

# The PSC Pulse

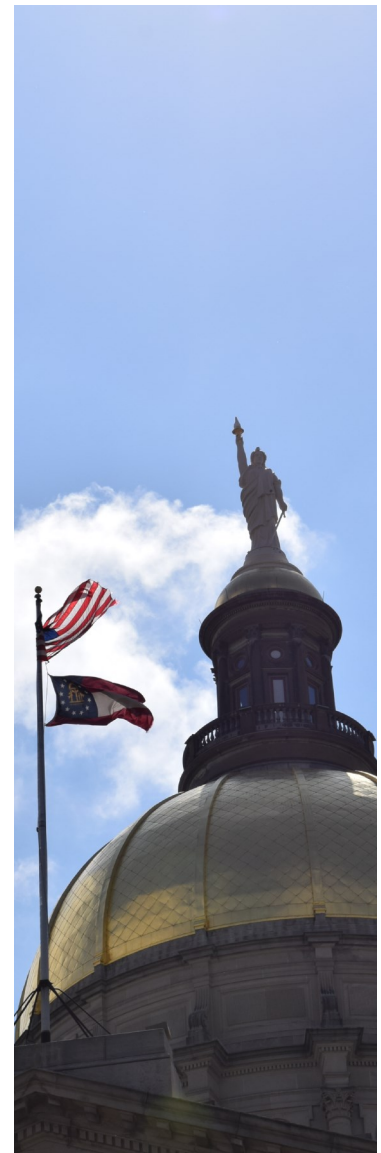
## BUSY YEAR FOR THE PSC INCLUDED GEORGIA POWER IRP, RATE CASES



2022 was one of the busiest years at the Public Service Commission in its history. The Commission held hearings for dockets including: the three-year Georgia Power Integrated Resource Plan (IRP); a Georgia Power rate case; monitoring of construction at Plant Vogtle; an Atlanta Gas Light rate review; and others, including the four regular meetings held at the Commission each month.

In approving the IRP, Commissioners set the three-year update to Georgia Power's 20-year energy plan. The 2022 IRP was one of the more complex plans in recent years. It added significant renewable energy to the grid and ensured the continued closing of coal-fired plants does not interfere with the reliability of the grid.

Toward the end of 2022, the Commission finalized the Georgia Power rate case. Where Georgia Power asked to raise rates by \$2.9 billion, the Commission approved a much more conservative increase that cut 40-percent of Georgia Power's requests. The final rate case order will save ratepayers more than \$1 billion over the next three years.



## END OF AN ERA UNDER THE GOLD DOME



Georgia Speaker of the House **David Ralston** always referred to the Capitol building as “The People’s House.” After his death on Nov. 17, his casket lay in state under the Gold Dome of the People’s House. The people came by the hundreds to wish him goodbye and to thank him for his work. He was 68.

Ralston, a Blue Ridge lawyer, was known for his no-nonsense demeanor and steady rudder hand. He also had a sharp wit and was known as a loyal friend to many legislators on both sides of the ideological aisle. When Ralston died, he was the



longest actively serving state speaker in the nation.

Ralston is succeeded as Speaker by longtime friend, Rep. Jon Burns.

## FORMER CHAIRMAN EATON HONORED WITH PORTRAIT

In 2021, the Public Service Commission dedicated the area immediately outside its hearing room as a new “Wall of Honor” to hang portraits of past PSC Commissioners.

Recently, former Chairman **Chuck Eaton**, now a Fulton County Superior Court Judge, returned to the PSC for a ceremony to unveil his portrait.

Eaton was first elected to the PSC in December 2006. It was during that term that he recognized the judicial nature of the Commission’s work. To gain a better understanding of regulatory and administrative law proceedings, he enrolled in night classes for law school at Georgia State University and, upon graduation, was sworn in to the State Bar of Georgia as an attorney.

He first served as PSC Chairman in 2008. Immediately following his re-election in 2012, he again was named Chairman and served through 2016. Eaton was serving his third stint as Chairman when he was appointed to the Fulton County Superior Court bench in August 2021.

At the portrait unveiling, current PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore**



*Commissioners **Jason Shaw**, **Tricia Pridemore**, **Tim Echols** and **Fitz Johnson** praised former Commissioner **Chuck Eaton** at the unveiling.*



***Judge Chuck Eaton**, a former PSC Chairman, was on hand as Executive Director **Reece McAlister** unveiled his portrait.*

said she always respected Eaton for his level-headed, calm demeanor. Commission Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** pointed to Eaton’s sense of humor as a calming influence during stressful hearings.

In 2021, the first portrait unveiling was held in honor of former PSC Chairman **David Burgess**, the first African American to serve as a Commissioner.



## PRIDEMORE SERVES ON LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE TO EXPAND EV CHARGING STATIONS ACROSS STATE

Late in the 2022 session of the Georgia General Assembly, a bill that would have helped shape the expansion of electric vehicle chargers in Georgia fell short and did not pass.

Undeterred, House and Senate legislators passed a bill to create a special joint committee to study electric vehicle expansion and various needs for the expansion of charging stations.

PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** was appointed as one of the few non-legislators to serve on the committee.



*A Tesla charges in a parking lot outside the Georgia Capitol.*

After months of hearings across the state — and after input from EV users, EV manufacturers, convenience stores, power companies, academics, and experts from every aspect of vehicle charging — the Study Committee released a list of recommendations.

Included recommendations in the list:



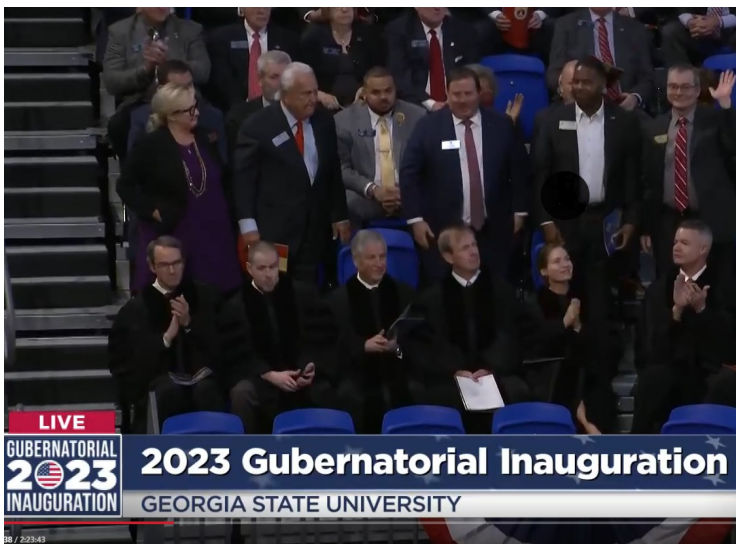
PSC Chairman  
**Tricia Pridemore**

- ♦ Charging for power by the kilowatt-hour instead of by the minute
- ♦ Fees to make up for lost gas-tax revenue (gas taxes help pay for roadway infrastructure)
- ♦ Ensure that alternative fuels other than electricity are taken into consideration in legislation, including alternative fuels that have not yet been developed
- ♦ Requiring the licensing and inspection of charging stations

The recommendations will help develop solid legislation in the 2023 session.

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## GOVERNOR KEMP SWORN IN TO SECOND TERM



After a resounding win in the 2022 election, Gov. Brian Kemp was sworn in to a second term on Jan. 12. All five PSC Commissioners were in attendance to celebrate Kemp's second term.

In addition to pay raises for teachers and other state employees, Kemp vowed to ensure Georgia is at the forefront of electric vehicle technology.

The Public Service Commission shares that goal and has worked for the past several years to ensure the growth of EV charging stations across the state.

## 2022 HEAT MEETING

With the theme “The Power of One,” the Heating Energy Assistance Team (HEAT) held its 39<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in 2022.

An example of making a difference one person at a time is a utility company that recently asked customers to round up their bill to the next dollar. The rounded amount, donated to the HEAT program, came to \$138,000.

HEAT started in the 1970s to combat the energy crisis. It still works today as a partnership between citizens, businesses and public agencies — including the PSC — to provide help on energy bills to the less fortunate.



*The PSC had a great showing at the HEAT meeting. From left, Human Resources Director **Lynn Page**, Executive Assistant **Amy Hicks**, Consumer Affairs Representative **Karen Howell**, Consumer Affairs Representative **Shaundra Worthy**, Executive Assistant **Heidi Strain**, Consumer Affairs Manager **Monique Andrews** and Consumer Affairs Representative **Maggie Francis**.*

## COMMISSIONER ECHOLS LOANS EV TO TYBEE ISLAND

PSC Commissioner **Tim Echols** handed over the keys to his personal 2015 Nissan LEAF electric vehicle, loaning it to the City of Tybee Island for 30 days.

The loan allowed city officials to test a low-range EV for parking enforcement and other purposes.



*Commissioner **Tim Echols***

“It is my hope that Tybee can secure a fleet of used older EVs allowing them to go green and save money at the same time,” Echols said. “This loaner will help them make a good evaluation.”

The average cost of a new EV is \$66,500. A used LEAF can be purchased for under \$10,000.



*A 2015 Nissan LEAF loaned to Tybee Island for 30 days by Commissioner **Tim Echols***

## COMMISSIONERS PRIDEMORE, SHAW IN AMERICUS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Georgia House of Representatives’ Rural Development Council met at Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus to discuss energy matters.

PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** and Commissioner **Jason Shaw** attended the meeting to offer a presentation on natural gas services in rural Georgia as well as an update on rural solar projects.

Also among the presenters were officials with the state Environmental Protection Division, who discussed some problems with water runoff on solar farms, and a University of Georgia engineering professor, who discussed how Georgia is keeping a proper balance between clean energy, low-cost energy, and a reliable grid.

The Rural Development Council was established in 2017. It meets across the state to listen to citizens, business owners and organization operatives to learn about the special challenges rural Georgians face and how the legislature can help.



*PSC Chairman **Tricia Pridemore** and Commissioner **Jason Shaw** offer insights to legislators in Americus.*



## FROM HUMAN RESOURCES: EDUCATION SUPPORT LEAVE

When you're logged on to TeamWorks, if you happen to be scrolling through your "Benefits Summary," you'll probably notice that you have eight hours of "Education Support Leave." This might get you to wondering: What exactly is Education Support Leave?



Every year you are given eight hours of leave for the purpose of promoting education in Georgia. Examples include attending a teacher's conference, assisting your child in early care learning or volunteering at a school – from pre-K through higher education. You do need prior approval from your supervisor to take Education Support Leave and only activities directly related to student achievement or academic support will qualify.

The eight hours don't roll over to the new year but you can use the time in increments fewer than eight hours within the year. For example, if you attend a teacher conference where only two hours are needed, you can keep the remaining six for use later that year.

## WARNER ROBINS SOLAR



Commissioner **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** traveled to Warner Robins for a luncheon celebrating a successful solar energy project at Robins Air Force Base that was years in the making.

Since 2009, the Air Force has been acquiring land in the "encroachment area" surrounding the base. This is property subject to noise and interference caused by activities crucial to the base's mission.

In 2016, community organizations, Georgia Power and base officials entered into an agreement that would place solar panels in parts of the encroachment area. The project now covers 650 acres with 470,000 solar panels. It produces enough energy to power 25,000 homes.

Additional upgrades to the substation infrastructure on the base directly connect to the solar array. The project has successfully helped to meet the energy security and resilience goals of the base and of the Air Force.

## PSC COMMISSIONER FITZ JOHNSON ON THE JOB



*Strapped into a harness, placed in a small bucket and pulled high into the air, **Commissioner Fitz Johnson** learned how the linemen use bucket trucks to make repairs. No fear of heights for Commissioner Johnson though. In the Army, he used to jump out of airplanes.*

## NEW FACES AT THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

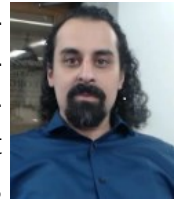


**Krushmi Chheda**, who holds an MBA from Georgia State University, comes to the PSC from American Honda Financing Corp. She is a new utilities analyst in the Natural Gas Unit. In addition to her academic skills, she speaks six languages including English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati and Kutchi.

**John Davy** joined the IT/ Operations Support unit in January. Prior to his role as an IT Support Engineer, John worked as a technical instructor for a national non-profit focused on creating careers in technology. Outside of work, John enjoys running, swim-



**Yves Avady** has been hired as an IT/Operations Support Systems Administrator. He has worked in systems administration and development since 1997. While studying at Wentworth Institute of Technology, Yves was the chess champion two years in a row.

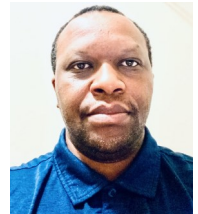


**William Threatt** joined the Electric Unit as a utilities analyst in August. He completed his Associate's Degree in engineering technology from Middle Georgia State University before completing his Bachelor's Degree in aerospace engineering from Georgia Tech. Prior to the PSC he worked as an engineer at Volvo Trucks, Michelin Tires and Osmose Utilities Services.



**Joseph Schneider**, a new utilities engineer in the Electric Unit holds a BS in mechanical engineering from Georgia Tech. He previously designed a system for monitoring operational status of hazard lights on Lake Lanier. He lives in Newnan with his wife and newborn daughter.

**Mark Gitonga**, who holds a master's degree in software engineering from California State University Fullerton, has been hired as a utilities engineer in the Electric Unit. Previously, he worked for Amazon as a transportation operations manager.



## CHRISTMAS GIVING

The Public Service Commission picked two charities where employees could donate toys, clothing or cash money to those in need during the Christmas holiday.

Many children received toys, thanks to PSC Commissioners and staff, as part of Clark's Christmas Kids, a charity founded by consumer advocate Clark Howard.

Also sponsored by the PSC was Women Empowerment for Success, a charity started by our own Consumer Affairs Manager **Monique Andrews** that helps homeless women become self sufficient.



Human Resources Director **Lynn Page** and CFO **Terry Pritchett** deliver Christmas presents to the Governor's Office



**HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY!**



**5 YEARS**

**George Brown**

**Joseph Jones**

**Maritza Rivera**

**15 YEARS**

**Daphne Jones**

**Terry Pritchett**

**Rob Trokey**

**20 YEARS**

**John Kaduk**

**25 YEARS**

**Winifred Gaines**

**MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

Apparently smarts run in the family. This past December, Sofie-Ellen Stroeva, the daughter of Operations Support Director Max Stroev and Accountant Jane Stroeva, graduated with Highest Honors from Georgia Tech in 3 1/2 years. She majored in Biology with a minor in Human Physiology.

Sofie hopes to be accepted into medical school and aspires to become a pediatric orthopedic surgeon. In the meantime, she's working at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta where she also conducts research. Additionally, she is a helpline volunteer with the National Alliance on Mental illness.



**Joseph Schneider**, an analyst in the Electric Unit, and his wife Sylvia, have welcomed their first child. Lillian Rae Schneider was born at 3:58 p.m. on Jan. 23.

Mother and daughter are happy and healthy. Lilly is the first grandchild on both sides of their family so, needless to say, there is a lot of joy going around.

Malachi Andrews, son of Consumer Affairs Manager **Monique Andrews**, marched in the Martin Luther King Jr. Parade with his Boy Scout troop.

Malachi, 12, has been scouting for four years with Troop 340. His goal is to have his Eagle badge within the next three years.

Monique is no stranger to scouting. For the past two years, she has been a co-leader for an all-girl troop. Troop 260 has grown from four to 20 scouts in a year.



## COMMISSION CALENDAR

### February 2023

2—Committee Meetings  
7—Administrative Session  
16—Committee Meetings  
21—Administrative Session  
21— Docket 29849, 27th Vogtle  
Construction Monitoring Report

### March 2023

2—Committee Meetings  
7—Administrative Session  
16—Committee Meetings  
21—Administrative Session  
30—Committee Meetings

### April 2023

4—Administrative Session  
13—Committee Meetings  
18—Administrative Session  
27—Committee Meetings

## UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



**State Holiday,  
Good Friday  
April 7**



**Memorial Day,  
Monday, May 29**

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### COMMISSIONERS

**Tricia Pridemore, Chairman  
Tim G. Echols, Vice Chair  
Fitz Johnson  
Lauren "Bubba" McDonald  
Jason Shaw**

The Public Information Office publishes The PSC Pulse for the Georgia Public Service Commission. Information for The PSC Pulse should be sent to the attention of **Tom Krause, Public Information Officer** or **Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor**.

**Executive Director: Reece McAlister  
Utilities Director: Tom Bond  
Executive Secretary: Sallie Tanner**