



GPSC News

Volume 8 Issue 3

Summer 2009

*Energy pending before Congress
 *Commissioners talk to Georgia Delegation
 *Bill Now in Senate
 *Passed House in June

Commissioners Meet Georgia Lawmakers on Energy Bill

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Representatives Lynn Westmoreland, Paul Broun and Nathan Deal listen to Commissioners



Representatives Sanford Bishop, David Scott and Hank Johnson with Commissioners

Commission Chairman to Washington, D.C. July 22 as “cap and trade,” which Commissioners say will dramatically increase Georgian’s utility bills in the coming

Doug Everett along with **Commissioners Lauren McDonald, Jr. and Stan Wise** traveled to Georgia’s Congressional Delegation about the pending energy and climate legislation, known

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Commission Reconsiders Chairman Vote

A majority of the Commission voted June 16 to reconsider its May 5, 2009 decision to elect **Commissioner Stan Wise** as Commission Chairman effective July 1, 2009 for a two-year term. The Commission then voted to table the original motion pending the outcome of legislation in the Georgia



General Assembly. The 3-2 decision means **Commissioner Doug Everett** will remain Commission Chair for the remainder of 2009. **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald, Jr.** will serve as Vice-Chairman during the same period. The vote follows a June 8, 2009 opinion by Georgia Attorney General Thurbert Baker that the Commission could not elect a chairman for more than a one-year term as set forth in the 1992 statute, O.C.G.A. § 46-2-5. Earlier this year, the Commission also proposed House Bill 568

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Next Issue November 2009

Legislative News

Governor **Sonny Perdue** ordered a five percent cut on July 17 in all state agency allotments and that all state employees would take three furlough days by the end of the calendar year 2009.



The announcement followed a top level meeting with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor Casey Cagle and Speaker of the House Glenn Richardson.

As Fiscal Year 2009 rolled to a close on June 30, the Governor released the discouraging revenue collections on July 10. State revenues for FY 2009 fell 10.5 per cent compared to FY



2008. The Governor had already ordered additional budget cuts to all state agencies of 25% of their June allotments as state revenues continued to fall. The state's reserve or "rainy day" fund balance now stands at just \$35 million.

In late June, Perdue asked all agencies to voluntarily cut their July allotments by three percent.

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, 2009.

At the same, there was speculation among many in state government that the Governor would call a Special Session of the General Assembly to deal with more budget cuts.

For May, the Governor reported revenues dropped 14.4% compared to May 2008 with the total revenue decrease for fiscal year 2009 at 10%.

At this time, there is no call for a special legislative session but that option apparently remains on the table as state leaders watch the revenue figures.



Legislative Hearing

Commission staff testified before the House Budget and Fiscal Affairs Oversight Committee on June 26 in response to the 2008 State Auditor's report on Household Goods Movers regulation. **Executive Director Deborah Flannagan, Transportation Manager Robert West, Attorney Kelli Leaf and Legislative Liaison Bill Edge** attended the hearing. The lawmakers had requested



the Commission appear to respond to the Auditor's report which was published in July 2008. Flannagan told the lawmakers that while the Commission agreed

that more consumer protection is needed, the Auditor missed the point that additional staff and funding are the problem.

Committee asked if other agencies could assist the Commission in enforcing laws and rules on household goods movers and if legislation approved in 2007 had removed cities' authority to enforce state laws.

Commission Reconsiders Chairman Vote

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which would have allowed the Commission to select a chairman by majority vote for up to a three year term. The measure is awaiting action by the State Senate.

Commission Wise, in making the motion for reconsideration said, "I do not want this Commission to be distracted with this is-



sue as we perform our duties. We will continue to have discussions with attorneys and the General Assembly prior to the next session as to the best solution in this conflict between the constitution and the law enacted by

the 1992 General Assembly." Commissioner Wise has served on the Commission since 1995. Commissioner Everett has served on the Commission since 2003. Commission Biographies can be found on the Commission web site at <http://www.psc.state.ga.us/pscinfo/bios.asp>.

PSC Assesses Penalties of \$154,760 against Natural Gas Marketer, Stream Georgia Gas

Stream Georgia Gas (Stream Georgia) will pay affected customers approximately \$104,760 and will donate \$50,000 directly to assist natural gas customers as a result of a settlement approved May 19 by the Commission. The settlement will resolve 288 allegations of switching a natural gas customer's service without their consent, a practice commonly known as "slamming." The settlement follows a Commission investigation into complaints from natural gas consumers that their natural gas service had been switched to Stream Georgia without their

consent. While Stream Georgia does not admit to any wrongdoing, they will pay the penalties directly to the 288 customers within 60 days of the filing of the Commission's order in this Docket. Stream also agrees to donate \$35,000 of the \$50,000 to Heat-switching a natural gas customer's service without their consent, a practice commonly known as "slamming." Other provisions of the settlement include:

1. Stream Georgia agrees to abide by all state laws and Commission rules.
2. Stream Georgia will provide a progress report to Commission

staff 90 days after the Commission's order is signed.

The Commission issued an Interim Certificate of Authority to Stream Georgia on April 1, 2008, to provide firm natural gas commodity sales service in all of the Atlanta Gas Light Company ("AGLC") Georgia primary delivery pool groups. As such, Stream Georgia is subject to all applicable state laws and Commission rules relating to natural gas service in Georgia.



PSC Receives Grant to Partner with Department of Energy and NARUC for Solar Energy Analysis

The Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has selected the Commission as one of only seven state public utility commission partners to participate in a solar energy resource potential study. The project will last up to one year.

This new partnership activity aims to provide states in the beginning stages of solar energy deployment with a solar resource assessment. The project is a piece of a larger DOE and NARUC partnership that will bring State utility commission staff and researchers from the DOE National Laboratories

together to identify and analyze technological, economic and regulatory barriers facing solar energy adoption and examine policy options to overcome these challenges.

"I am proud that the Georgia Public Service Commission and its staff have been selected for this innovative partnership. This

project will enable our state to receive a detailed and quality analysis on solar energy issues for Georgia," said **Commission Chairman Doug Everett**, "Efficient solar energy can be a part of any renewable energy package."

DOE will provide \$150,000 to the fund the project. Besides Georgia, the other states selected to participate are Ken-

tucky, Tennessee, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri, and Colorado. All participants were selected through a competitive application process.

Through a solicitation by NARUC, state commissions submitted research proposals covering a wide range of topics. Areas selected for analysis include an examination of feed-in tariff policies and implementation, solar energy grid integration issues, and the re-

source assessment analysis. This suite of projects will receive \$350,000 of funding from the DOE Solar Energy Technologies Program. Future areas of funding may include solar hot water technical standards, quantifying the benefits of solar energy, and examining the role of solar energy in utilities' integrated resource planning processes.

Commission Sponsors First Large Project Meeting on Major Road Construction

Commissioners **Doug Everett** and **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** along with Pipeline Safety Director **Danny McGriff** and GUFPA Case Manager **Gary Mason** brought together stakeholders June 18 at

the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce to discuss utility locates for a major road construction project in Sandy Springs. The meeting was the first large project meeting held under amendments



Commissioner McDonald addresses the meeting



Gary Mason briefs the audience on the project

to the Dig Law passed in 2005.

Commissioner Doug Everett stressed that communication is key in ensuring that large projects go smoothly, while Commissioner McDonald said it is about teamwork. Representatives from all major utilities were present along with the Utilities Protection Center and the contractor C.W. Matthews Contracting.

Commission Receives Patriot Award

The Georgia Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) July 28 awarded the Commission the Patriot Award for the Commission's support of National Guard and Reserve Commission employees. **Chairman Doug Everett** accepted on behalf of the Commission during the award ceremony at the Army Reserve Center in Decatur.

ESGR is a Department of Defense agency whose mission is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law, and re-

solving conflicts through mediation. Civilian employers play a critical role in the defense of the nation by complying with existing employment laws protecting the rights of employees who serve in National Guard and Reserve. The sacrifices of employers allow these men and women the ability to perform duties in an exemplary manner.



Commissioners Go to Washington

(Continued from page 1)

years. "Unless this legislation is modified and revised, Georgians could see their electric utility bills go up by as much as \$66 a month by 2020," said Everett. "Ultimately, we want to find a way to sculpt a bill that has less impact on Georgians," **Commissioner Stan Wise** told the

delegation members. Commission **Vice-Chairman McDonald** said, "We were pleased with the reception afforded us by members of Georgia's Congressional Delegation and will continue working with them through the legislative process." The members of the Georgia Congressional Delegation who

met with the Commissioners were: Representatives Phil Gingrey, Lynn Westmoreland, Nathan Deal, Paul Broun, Sanford Bishop, Hank Johnson, and David Scott. Senators Johnny Isakson and Saxby Chambliss were represented by staff members due to ongoing legislative committee hearings.

PSC Continues Work despite Budget Cuts

The Commission remains committed to its core mission of balancing the interests of consumers and the utilities it regulates even during these difficult economic times. Due to the recession and decline in state revenues the Commission has taken a 14.6 per cent decrease in the agency's annual operating budget since August 2008.

"As a small agency with a wide ranging mission, any cuts in our budget have a dramatic effect on our regulatory duties," said Commission Vice-Chairman **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** "Like all other state agen-



and other proceedings. Among the cost cutting measures the Commission has implemented:

cies, we have complied with the mandated budget cuts but they have had an impact on our ability to carry out our constitutional and statutory responsibilities." McDonald noted however that the Commission has sought to implement innovative funding methods to provide the outside experts needed for rate cases

1. Reached an agreement with Georgia Power Company for the Company to pay \$600,000 annually for an independent monitor to provide oversight for Plant Vogtle Nuclear Power Unit 3 and 4 construction costs.
2. Sought legislation to fund outside experts for rate cases with-

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Nantz Named Consumer Affairs Director

The Commission on July 7 named **Mike Nantz** as the Director of Consumer Affairs, replacing longtime Director Cynthia Cornelius who is resigning to pursue a law career. Mike joined the Commission in January 2003 as the Assistant Director for Enforcement in Consumer Affairs. In this role, his responsibilities included assuring utilities and

marketers were complying with Commission Rules. Prior to moving to Georgia, he held various positions with the Kentucky PSC and also worked for Kentucky Utilities Company. Mike is a graduate of Francis Marion University in Florence, South Carolina. He and his wife Deborah live in Roswell. His stepson, Aaron, is completing his Basic Training in the United States



Staff Visits Plant Vogtle

Commission staff along with our budget and research analysts visited Georgia Power's Nuclear Generating Plant Vogtle near Waynesboro, Georgia on July 10. Staff members **Bill Edge, Allison Morris, Tom Bond, Phil Smith and Steve Roetger**, Senate Budget Analyst Kristin Youngquist, Office of Planning



and Budget Analyst Brian Smith and Senate Search Assistant Director Brian

Johnson all got a close up look at the reactor control room, turbine generation room and plant security measures. Plant Vogtle Units 1 and 2 entered operation in 1987 and 1989. Two more units are currently under construction at the site and scheduled for completion in 2016 and 2017.

Everett Grandson Aims for 2012 Olympics

Taylor "Wildman" Delk is streamlining his way into national swimming record books, following a nationally recognized 2008 season with an early 2009 season that has already engraved his name into the ranks of the nation's best swimmers.

Delk is the 11 year old grandson of **Commissioner Doug Everett**. The attendance charts at the White County Intermediate School list him as "Robert Taylor Delk," but in the swimming world, the local swimming prodigy goes by "Wildman."

In May Delk was invited to swim with the Select Team, a very prestigious invitation. Delk was the only male from his Swim Atlanta region to be invited to the



team. The Select Team has nothing to do with age groups, thus Delk is competing with some of the nation's top swimmers (future Olympians), some of whom are over 20 years old.

Delk now competes with USA Swimming, the largest competitive swimming program in the

world. USA Swimming is the governing body of swimming in the United States. It manages the competitions, training, and selection of the USA national teams and Olympic teams.

Delk, who hopes to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, competes in the USA Swimming junior division. Long course (LC) competitions are in a 50 meter pool. Short course (SC) competitions are in a 25 yard pool. He is currently ranked second in the nation in the 100 meter backstroke (LC) and 200 meter backstroke (LC), as well as third in the nation for the 50 meter backstroke (LC). The

2009 season is still underway, thus those standings are subject to change and a possible improvement to gain even more ground by Delk.

2008 was a record year for the young swimmer. In USA Swimming, he finished number one in the nation in the 100 meter backstroke event (LC) and number two in the nation in the 50 meter backstroke (LC). He finished number one in the state of Georgia in the 50 yard backstroke (SC) and the 100 yard

backstroke (SC).

Delk also competed in Parks and Recreation swimming in 2008. He broke the 50 yard backstroke time record en route to finishing number one in state in the event. He also broke the 100 yard Individual Medley (back, breast, butterfly, and free styles) Parks and Recreation record. The record had previously remained untouched for 15 years. Delk finished number one in the state in this event.

For the Wildman, the hunting of national records began when he

was five years old, his first year of competitive swimming. He continues the hunt thanks to a diligent and rigorous training schedule. Wildman swims two hours a day, six days a week, for 312 days of the year. He only takes off Sundays and major holidays.

Denice Delk, the swimmer's mother and chauffeur to every event and practice, spends hours supporting her son's dream, and she knows him better than anyone else. "He

does not swim on Christmas," said Delk. "But on Christmas Eve, he's swimming. He does not swim on New Years, but on New Year's Eve, he's swimming."

The practice totals equals an approximate of 624 hours a year. to answer. This summer, Delk will swim in USA Swimming events, including a state competition at Georgia Tech the week of July 16-19. Three summers from now, he

just might be in London. Good luck Wildman!



Commission Continues Work

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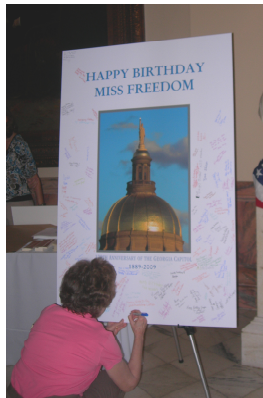
out seeking additional state funds.

3. No new equipment purchases. For Fiscal Year 2011, the Commission must submit budget proposals calling for 4 percent, 6 percent and 8 percent cuts.

Employee News

Capitol Celebrates 120 Years

Hundreds of folks attended the 120th anniversary celebration of the State Capitol on July 8. Secretary of State Karen Handel spoke to the audience and the 338th Army Band Brass Quintet provided stirring patriotic music. Attendees enjoyed Capitol birthday cake and signed a birthday card to Miss Freedom. The Capitol was dedicated on July 4, 1889 and was



completed on time and within budget. The total cost was just over \$1 million! A bargain by today's standards!

Sympathy

Our condolences go to **Executive Director Deborah Flannagan** on the passing May 4, 2009 of her sister, **Monica Kerckoff** of Tallahassee, Florida. Services were held on May 8 in Tallahassee. Monica is survived by two sons and a granddaughter.



Farewell Cynthia

Cynthia Cornelius bid farewell to the Commission July 1 as co-workers and friends gathered for her "official" send

off. Her last official day here was July 15. Cynthia has been with the Commission since 2000 and has been Director of Consumer Affairs since 2001. She plans to attend Loyola University Law School for her law degree and practice public interest law. We wish Cynthia all the best!



Renee Heads for Retirement

Renee Shadix retired from the Commission on May 29 after 34 years with the state.



The celebration began with a Parade down Washington Street and continued with eats and speeches



inside. Farewell and Best wishes Renee!



Commission News

Georgia State Holidays For 2009

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's Birthday
Washington's Birthday
Christmas

January 1
January 19
April 27
May 25
July 3
September 7
October 12
November 11
November 26
November 27
December 24
December 25

Commission Calendar



August 2009
 4-Administrative Session
 13-Committees
 18-Administrative Session
 27-Committees
September 2009
 1-Administrative Session
 7-Labor Day Holiday
 10-Committees
 15-Administrative Session
October 2009
 1-Committees
 6-Administrative Session

Commission Calendar

12-Columbus Day Holiday
 15-Committees
 20-Administrative Session
 29-Committees
November 2009
 3-Administrative Session
 11-Veteran's Day Holiday
 12-Committees
 17-Administrative Session
 24-Committees
 26-Thanksgiving Holiday
 27-Holiday

NARUC

Annual Convention 2009
 November 15-18, 2009
 Chicago, IL

Winter Meeting 2010
 February 14-17, 2010
 Washington, D.C.

Summer Meeting 2010
 July 18-21, 2010
 Sacramento, CA

SEARUC

Annual Meeting 2010
 June 21-24, 2010
 Point Clear, Alabama



GPSC ONLINE: psc.state.ga.us

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