



Summer 2014



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# GPSC News

Volume 12 Issue 4

\*Ninth and Tenth Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report  
\*Hearings held July 1 and June 1, 2014  
\*Decision on August 19, 2014

## Commission Hears Latest Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report

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The Commission completed the latest round of hearings on the progress of the Georgia Power Company Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring Report in Docket Number 29848 on July 1 with testimony from the Commission's Public Advocacy Staff and consultants. Commission Analyst Steve Roetger and consultants Bill Jacobs, Phillip Hayet and E. Cary Cook presented the Public Advocacy Staff testimony which had been pre-filed on June 20. Several members of the public also commented at the opening of the hear-



Steve Roetger and Bill Jacobs testify during the hearing on July 1, 2014

ings. Some were rate-payers and Nuclear Watch South. During the June 1 hearing Georgia Power witnesses Kyle C. Leach Savannah River Keep-

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## Commission Approves Credit to Set Nuclear Waste Fund at Zero to Save Georgia Ratepayers \$31 Million Annually

The Commission June 17 approved the Georgia Power Company request to credit to consumers a portion of the fuel cost that pays into the Nuclear Waste Fund, a move that will save Georgia Power customers about \$31 million a year. The Company submitted the proposal for Commis-



sion approval after the Department of Energy set the fee it collects under the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act to zero effective May 16, 2014.

The DOE acted following a federal court decision on November 19, 2013 that the government must set the fee at zero until it is in compliance with the law. The Company will apply the credit to customers' bills beginning

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## State Budget Update

The state's new 2015 fiscal year began July 1, 2014. The Commission received an increase in its budget with an additional \$90,000 in funding for one new position in the Utilities Unit to assist with the monitoring of the Georgia Power Plant Vogtle Construction Monitoring. The budget also includes an additional one percent in salaries for state employees.



**Commissioners Listen to Testimony during the hearing**

*(Continued from page 1)*

and David L. McKinney presented the Company's direct testimony which had been pre-filed on April 25.

The Commission will issue its decision in this proceeding during its regular Administrative Session on August 19, 2014.

The Commission certified the construction of the Plant Vogtle project in 2009. Currently, the



**Tonya Bonitatibus, with Savannah River Keepers speaks to the Commission**

first of the two new units are scheduled to begin commercial operation in December 2017.



## Solar Foundation Honors McDonald with 2014 Individual Achievement Award

The Solar Foundation has awarded **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** its 2014 Individual Achievement Award because of his efforts to promote solar energy in Georgia. The Foundation presented the award during its Summer Solstice event June 21 in Washington, D.C. "I am honored to receive this award," said McDonald. "As we continue to move forward with solar energy



D.C. based national center for solar energy research and education.

in Georgia, I will work to ensure that it is done responsibly and without ratepayers' subsidies."

The Solar Foundation is a Washington,

The Solar Foundation is also a key member of the Department of Energy's SunShow Solar Outreach Partnership, delivering customized solar educational materials and workshops to communities throughout the country.

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, 2014.

## Nuclear Waste Fee

*(Continued from page 1)*

ning with the billing month of July. This action means accredited to the average residential customer using 1000 kilowatt hours a month of about \$2.69 per year. Overall, Georgia electric customers have \$827 million into the Fund since 1982 but with the accumulated interest, the total liability for

Georgia is \$1.546 billion.

"This reduction is long overdue," said **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald**. "This Commission, through the courts, has pushed the DOE to either reduce the fee or build the nuclear waste repository," McDonald added. "Georgia consumers who have paid in over a billion dollars have little to show for this investment." McDonald

serves as Vice-chair of the Nuclear Waste Subcommittee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).

**Commission Chairman Chuck Eaton** said, "This is a win for the Georgia consumer. If the federal government refuses to keep its promise to build a nuclear waste repository then consumers

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# Commissioners Applaud DOE Decision on Nuclear Waste Fee

The Commission May 16 applauded the U.S. Energy Department announcement that it will zero out the fees it has collected under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to fund a non-existent Nuclear Waste Repository, thereby saving Georgia consumers approximately \$31 million a year. The Department is complying with a November 19, 2013 federal court order to stop collecting this fee which was assessed on nuclear power companies and then passed onto consumers. Since 1982, Georgia electric consumers have paid an estimated \$1.2 billion in fees and interest into the fund.

"The Georgia Public Service Commission has been very active in this battle and is pleased that Georgia consumers will no longer be paying into the Nuclear Waste



**Chuck Eaton.**

Twice, this year and in 2009, the

Fund. It is our hope that the federal government will begin to fulfill its promise from 1982 to build and operate a nuclear waste repository,"

said **Commission Chairman**

Commission has unanimously passed resolutions calling on the federal government to either suspend the collection of the fee or build the promised nuclear waste repository, which the law required the federal government to have operational by 1998.

In addition, the Commission, working through its national organization, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), has supported litigation to stop the Energy Department from collecting the fee. The fees which are deposited into the U.S. Treasury collect about \$750

million a year. Currently the Nuclear Waste Fund's balance is about \$30 billion.

"It's a start. Unfortunately we are still nowhere close to having this long promised repository but it's a start. The people of Georgia have paid nearly \$1 billion into the fund but

Congress and the Energy Department have not lived up to



their promises," said **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** who is also vice-chair of the NARUC Subcommittee on Nuclear Waste Disposal.



**er Tim Echols.** "I appreciate Com-

"It is only right to stop charging our citizens a nuclear waste fee if the federal government isn't going to collect the waste as they promised,"

said **Commissioner**

missioner McDonald's relentless effort to end this fee."

**Commission Vice-chair**

**Doug Everett** said, "I join with my colleagues in applauding this event. I too hope the federal government will fulfill its long standing promise to dispose of nuclear waste."



**Everett**

## Nuclear Waste Fee

*(Continued from page 2)*

should not be paying for it."

"For too long the federal government has charged the ratepayers of Georgia a collection fee for our nuclear waste, yet they have not picked up a single ounce of it," said **Commissioner Tim Echols.** "I am very glad the Commission could take

this action in light of the federal court decision."

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 committed the federal government to build a repository to receive and store commercial nuclear waste and have it operational by 1998. The government failed to meet this deadline and state regulators through NARUC sued to ei-

ther force the government to meet is obligation or stop collecting the fee.



## Commissioner Wise Reacts to New Federal Proposal on Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Commissioner **Stan Wise** commented on June 2 in reaction to the issuance of carbon dioxide rules by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "The Obama Administration continues its war on coal with the issuance of carbon dioxide rules for existing coal plants. These overreaching rules trump state authority, put energy users at risk to future price swings, ignores the investments and progress Georgians have made to improve the environment, and are a backdoor attempt to force federal renewable energy



**Commissioner Wise**

mandates.

Under our oversight, customers of our state's regulated electric utilities have spent more than \$5 billion in capital on environmental compliance since 1990, reducing some emissions by 95%. While tough on the average consumer, these investments have yielded environmental improvements in an incremental, measured, and cost-effective fashion.

In addition to emission controls, Georgia continues to rebalance its energy mix, the result of which has also reduced emissions, including CO<sub>2</sub>. This Com-

mission has overseen a shift from 62% coal, as recent as 2011, to 35% in 2013, without federal mandates to do so. The ongoing nuclear renaissance in Georgia will also reduce the demand on higher-emitting generation sources.

While these efforts mean our state is in a better position than others to comply with some version of these rules, by effectively taking coal off the table, the Administration is



placing all of the state's energy consumers at risk of escalating prices and energy interruptions, with only slight reductions in carbon emissions to show for it.

When natural gas commodity rates spike again, as they did over a decade ago, this fragile economic recovery could return to a downward spiral.

The Administration is also going beyond the authority given under the Clean Air Act in order to devise a back door attempt to federally-mandate renewable energy and energy efficiency standards, without regard to the cost on consumers. The Clean Air Act specifically reserves flexi-

ble implementation options to the states where the best overall balance can and has been struck. Although the Administration claims to offer states a wide menu of options to achieve reductions, you can only choose from two entrées – cap and trade, which translates to higher electric rates when we southerners use our air conditioners, or more renewables like solar, which is not a substitute for the

base load generation that coal provides.

These rules are simply the means to an end – the end of coal and an annual loss of \$10.5 billion in GDP and 59,700 jobs in our south Atlantic region alone, and the backdoor mandating of energy renewables. \*

We look forward to working with our colleagues and policy-makers across the region in hopes that the final rule to be issued later next year is more pragmatic and

consumer friendly."

**\* Source: Figures are based on a study Commissioned by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found here: <http://www.energyxxi.org/epa-regs>. The study, conducted before the final rule came out, included GDP and jobs figures that may have been based on a higher reduction goal than is contained in the current version of the rule; thus the final figures may or may not change when adjusted for the current reduction goal.**

# Alternative Fueled Vehicles Roadshow Hits the Road Again in Georgia

**Commissioner Tim Echols** hosted the fourth annual Alternative Fueled Vehicles Roadshow, touring eight Georgia cities in eight days during June 17-26. The stops included College Park, Evans-Augusta, Warner Robins, Savannah, Marietta, Clayton, Gainesville and Columbus. The Roadshow featured over a dozen vehicles that use electric, natural gas, propane and hybrid technology. The tour broke attendance records over the 2013 show and generated extensive local and statewide news coverage. **Commissioner Chuck Eaton**



**Alternative Fueled Vehicles on display at the Columbus Trade and Convention Center**

stopped by to greet the attendees at College Park and Marietta while **Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** spoke to the groups in Clayton and Gainesville. Several local officials also extend-



**Senator Butch Miller speaks to the Roadshow at the Brenau Center in Gainesville**

ed greetings including the mayors of Augusta and Savannah, the Chairman of the Columbia County Commission and state legislators from Warner Robins, Gainesville and Marietta.



**Commissioner Chuck Eaton at the Georgia International Convention Center in College Park, Georgia**



**Commissioner Echols discusses the Roadshow live with WTVM-TV Columbus anchor Cheryl Renee on June 25, 2014**



**Commissioner McDonald visits Commissioner Echols at the Roadshow in Clayton, Georgia**

## McDonald Takes Part in Silicon Ranch Dedication

**Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** participated May 13 in the dedication of the Georgia Silicon Ranch, the largest solar array east of the Mississippi, near Social Circle in Walton County. The Georgia Public Service Commission authorized this project as part of the original 50 megawatt solar project in 2011. The power gen-



**(left) Commissioner McDonald throws the ceremonial switch to open the Silicon Ranch**

erated on this site is supplied to Georgia Power Company through a long term purchase power agreement.

"This is an example of the Commission, industry and Georgia

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Commission Approves Wind Power Contracts

The Commission May 20 took another step aimed at diversifying Georgia's energy portfolio. The Commission approved a proposed agreement that will add 250 megawatts of clean renewable wind energy to Georgia's electric grid.

Under terms of the agreement, Georgia Power will purchase the wind-generated electricity from EDP Renewables North America, LLC, for 20 years beginning January 1, 2016. EDP will operate two wind farms in Oklahoma, Blue Canyon II with 151 MW and Blue Canyon VI with 99 MW of electric generation. These



contracts will provide energy at a cost below Georgia Power's projected avoided costs.

"Securing a firm energy contract for wind power is rare, so kudos to Georgia Power and our staff for cutting this deal," said **Commissioner Tim Echols**. "By adding yet another form of renewable energy—already constructed—to our energy mix, we keep Georgia prepared for possible rising natural gas prices in the future and we avoid any construction cost overruns associated with building our own resource." The Commission held two hearings on this issue under Docket No. 37854 on March 13 and April 10, 2014.

## McDonald Attends Silicon Ranch Dedication

*(Continued from page 5)*

Power working together to benefit all Georgians," said McDonald. "This facility will generate over 30 megawatts of clean energy and reduce pollution." McDonald has been a leader in bringing Georgia to the forefront in solar energy generation during his time on the Commission. Georgia will have approximately 800 megawatts of solar generation capacity in place by the end of



2016. Commissioner McDonald took part in the ceremonial throwing of the switch for the facility along

with Phoenix Solar AG CEO Bernd Kohler, Silicon Ranch President and CEO Matt Kisber and Georgia Power Manager of Renewable Implementation Ervan Hancock. Kohler noted that this solar array is the largest one they have ever constructed. Silicon Ranch Corporation of Nashville, Tennessee will operate the facility. Phoenix Solar AG of Munich, Germany designed and

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Facilities Protection Unit Conducts Vehicle Inspection

On June 25 the Facilities Protection Unit conducted an equipment inspection on all of its vehicles. The purpose of the inspection was to ensure that each vehicle has proper inspection and safety equipment, including fire extinguishers, flame packs, hard hats, safety vests, etc.

**Facilities Protection Unit Director Michele Therbert** reminded the group to make sure that the vehicles were main-



tained for all needed repairs and routine maintenance (tires, oil changes, etc.) in order to ensure that each vehicle will provide as many service years as possible.

# Employee News

## Congratulations

To **Reece McAlister**, Executive Secretary and his wife Ellen, on the birth of their first grandchild on May 7. Her name is **Korilyn Drew Hayes** and she weighed in at 8 pounds 6 ounces and was 19 and a half inches long. Parents, grandparents and Korilyn are all doing well.



To **Jamie Barber**, Director of the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Group on the graduation of her daughter, **Crystal Barber** in May 2014, from Shorter University in Rome, Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She has passed her NCLEX, state boards, and is pursuing a career as a Registered Nurse.



To **Blair Fink**, Utilities Analyst, on his daughter **Sarah's** graduation from Georgia State University on May 10, 2014.



## Welcome



In addition, Reece's daughter **Katelyn**, graduated May 10, 2014 from the University of North Georgia.

To **Catherine Leigey** on joining the Electric Staff July 1 in a fulltime position.

To **Faith Henning** on joining the Commission June 1 as Commissioner Tim Echols' Administrative Assistant.

To **James (Jim) Atkins** on joining the Commission on July 16 as a Pipeline Safety Inspector. Jim previously worked for the Maine Public Service Commission as a Gas Pipeline Safety Inspector.

To **Wendy (Dongxue) Li and Nicholas Cooper** on joining the Electric Unit. Wendy is a NARUC Summer Energy Intern and a candidate for the Master of Science in Public Administration, with a concentration public budgeting and public financial policies, from the University of Georgia. She also has an undergraduate degree in Economics.

Nicholas is an independent contractor and just received his Master of Science degree in Public Policy, with a concentration Environmental and Energy Policy. He

also holds a M.S. in Environmental Engineering. Both degrees are from Georgia Tech.

## Farewell

To **Michael Semansky** who resigned April 21. He was an inspector in Pipeline Safety.

## Sympathy

To **Commissioner Tim Echols**, on the passing of his mother, **Betty Tallent**, on April 17, 2014. The funeral was held in Rex, Georgia on April 23.

To **Irma Correa**, Consumer Affairs, on the death of her mother, **Luz Maria Prado Requena de Ormeño**, on April 29. The funeral took place in Peru. From Irma: Thank you very much for the support in these tough times. I feel stronger now and I really appreciate every word I read on those cards.

## Solar Ranch Dedication

*(Continued from page 6)*

built the solar farm and will provide ongoing operations and maintenance support.



**Solar panels at the Silicon Ranch in Social Circle, Georgia**

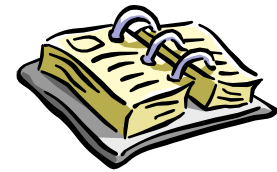
# Commission News

## 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



#### August 2014

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

#### September 2014

1-Holiday  
 2-Administrative Session  
 11-Committees  
 16-Administrative Session

#### October 2014

2-Committees  
 7-Administrative Session

## Commission Calendar

13-Holiday  
 16-Committees  
 21-Administrative Session  
 30-Committees  
**November 2014**  
 4-Administrative Session  
 11-Holiday  
 13-Committees  
 18-Administrative Session  
 26-Committees

### NARUC

**Annual Convention 2014**  
 November 16-19, 2014  
 San Francisco, California

**Winter Meetings 2015**  
 February 15-18, 2015  
 Washington, D.C.

**Summer Meetings 2015**  
 July 12-15, 2015  
 New York City, N.Y.

### SEARUC

**Annual Meeting 2015**  
 June 2015  
 Austin, Texas



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