

*Georgia Public Service Commission*

*Fall 2023*

# The PSC Pulse

## VOGTLE #3 ONLINE!

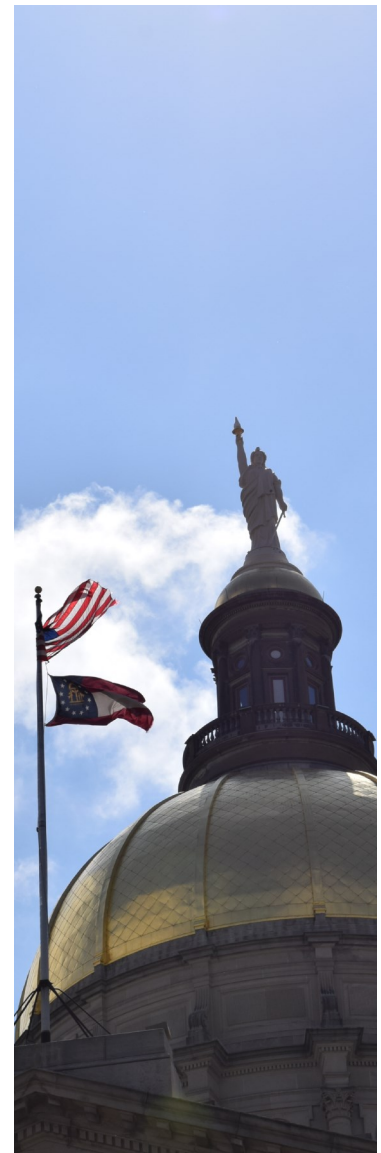


Persevering through construction delays, cost overruns and a global pandemic, the Vogtle Unit 3 nuclear reactor is now online and delivering power to an estimated 500,000 Georgia households and businesses. This is the first operational U.S. nuclear plant constructed in more than 30 years. Unit 4 is expected to become operational by the end of this year or early next year. Both are expected to deliver zero-emissions energy for 60 to 80 years.

Completion of the Unit 3 project spurs hearings at the Georgia Public Service Commission to determine which construction costs must be paid by Georgia Power and which can be passed to the ratepayer.

In September, the PSC Public Interest Advocacy Staff and several intervenors entered into a stipulated agreement with Georgia Power that, if approved, will save ratepayers more than \$2.6 billion.

The case will continue through December 19, when the Commissioners will either approve, deny or amend the stipulation.



## COMMISSIONERS VISIT SOLAR FARM



Commissioners **Jason Shaw** and **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald Jr.**, toured the Southern Oak Energy Center in Camilla with Jeff Clark and Brad Carver of Advanced Power Alliance and representatives of Invenergy, the project’s developer.

Southern Oak Energy Center is a 160-megawatt, utility-scale solar project that powers nearly 40,000 homes. During construction, the project supported more than 400 jobs.

Invenergy is the leading privately-held developer, owner and operator of clean energy solutions across the globe. It has developed over 30 gigawatts of energy projects over the past 20 years, from gas to wind to solar and more.



## GOVERNOR’S ANNOUNCEMENT: GEORGIA NAMED NO. 1 FOR BUSINESS IN 10th CONSECUTIVE YEAR



Gov. Brian Kemp, joined by First Lady Marty Kemp, former Gov. Nathan Deal as well as past and present leaders with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, announced that *Area Development* magazine has named Georgia the No. 1 state to do business for the 10th consecutive year. No other state in the nation has achieved this benchmark.

The Governor and First Lady were joined for the announcement by several constitutional officers including PSC Commissioners **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald Jr.**, **Fitz Johnson** and **Tim Echols**.

In his remarks, Gov. Kemp specifically cited PSC Commissioners for their economic development work over the years. The PSC helps Georgia meet the energy needs and helps facilitate utility service for industries relocating to Georgia.

*Area Development* magazine’s 2023 rankings of the “Top States for Doing Business” are based on scores from approximately 50 leading site consulting firms in 14 categories. Georgia placed in the top 10 for all 14 categories, earning the No. 1 spot in seven classifications and claiming the overall No. 1 ranking.



Commissioners **Fitz Johnson**, **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald Jr.** and **Tim Echols** listen in as the Governor makes the historic announcement.



## COMMISSIONER SHAW ELECTED PSC CHAIRMAN



The Public Service Commission has unanimously elected Commissioner Jason Shaw as Chairman of the Commission. His two-year term as Chairman began on July 22.

He succeeds Commissioner Tricia Pridemore in the role. Pridemore, while continuing her duties as a Georgia PSC Commissioner, will also serve as the president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. Her tenure in that role begins in 2024.

“I am honored that my fellow Commissioners have elected me to serve as chair,” Chairman Shaw said. “I have great admiration for each of the Commissioners here at the PSC and specifically want to say that Chairman Pridemore’s efforts over the past two years have placed the PSC in an excellent position as it moves forward with the goal of affordable, reliable and safe utility service for all Georgians.”

Chairman Shaw, of Lakeland, was appointed to the PSC in 2019 by then-Gov. Nathan Deal. In November 2020, he was elected to serve a six-year term.

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## 25 YEARS OF DEREGULATED NATURAL GAS IN GEORGIA

Staffers with the PSC Natural Gas Unit attended the 2023 Atlanta Gas Light and Marketer Expo. The theme of the day: 25 years of natural gas deregulation.

Among the panelists at the event was PSC Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald Jr.**

In 1997, the General Assembly adopted a new regulatory model for natural gas distribution companies where competitive marketers provide natural gas services to Georgia consumers. The General Assembly found market-based competition the best mechanism for selecting and providing natural gas services at the most efficient prices possible.



*PSC staffers pose with Digger the 811 Dog.*

The recent Expo included representatives from a number of Atlanta Gas Light departments including Technology Operations, Regulatory Affairs, Customer Service, Customer Relations, Marketing, Corporate Communication, Growth and Retention, Operations and Damage Prevention. Also in attendance were Certificated Marketers, representatives with HOPE WORKS and Georgia 811 — with a special appearance by Digger the Dog.

## COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI



Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore** served as Master of Ceremonies at the Financial Research Institute's 2023 Public Utility Symposium.

The program, held on the campus of the University of Missouri, focused on issues related to planning, siting, developing, and securing critical infrastructure in the electricity, natural gas, and water industries.

Pridemore helped to lead panels on each of the symposium's topics including interconnectivity/transmission planning, location of new infrastructure and security/safety.

The board of the Financial Research Institute is comprised of public and private experts from across the nation including Commissioner Pridemore.

## COMMISSIONERS SHAW AND ECHOLS JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE GLASS RECYCLING

Public Service Commission Chairman **Jason Shaw** and Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** have launched a glass recycling contest for high school students across Georgia. The "cullet," as clean glass is called, will be taken to Arglass, a new glass recycling factory in Valdosta.

Winning schools will receive cash prizes and a trip to Zoo Atlanta.

"I participated in a contest like this when I was in high school," Echols said. "It taught me the value of recycling at a young age. Glass is 100 percent recyclable, but for a variety of reasons we can't seem to get it back to a glass facility for reuse. Commissioner Shaw and myself believe that students can play a role in changing this in Georgia."



## COMMISSIONER JOHNSON TO LEAD NATIONAL ENERGY COMMITTEE

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) has named Georgia PSC Commissioner Fitz Johnson to chair a new committee — the Task Force on Natural Gas Resource Planning.

The task force was established to provide utility regulators across the county with tools, expertise and platforms to share information as they create energy policy for their respective states.

This initiative is supported by the Department of Energy Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management, Office of Policy and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and will be staffed by the NARUC Center for Partnerships and Innovation. The task force has been commissioned to work for two years.





## STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS ATTEND NARUC CONFERENCE IN AUSTIN, TX

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners met in Austin, Texas, for its summer policy summit.

Attendees included federal and state commissioners, analysts, engineers, administrators and other key policy staff from regulatory bodies across the nation.

Key discussions at the summit included electric reliability challenges, thermal generation, workforce diversity and the costs to consumers during the transition to renewable energy.



*Electric Unit Director **Rob Trokey** and Electric Utility Analyst **Ben Deitchman** take in a little caffeine outside a meeting room.*



*Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore** gets a debrief from Telecom Unit Director **Leon Bowles** between learning sessions.*

***Anjali Dube**, a utilities analyst in the Natural Gas Unit, takes a quick break to rehydrate before training resumes.*



*Telecom Unit Director **Leon Bowles** and Telecom Utility Analyst **Tonika Starks** walk out of a session room.*



*From left to right, Utilities Engineer **Blair Fink**, Human Resources Director **Lynn Page** and EERE Director **Jamie Barber** in a session on electricity demand and reliability.*

## COMMISSIONER ECHOLS VISITS TAIWAN



Commissioner **Tim Echols** had the opportunity to travel to Taiwan as a guest of the Taiwanese government.

He was there to speak at the US business day conference about economic opportunities in Georgia, including low utility rates, overseen by the Public Service Commission. Echols penned an op-ed that was published in the Taipei Times.

“Without Taiwan’s advanced semiconductors and microchips, life in the US as we know it would probably screech to a halt,” Echols wrote. “However, it is not just the semiconductors and chips Taiwan makes, as it is the US’ ninth-largest trading partner, with the US importing some US\$60 billion worth of goods. Not bad for a country one-fourth the size of Georgia.”

While visiting the small Asian country, Echols learned about the history, the people and the island’s electrical system.

## FROM HUMAN RESOURCES: OPEN ENROLLMENT BEGINS

Health and Flexible Benefits Open Enrollment runs from October 16 at midnight until November 3 at 11:59 p.m. You will receive emails (several...) with specifics of where and how you can renew your benefits.

### SHBP (State Health Benefit Plan)

Active members will have access to the same high-quality plan designs that were offered in Plan Year 2023, which include:

- ◇ The Gold, Silver and Bronze Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) Plan Options offered by Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield (Anthem),
- ◇ The High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) Option offered by UnitedHealthcare
- ◇ The statewide Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) Plan Options offered by Anthem and UnitedHealthcare

## 2024 Enhancements & Upgrades

**FLEXIBLE** BENEFITS  
FOR YOU



### Dental Insurance

- DHMO dental implants
- Dental PPO lifetime orthodontia limits restarted



### Employee Life Insurance

- **Special Opportunity**  
Add or start coverage of 1 x Pay — guaranteed



### Enhanced Protection Coverage

#### NEW from Voya!

- Critical Illness Insurance — lower cost + more coverage
- Accident Insurance with Travel Assistance benefit

#### Plus, two new options

- Hospital Indemnity Insurance
- Cancer Insurance



### Vision Care

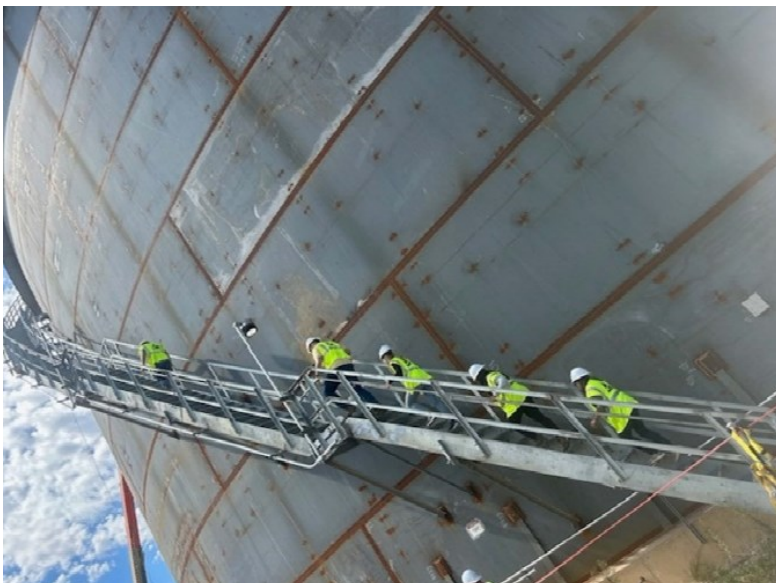
- *Vision Access Value* — largest network in the State
- Network-level benefits at Walmart and Sam's Club



### Disability Insurance

- Benefits apply to more pay
- **Special Opportunity**  
Elect STD without 60-day waiting period

## ALL IN A DAY'S WORK



The PSC Natural Gas staff visited the Atlanta Gas Light Cherokee County Liquefied Natural Gas plant as part of construction monitoring.



**HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY!**



**5 YEARS**

**Sam Johnson**

**15 YEARS**

**Steve Roetger**

**20 YEARS**

**Monique Andrews**

**Tonika Starks**

**25 YEARS**

**Ann McCullough**

**30 YEARS**

**Jamie Barber**

**MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

Sometimes, colleagues can work together everyday without realizing the hidden talents of the person in the office just down the hall. A perfect example: Utilities Analyst **Anna Vukmanovic**, an accomplished artist, recently had a painting in an art exhibit at the Alpharetta Arts Center.



PSC Attorney **Nancy Gibson's** son, Brooks Cowles III, married Kenly Khan in Portugal. Brooks' brother, Davis Cowles, was on hand to officiate the ceremony.



**Nijah James**, a utilities engineer who joined the Natural Gas Unit last year, had her first chance to testify in front of the Public Service Commission. The 2021 Georgia Tech graduate was sworn in and provided the Commissioners vital analysis during a special administrative hearing on the Liberty Utilities Gas Supply Plan.



## COMMISSION CALENDAR

### October 2023

3 - Administrative Session  
  
12 - Committee Meetings  
17 - Administrative Session

### November 2023

2 - Committee Meetings  
  
7 - Administrative Session  
12-15 NARUC Annual Meeting  
  
16 - Committee Meetings  
21 - Administrative Session  
  
27 - 30 Docket No. 45045 Petition for Approval to Acquire Real Estate by Condemnation (hearing officer Nancy Gibson)  
  
30 - Committee Meetings

### December 2023

4 - 6 Docket No. 29849 Georgia Power: Plant Vogtle Prudency hearings  
5 - Administrative Session  
14 - Committee Meetings  
  
19 - Administrative Session  
28 - Committee Meetings

## UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



**Veterans Day**  
**November 11**  
**Observed Friday, Nov. 10**



**Thanksgiving**  
**Thursday/Friday,**  
**Nov. 23 & 24**



**Christmas**  
**Monday/Tuesday**  
**Dec. 25 & 26**

### Georgia Public Service Commission

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### COMMISSIONERS

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

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**