



# GPSC News

Winter 2011

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## Commission Decides Georgia Power Rate Case

- \*Georgia Power
- \*\$10.76 monthly increase
- \*ROE of 11.15%
- \*Sets earnings band between 10.25% and 12.25%
- \*Base rate increase of \$562.3 million

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The Commission on December 21 voted 4-1 to approve a settlement agreement in the Georgia Power Company rate case docket that adjusts the Company's base rates beginning January 1, 2011. The Company, the Commission's Public Interest Advocacy Staff, and eight other parties in

the case all signed off on the settlement that will mean an average increase of about \$10.76 in the average residential customer's monthly bill. Other items in the approved settlement include:

- Sets the Company's return on equity (ROE) at 11.15 percent

- Sets an earnings band between 10.25 percent and 12.25 percent. Any earnings above 12.25 percent will be shared two-thirds with customers.
- The Company will not file a general rate case unless its retail earnings are projected to be below 10.25 percent

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## Echols Takes Office as Newest Commissioner

Commissioner **Tim Echols** took the oath of office December 21 and began his six-year term on the Commission on January 1, 2011. **Governor Sonny Perdue** administered the oath of office to Echols as Echols's wife held the Bible. Echols' seven chil-



dren, parents and other friends and colleagues also attended.

Echols won election to the Commission in the general election of November, 2010 after spending 15 years in the non-

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## Legislative News

**N**athan Deal was inaugurated as Georgia's 82nd Governor on January 10, 2011 the same day that lawmakers returned to the State Capitol for the beginning of the 2011 Georgia General Assembly. Deal defeated former Governor Roy Barnes in the November election to continue Republican control of the Governor's offices.

Deal delivered his first State of the State address to lawmakers on January 12.

With the convening of the legislature comes the annual budget writing process and the Commission's presentations to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees.



24, 2011.

The House should pass out the Amended Budget in February when the Senate will begin its consideration of the state budgets.

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 April 15, 2011.

Chairman Stan Wise presented the Commission's Amended Fiscal Year 2011 budget to the House Economic Development Subcommittee on January



**Chairman Stan Wise** presents the Commission's Amended Fiscal Year 2011 Budget to the House Economic Development Subcommittee

## Echols Takes Office

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profit sector. Echols founded "TeenPact" and grew the mock legislative youth program to 38 states in his tenure. He continues to serve on the group's Board of Directors.

Echols noted that one of his goals as a college student while at the University of Georgia was to become a statewide elected official and that he has now achieved that goal. Echols' cam-

paign focused on consumer protection, clean energy, and accountability. He plans to travel the state speaking to high school and college students as well as civic groups about the importance of reliable energy at low prices and other aspects of the Commission's responsibilities. Additionally, Echols has a goal to tour every power plant owned by Georgia Power during his first year in office.

Echols has a strong interest in the transportation responsibilities of the Commission. In that regard, he was instrumental in persuading a Macon television station to do an investigative report on "rogue" moving companies who are in violation of the law and hurting legitimate businesses. Additionally, he promotes the use of CNG (compressed natural gas) as a

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## Commission Decides Georgia Power Rate Case

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- Increases Georgia Power base rate revenues by approximately \$562.3 million for 2011
  - Provides for a three-year rate plan for a total base rate revenue increase of \$844.6 million
- Georgia Power filed a request on July 1, 2010 with the Commis-

sion to increase its base retail rates by \$1.2 billion over three years. During this rate proceeding, the Commission held three rounds of hearings in Atlanta as well as additional meetings for public input in Macon, Rome and Savannah.

Georgia law requires the Commission to issue a decision on

any new proposed rates within 180 days of the Company's filing.

The Commission decided the last Georgia Power rate request on December 18, 2007 in Docket 25060.

## Wise Takes Helm as Commission Chair in 2011

**Commissioner Stan Wise** begins a one-year term as Chairman of the Commission for 2011, taking the gavel from outgoing Chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. The Commission Chairmanship is rotated annually among the five Commission members based on Georgia law and Commission rules.

This will be Wise's fourth tenure as Chair, having previously chaired the Commission in 1997, 1999 and 2006.

Wise has served on the five-member regulatory panel since 1995. He won re-election to his third six-year term on the Com-



mission in November 2006. Commissioner Wise is a national-

ly recognized expert on energy matters, having testified numerous times before Congress.

He is an active participant in the National Association of Regulator Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and served as NARUC President in 2003-2004. He serves on the NARUC International Relations Committee and the Gas Committee. He is also a past President of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. (SEARUC)

Commissioner Wise's complete biography is on the Commission web site, [www.psc.state.ga.us](http://www.psc.state.ga.us).

## Commission Approves \$5 Grant to Help Low Income Senior Citizens

**T**he Commission January 18 unanimously approved a \$5 million grant to provide relief for low-income senior citizens who are natural gas customers in the Atlanta Gas Light Company (AGLC) distribution area. The Commission directed that the money be allocated from the natural gas Universal Service Fund

(USF). Atlanta Gas Light Company and the natural gas marketers will receive \$4 million to be used as a line item credit, "Georgia PSC Credit", on qualified senior citizens bills. The remaining \$1 million will be distributed to the Salvation Army to provide additional relief.

"We are pleased that we are able to assist these natural gas cus-



tomers during this extremely cold 2011 winter heating season," said **Commissioner H. Doug Everett**, who made the proposal during the Commission's Administrative Session.

## Busted Pipes Flood Consumer Affairs

**T**he deep freeze that hit Georgia just before Christmas did more than drop temperatures into the teens, it caused the pipes in the heating units in Consumer Affairs to burst. The water spread throughout the first floor area occupied by Consumer Affairs, forcing employees to evacuate



their offices and work out of temporary locations.

The problem first surfaced on the afternoon of December 17. The Georgia Building Authority brought in dehumidifiers to start the drying out process. However, additional pipes gave way on

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## Baker Retires from Commission

Fellow Commissioners, Commission staff, friends and family joined together on December 16 to wish **Commissioner Robert Baker** farewell as he prepares to head off into the private section. After 18 years in office, Commissioner Baker is joining the Cobb County law firm of Freeman, Mathis and Gary LLP. According to a release from the firm, Baker will represent clients on energy and technology issues including both private companies and governmental entities.

Baker did not seek re-election to the Commission for a fourth term. He is being succeeded by



**Administrative Assistant Cheryl Vinson, wife Jocelyn Baker and Commissioner Baker at the reception for Baker on December 16, 2010**

Tim Echols who won the seat in the November 2010 election.

When he was elected in 1992, Baker was the first Republican to be elected to a statewide office since Reconstruction. He was on the only Republican on the Commission until 1995 when he was joined by fellow Republican Stan Wise. The Commission soon gained a Republi-

can majority when Commission Bob Durden switched from the Democratic to the Republican party.

"It's been a privilege working here and I will miss it," said Baker at his retirement party. "It's been quite an experience," Baker added.

Baker thanked the Commission staff and especially his longtime assistant Cheryl Vinson who has been with Baker since 1996.



**Commissioners Chuck Eaton and Doug Everett wish Commissioner Baker farewell**



**Commission Chairman Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr. speaks at Commissioner Baker's farewell**

## Echols Takes Office as New Commissioner

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transportation fuel and hopes one day America will be less dependent on foreign oil.

Echols attended North Clayton High School in Riverdale, Georgia where he served as Student Council President. He also owned his own car clean-up shop, housed in the family auc-

tion barn.

Echols attended the University of Georgia where he served as Baptist Student Union President. He met his wife Windy there and they were married shortly after Echols graduated. Windy went on to graduate with a teaching degree from Georgia State University. She currently teaches second

grade at Athens Christian School.

Echols and his wife Windy have seven children and have been married 27 years and live in Winterville, just outside Athens. He received a Bachelor of Arts and two Masters Degrees from the University of Georgia.

## Annual NARUC Convention in Atlanta

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners held its 112nd annual convention in Atlanta on November 13-16, 2010. Commissioners and staff attended and participated in several committee meetings. Appearances by Secretary of Energy Steven Chu and Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski highlighted the gathering. The convention was filled with NARUC Committee and staff subcommittee meetings. Consumer Affairs

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS



**Commissioners Stan Wise and Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** enjoy the NARUC luncheon with Commissioners from across the country during the annual NARUC convention in Atlanta

**Director Mike Nantz and Consumer Operations Analyst Will Culbreath** briefed the Staff Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs on the consumer affairs web based consumer complaint system. Consumer Affairs and Public Information staff members from ten state commissions attended the gathering.

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## Commissioner Echols Displays CNG Car

**Commissioner Tim Echols** displayed his Compressed Natural Gas vehicle to interested news media reporters and others on January 20 outside the Commission offices. Echols purchased the used 1999 Honda Civic sedan in December 2010. He says his car has an average range between fill-ups of 180 miles. Echols paid \$3000 for the car and believes his new ride will give



**Commissioner Echols chats with reporters about his CNG car**

him great service as he drives between his home in Athens and the Capitol. "Most people don't know that CNG cars can drive in the HOV lane with just the driver," said Echols. "This benefit alone should motivate frustrated commut-

ers to consider CNG as an alternative fuel."

Georgia currently has only two public fueling stations providing CNG services, both of which are in the south metro area of Atlanta. Echols has refilled his Honda at both stations, run by Clean Energy and PS Energy.

"I have always felt the best way to lead is by example, if at all

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## Consumer Affairs Flood

*(Continued from page 3)*

December 20 further compounding the problem. **Consumer Affairs Director Mike Nantz** sent his call center folks home to telework while Georgia Building Authority personnel

worked to stop the water and begin the clean up process. Consumer Affairs returned to nearly normal operations on December 27.



## NARUC Donates to Project SHARE

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) announced November 16 that the group has donated \$1500 to Project SHARE in lieu of speaker gifts during the NARUC Annual Meeting in Atlanta. NARUC made the donation at the urging of **Commissioner Stan Wise**. "Project SHARE helps make the difference for those who are facing disastrous situations due to lack of resources and NARUC is glad to assist this worthwhile charity," said **Commissioner Wise**.

In 1985, the Salvation Army Georgia Division established Project Share to provide emergency assistance for the elderly, families and other Georgians facing crisis situations. Each year SHARE assists more than 40,000 people affected by illness, job loss or other unfortunate situations. . NARUC is the national association representing the State Public Service Commissioners who regulate essential utility services, including energy, telecommunications, and water. 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. NARUC drew over 1200 attendees to Atlanta with an estimate economic impact of nearly \$1 million. This is the second NARUC annual meeting in Atlanta in the past six years. The next NARUC Annual Convention will take place November 13 -16, 2011 in St. Louis, Missouri.



DOING THE MOST GOOD.™



**Mike Nantz and Will Culbreath brief the Consumer Affairs Staff Subcommittee during NARUC Atlanta Meeting**



**Jamie Barber and Sallie Tanner at the Annual NARUC Convention**

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Commissioner Tony Clark of the North Dakota Public Service Commission took office as NARUC President from outgoing President David Coen of the Vermont Public Service Board.

### Echols Displays CNG Vehicle

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possible," said Echols. "It's one thing to encourage investment in alternative energy, but being able to speak from personal experience may enable me to convince other public officials to do the same thing." Echols said he believes that many officials will be interested because CNG is an

American resource and that most of our national trade deficit is because of foreign oil.

Atlanta Gas Light Company, one of the two gas utilities regulated by the Georgia PSC, has a proposal currently under review at the PSC where the utility would install refueling equipment at public stations operated by private companies. Funds would be dispensed from the state's natural gas universal service fund

based on criteria to be established by the PSC. In addition to building fueling infrastructure, AGL's announced program would include a low cost leasing option for individual customers and small businesses to install home refueling appliances at their residences or places of business.

The AGL proposal will be voted on by the Commission in

# Employee News

## Eaton and Echols Meet with French Consul

The French Consul and his staff paid a visit to the Commission on January 19. Pascal Le Deunff, Consul General of France along with his Press Attache, Claire Colbert and Serge Hanoca, Director for Energy and Industrial Affairs, chatted with **Commissioners Chuck Eaton and Tim Echols**. **Commissioner Echols** said, "It was my honor to meet with the



French General Consul and discuss nuclear waste recycling and reprocessing. The French derive 80% of their electricity from nuclear power and have developed the reprocessing technology that I hope we can employ here in Georgia and the United States."



### Congratulations

To **Rob Trokey** who recently got married to his fiancé, Giang in Vietnam on January 5, 2011. Co-workers held a celebration in the couple's honor on January 31, 2011.



### Commissioners Take Part in White County Pipeline Opening

**Commissioners Doug Everett and Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Jr.** took part in the ceremonial wrench turning January 19 that officially opened the new natural gas line in White County. They joined Atlanta Gas Light President Suzanne Sitherwood and Cleveland Mayor Don Stanley in Cleve-



land for the official opening.

### Farewell

Commissioners, staff, friends and family bid farewell and fond retirement to **Gary Mason** on January 26 as Gary retires from the Commission with over 12 years of service. Gary worked in the Underground Facilities Protection section as a GUFPA analyst. Gary officially retired on January 31.



**Pipeline Safety colleagues join to wish Garry a great retirement**

**Chairman Stan Wise** presented Gary with a proclamation from Governor Nathan Deal commending him for his service to

the state. Everyone joined in to partake of cake, punch and other goodies



to help celebrate Gary's venture into retirement.

# Commission News



## Commission Calendar



## Georgia State Holidays For 2011

<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>January 3</b>
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday</b>	<b>January 17</b>
<b>Confederate Memorial Day</b>	<b>April 25</b>
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>May 30</b>
<b>Independence Day</b>	<b>July 4</b>
<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>September 5</b>
<b>Columbus Day</b>	<b>October 10</b>
<b>Veterans Day</b>	<b>November 11</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>November 24</b>
<b>Robert E. Lee's Birthday</b>	<b>November 25</b>
<b>Washington's Birthday</b>	<b>December 26</b>
<b>Christmas</b>	<b>December 23</b>

### January 2011

4-Administrative Session  
13-Committees  
18-Administrative Session  
20-Vogle hearing  
27-Committees

### February 2011

1-Administrative Session  
10-Committees  
15-Administrative Session  
24-Committees

## Commission Calendar

### March 2011

1-Administrative Session  
10-Committees  
15-Administrative Session  
24-Committees

### April 2011

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

### NARUC

#### Winter Meeting 2011

February 13-17, 2011  
Washington, D.C.

#### Summer Meeting 2011

July 17-20, 2011  
Los Angeles, California

#### Annual Convention 2011

November 15-18, 2010  
Atlanta, Georgia

### SEARUC

#### Annual Meeting 2011

June 12-15, 2011  
Nashville, Tennessee



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

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### COMMISSIONERS

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

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**Deborah Flannagan**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
**Reece McAlister**