web site at [www.salvationarmygeorgia.org](http://www.salvationarmygeorgia.org).

"We are looking forward to serving thousands of additional clients who otherwise would not be served without the generosity

and concern of the Georgia Public Service Commission," said Michael J. Bradford, Director of Project SHARE.

H.E.A.T. will also provide grants to low-income customers. H.E.A.T. will receive \$200,000 a year for five years beginning in 2016. Since 2008, H.E.A.T. has provided more than \$689,000 in assistance for nearly 1,800 households in Georgia. Interested parties can contact H.E.A.T. by calling 678-

406.0212 or visiting them on the web at [www.heatga.org](http://www.heatga.org).

"This funding will help thousands of low-income Georgians throughout the state who will need emergency energy assistance and we are happy to have this funding to be able to help them," said Janet Joseph, Executive Director of H.E.A.T. Any unused funds will carry over to the next year.

### Merger

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review this merger, I am impressed that both Southern Company and AGL Resources are committed to continuing to expand their lines and pipelines to support economic development throughout Georgia, and to keep a robust, competitive market place for energy available for customers to have real

choices," said **Commissioner Doug Everett** of Albany.

"Anything that helps Georgia consumers is of interest to me," said **Commissioner Tim Echols**. "The commission will review the merger and I will be looking to see if it could potentially help provide additional natural gas infrastructure, economies of scale, more expertise to Georgia Power, and ultimately more cus-

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# Commissioners Take Part in King's Bay Naval Base Solar Project Groundbreaking

**Commission Chairman "Bubba" McDonald and Commissioner Doug Everett** took part September 10, 2015 in the groundbreaking ceremony for Georgia Power's solar project at King's Bay Naval Submarine Base near St. Mary's on the southeast Georgia coast. Commissioner McDonald opened the ceremony with a rousing rendition of the National Anthem. Among the more than 100 attendees were Department of the Navy officials, local Navy commanders and representatives of local government and business organizations.

**Vice-Lauren**



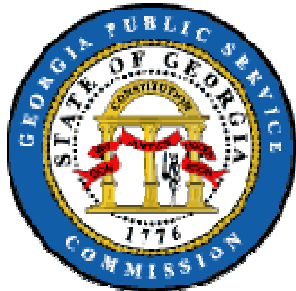
**Navy, Georgia Power officials and Commissioners turn first dirt at groundbreaking**



**Commissioner McDonald gives remarks at the groundbreaking**

Commissioner McDonald in remarks to the attendees noted that

today's groundbreaking was due to a team effort between the Georgia Public Service Commission, the Georgia Power Compa-



ny and the U.S. Navy. "At the end of next year, we will have close to one thousand megawatts of solar power in this state," said Commissioner McDonald. He noted the progress in solar development in Georgia has taken place without mandates and without an



increase in rates. "We continue to make sure our people have electrons when you flip the switch, have the ability to pay for it and have the reliability to be



**A SOUTHERN COMPANY**

clean and there for a very long time," McDonald added. Other speakers were Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment Dennis V. McGinn; Paul Bowers, Chairman, President and

Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Power Company; and Navy Captain James W. Jenks, Commanding Officer, King's Bay Naval Submarine Base. "This project again demonstrates that renewable energy can be cost effective with no upward pressure on rates while generating clean carbon free energy. This partnership between the Navy and Georgia Power will also contribute to national security



**Georgia Power President Paul Bowers speaks at the groundbreaking**

and help the Navy meet its renewable energy goals," said Commissioner Everett. "Helping our military meet their energy goals helps the whole state, and quite possibly avoids base closures," said Commissioner Tim Echols. "This is yet another way Georgia is leading the nation." The Commission on December 16, 2014 approved the Memo-

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## Commission Celebrates Lifeline Awareness Week

Governor Nathan Deal joined with the Commission in proclaiming September 14-20, 2015 as National Lifeline Awareness Week in Georgia. Access to local emergency services and community resources is vital to all residents. Lifeline helps low-income consumers connect to the nation's communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family, and call for help in an emergency. For some, a local phone can be the difference between social connection and complete



isolation. Under the federal Lifeline program, telephone customers who participate or are eligible for certain public assistance programs are entitled to receive a basic telephone service discount of at least \$9.25 per month. More information on program eligibility, rules and key messages is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/lifeline/outreach>.

"We want to make eligible Georgians aware of this program which can provide this crucial link to services and family in times of need," said **Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton**. Lifeline

Awareness week is a nationwide program between the Commission, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Federal Com-

munications Commission to publicize the Lifeline Program. As of June 30, 2015, there are 433,641 Georgians who are receiving this credit but there are thousands more who could qualify but are not signed up. A consumer is automatically qualified to receive the Lifeline discount if he or she currently participates in any one of the following programs: Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Security Income,

Federal Public Housing Assistance (Section 8), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, National School Lunch Program's free lunch program; or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or senior citizens discount from power or gas company. A consumer, whose household income is equal to or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of that size, will also qualify for the discount.

"I am pleased with the federal government's emphasis on strictly enforcing eligibility for this important program. We have been able to reduce duplicate and fraudulent Lifeline accounts in Georgia by 60 percent over the past two years," said **Commissioner Doug Everett**. The Lifeline program has undergone a transformation in recent years to improve program efficiency and combat waste, fraud and abuse to ensure that only

those eligible are receiving this vital support. Program rules and requirements that consumers should know include: Lifeline is available only to eligible consumers. Only low-income consumers with proof of eligibility are qualified to enroll. Only one Lifeline benefit is permitted per household. Federal rules prohibit consumers from receiving more than one Lifeline service. If a consumer or his or

her household currently has more than one Lifeline discounted service, they must select a single provider immediately or be subject to penalties. Existing Lifeline subscribers must recertify their eligibility every year and should respond to their Lifeline providers' attempts to recertify eligibility. Subscribers must verify that they remain eligible to participate in the Lifeline program once each calendar year. Subscribers who fail to

recertify their eligibility will be de-enrolled from the Lifeline Program. To sign up, consumers should contact their prospective telecommunications provider. Consumers should be aware that not all providers offer the Lifeline discount and should contact any potential provider before making a commitment. Consumers can find more information at: <http://www.fcc.gov/lifeline/outreach>. Consumers

## Commission Verifies and Approves Plant Vogtle Construction Expenses

The Commission August 18 unanimously approved Georgia Power Company's request to verify and approve the expenditures in the Twelfth Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report for the period between July 1, 2014, and December 31, 2014, in Docket Number 29849.

The total amount approved for this period for the Vogtle expansion is \$169 million, bringing Georgia Power's cumulative construction and capital costs verified to date at \$2.966 billion.

The decision follows Commission hearings held on June 2,

2015 for the Company's direct testimony and on June 23, 2015 for the Public Interest Advocacy Staff and other parties' testimony. According to the Company's latest filings with the Security and Exchange Commission, Unit Three will begin commercial operation in late 2019, and Unit Four will begin operation in late 2020.

"We continue to support Plant Vogtle as a project that will provide clean, carbon free energy for Georgia's future," said **Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton**.

The Commission decision also requires: The Company to continue to provide delay scenarios of 24, 36, and 48 months beyond the current

forecasted in-service dates as part of its future Vogtle Construction Monitoring filings.

The Company to provide for each delay scenario an estimate of total project cost and the full embedded cost revenue requirements associated with the total project cost result that the Company expects customers have and will continue to incur both during construction and over the operating lives of the Units.

The Company to develop and implement a mechanism to track replacement fuel costs in all future reporting periods.

The Commission on March 17, 2009, certified Georgia Power's

share of the cost for the Plant Vogtle Nuclear Construction Project as \$6.114 billion. Plant Vogtle is co-owned by Georgia Power, Oglethorpe Power, City of Dalton Utilities and the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia.

More information about Plant Vogtle can be found on the Commission website, [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us), under Docket Numbers 29849 and 27800.

## Staff Tours Plant Vogtle Construction Site



From left to right: Bill Edge, Lynn Page, Chris Wells OPB, Kelsey Tomblin OPB, Heather Aquino OPB

Commission staff members **Bill Edge** and **Lynn Page** accompanied three budget analysts from the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget on September 2, 2015 on a tour of the Plant Vogtle Construction site near Waynesboro, Georgia. The OPB staff members were Chris Wells, Kelsey Tomblin and Heather Aquino.

### Lifeline

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can find Lifeline providers by State ([www.lifelinesupport.org](http://www.lifelinesupport.org)) and a Lifeline Eligibility pre-screening tool (<http://www.lifelinesupport.org/lis/am-eligible.aspx>).

### King's Bay

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Understanding between Georgia Power and the U.S. Navy to initiate this project which is scheduled to come online in 2016. The project is based upon capacity from the 2014 cancellation of Plant Mitchell in Albany, Georgia conversion to biomass.

The Department of the Navy

and Georgia Power will develop this large scale solar project of approximately 258 acres on the King's Bay Naval Submarine Base. Georgia Power will build, own, operate and maintain the 42 megawatt (MW) direct current (DC) or 30 megawatt alternating current (AC) solar farm that will produce power for its

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Commission's Previous Actions May Lessen Effects of E.P.A. Clean Power Rule

The proactive decisions of the units will produce no carbon emissions or other greenhouse gases for at least sixty years. Since 2011, working with the Environmental Protection Agency Commission, Georgia Power has increased their purchases of solar generation from almost nothing to approximately 1 gigawatt of electricity. If all of this solar was in production today, Georgia Power would have the fourth largest solar portfolio in the nation. In 2013 the Commission approved the closing of 16 of Georgia Power Company's coal units, a decision that has already reduced carbon dioxide emissions. These and other greenhouse gases.

In 2014 the Commission approved Georgia Power's purchase of 250 megawatts of wind power, another clean energy source, which produces no carbon or other greenhouse gases. It is expected that having this carbon-free energy source will assist the state in meeting its carbon emissions targets under the new rule.

Georgia Power is in the process of adding 282 megawatts of homegrown, Georgia biomass capacity to our grid.

Georgia Power Company, at the urging of the Commission, has increased its demand-side power initiative and energy efficiency

programs. Both of these programs have reduced power consumption, which in turn reduces greenhouse gases.

These programs, implemented by Georgia Power under Commission orders, will make the process less difficult for Georgia to meet its initial emission reduction goals in 2022. In addition, if the Commission stays on its current course, it will also be less difficult to meet Georgia's 2030 goals. However, it is difficult to predict with certainty the

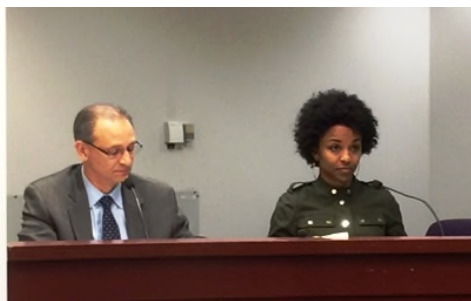
exact effect this rule, should it take effect, will have on Georgia's electric rates. We believe that, overall, it will increase electric power rates in Georgia and nationwide. The Commission will continue to provide input to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division as it works to complete the compliance plan for our state.

However, the Commission still believes the rule is a federal overreach and tramples over the careful planning which has achieved competitive and reliable electricity

in our state. The rule will seriously tie the Commission's hands in our Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process that allows this Commission, working with our investor-owned utility and other interested parties, to decide on the generation mix that best provides reliable electricity at reasonable rates. This rule may significantly limit fuel diversity and increase the cost of electric power in Georgia and nationwide.

## Commission Approves Liberty Utilities Gas Supply Plan

The Commission September 15 approved Liberty Utilities 2015-2016 Gas Supply Plan. The Commission approved a stipulation agreement between the Commission staff and Liberty Utilities. This is an annual proceeding to ensure that Liberty Utilities customers will have an adequate supply of natural gas during this time.



**Liberty Utilities witness Francisco "Choco" DaFonte and Commission Utility Analyst Tara Surratt testify at hearing**

## King's Bay

customers, including King's Bay. The scheduled completion date is at the end of 2016. This project is part of the Navy's one gigawatt (GW) initiative of renewable energy into procurement by the end of 2015. The Navy project will join three projects on three Georgia U.S. Army bases that stem from a 2007 decision by the Commission which authorized the Company

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# Employee News

## Sympathy

The Commission recently lost a friend and valued colleague. **Joyce Johnson**, who previously worked in Consumer Affairs, passed away on September 1, 2015. Each of us not only grieves at the passing of a tremendous individual but also for the loss her family suffers. The funeral service was held September 8 at Berean Christian Church Community Center



in Stone Mountain. Joyce started at the Commission in 2005 and left in 2008. She had previously worked over 30 years with Atlanta Gas Light Company.



## Merger

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 tomer choice."

The focus of any Commission review of the a merger between Southern Company and AGL Resources will be on its mission to exercise its authority and influence to ensure that consumers receive safe, reliable, and reasonably-priced telecommunications, electric and natural gas service from financially viable and technically competent companies.

## Commission Receives Honor from Solar Group

The Georgia Solar Energy Association honored the Commission with its "Solar Stars Awards" during a reception on August 6. Sharon Lee, President of GSEA, presented the award. On hand for the presentation were **Commissioners Tim Echols, Lauren "Bubba" McDonald and Stan Wise.**



**Commissioners Wise, McDonald and Echols with GSEA President Sharon Lee**



## King's Bay

*(Continued from page 6)*

to build three 30 MW renewable projects provided that the cost of the projects is equal to or less than the Company's avoided costs, meaning no upward pressure on rates. These projects will contribute towards the Department of Defense mandates regarding renewable energy and energy security and represent a significant investment in Georgia Army bases.

## Everett Grandson to Swim for University of Florida

Taylor Delk, grandson of **Commissioner Doug Everett**, has signed a scholarship to swim on the University of Florida varsity swim team. Delk, who attends Collins Hill High School in Gwinnett County, excels in distance free as well as backstroke. The high school senior really turned things up this summer in backstroke, garnering Olym-



pic Trials cuts in both the 100 and 200 meter backstroke races after he placed 6th in the 200 and 8th in the 100 at the 2015 U.S. Junior Nationals.

Looking ahead, he will certainly add depth to the Florida distance and backstroke groups, and he's been improving at such a rapid rate that he might be ready to score in a bigger manner when he gets to Gainesville next year. Taylor is the son of **Boyd and Deneice Delk.**

## Georgia State Holidays for 2016

### Commission Calendar



**New Year's Day**  
**M.L. King, Jr. Day**  
**State Holiday**  
**Memorial Day**  
**Independence Day**  
**Labor Day**  
**Columbus Day**  
**Veterans Day**  
**Thanksgiving Day**  
**State Holiday**  
**Washington's Birthday**  
**Christmas Day**

**January 1**  
**January 18**  
**April 25**  
**May 30**  
**July 4**  
**September 5**  
**October 10**  
**November 11**  
**November 24**  
**November 25**  
**December 27**  
**December 26**



**November 2015**  
3-Administrative Session  
5-Georgia Power hearing  
11-State Holiday  
12-Committee  
17-Administrative Session  
24-Committees  
26-Holiday  
27-Holiday  
**December 2015**  
1-Administrative Session  
1-Georgia Power hearing  
10-Committees

## Commission Calendar

15-Administrative Session  
31-Committees  
**January 2016**  
1-Holiday  
5-Administrative Session  
14-Committees  
18-Holiday  
19-Administrative Session  
28-Committees

**NARUC**  
**Annual Meeting 2015**  
November 8-11, 2015  
Austin, Texas

**Winter Meeting 2016**  
February 2-5, 2016  
Washington, D.C.

**Summer Meeting 2016**  
24-27 July, 2016  
Nashville, Tennessee

**SEARUC**  
**Annual Meeting 2016**  
June 12-15, 2016  
Palm Beach, Florida



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

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