

Georgia Public Service Commission

Spring 2024

# The PSC Pulse

## VOGTLE 4 ONLINE!



Nine months after Unit 3 went into commercial operation at the Vogtle Nuclear Power Plant, Unit 4 is now online — splitting atoms, creating clean electricity and sending it to the power grid for all Georgians to use day or night, rain or shine.

The clean, carbon-free energy from these two new nuclear units will power approximately 1 million homes and businesses in Georgia.

“Today is a great day and a generational event for all Georgians,” said PSC Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald**. “This plant will produce carbon-free energy for the people of Georgia for the next 80 years.”

Commissioner **Tim Echols** said he is proud of the accomplishment.

“Georgia has done what no other state could do by completing the first nuclear project from scratch in more than three decades,” he said. “We now have the largest clean energy site in North America.”



## GOV. KEMP PROMOTES SAFE DIGGING MONTH



Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** was with Gov. Brian Kemp when the Governor signed a proclamation naming April “Safe Digging Month.”

Homeowners, landscapers, and professional excavators are encouraged to dial 811 or to visit Georgia 811 online at least three business days prior to digging. Professional locators are sent to the dig site. Once lines have been accurately marked, digging can safely begin.

The PSC enforces the 811 system. If utilities are damaged and the homeowner or excavator did not contact Georgia 811, the PSC Facilities Protection Division can investigate the incident and issue a significant fine. Although fines are involved, the PSC’s goals are safety and prevention, not prosecution.

## JASON SHAW SPEAKS TO GEORGIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PSC Chairman Jason Shaw was invited to sit for a discussion session at the Georgia Chamber of Commerce Winter Board Meeting.

Over a half-hour, Shaw was interviewed by Boyd Pettit of GeorgiaLink



Public Affairs. Included in the discussion were questions about the learning curve when first elected to an energy regulatory body, the continuing construction project at plant Vogtle, and the Public Service Commission’s involvement in economic development for the state.

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## BUSY LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOR THE PSC

In a typical session of the Georgia General Assembly, the Public Service Commission might get mentioned in a bill or two — maybe three. The 2024 session brought a flurry of activity for Georgia’s energy sector.

HB1192, by Rep. John Carson, sets up a board to review energy usage by data centers. The PSC appoints two members of the board.

HB300, by Rep. Trey Kelley, creates a system to decertify solar panels and sets guidelines when it is time to dispose of them.

HB1033, by Rep. Rob Leverett, creates enhanced penalties for assault on any utility worker acting within the scope of his/her duties.

HR1498, by Rep. Trey Rhodes, sets up a study committee to determine if privately owned water utilities should be regulated by the PSC.

HB73, by Rep. Joseph Gullett would have given the PSC oversight for companies selling residential solar panels to curb those who prey on homeowners. This bill did not pass but is likely to resurface in a future session of the General Assembly.



## COMMISSIONERS ECHOLS AND SHAW ENCOURAGE GLASS RECYCLING WITH STATEWIDE CONTEST

Georgia Public Service Commission Chairman **Jason Shaw** and Vice Chairman **Tim Echols** teamed up for an Earth Day challenge, where participating Georgia students collected recyclable glass for a contest with cash prizes for their schools.

The students came through beautifully.

All participating schools received entry into Zoo Atlanta and lunch for an awards ceremony. The 10 schools that collected the most glass, by weight, received cash prizes — with Maynard Jackson High School taking top honors and receiving a check for \$2,500.

Each school's effort was coordinated by a student-led club. In all, more than 18-tons of glass was collected for recycling.

"Students today are pulled in many directions with competing interests," Echols said. "I want to highlight extraordinary effort for a cause that helps us all — reducing landfill waste and inspiring environmental collaboration."



*Georgia Public Service Commission Vice Chairman Tim Echols addresses the crowd of about 200 students from across Georgia.*



*Seniors with the Bainbridge High School Math Club came to Zoo Atlanta all the way from South Georgia. Bainbridge High School came in second in the contest, having collected 4,876 pounds of glass.*

Echols came up with the idea to challenge students to a recycling contest. He approached PSC Chairman Jason Shaw with the idea and together the glass recycling contest was born.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the work put in by these students," Shaw said. "They certainly earned the recognition — and the prizes for their schools."

The contest was sponsored by Commissioners Echols and Shaw, Georgia Natural Gas, Arglass, Coca-Cola, United Consulting, MHC Kenworth, Bulldog Movers, and Republic Waste Services.

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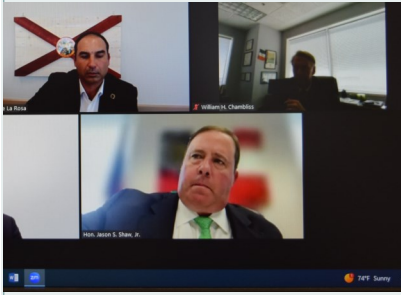
## COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE TO HEAD NATIONAL GAS-ELECTRIC INITIATIVE

PSC Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore** has been named chair of a national initiative to bring together state regulators and industry leaders to find solutions that better align the gas and electric industries.

Gas Electric Alignment for Reliability, or GEAR, was established for 15 months to improve energy reliability. Julie Fedorchak, president of the National Association of Regulatory Commissioners, established GEAR and appointed Pridemore to chair. Pridemore is the 1st Vice President of NARUC and will serve as president next year.



## COMMISSIONER SHAW HELPS TO EDUCATE ENERGY ATTORNEYS



State Bar Associations across the country require all practicing attorneys to complete several hours of Continuing Legal Education (CLE) each year.

To help regulatory attorneys complete their CLE hours and stay up-to-date on energy issues, attorneys with the Virginia Corporation Commission (the Virginia version of the PSC) put together an online CLE seminar with updates from utility commissioners representing several states.

Georgia PSC Chairman **Jason Shaw** was asked to participate as a panelist. Chairman Shaw updated participating lawyers about the Plant Vogtle expansion project, the state of natural gas in Georgia's energy mix, solar power in Georgia and the 2023 update of Georgia Power's Integrated Resource Plan.

Other Commissioners provided updates on regulatory law in Virginia, Florida, and North Carolina.

## COMMISSIONER FITZ JOHNSON HELPS OPEN SOLAR-CENTRIC SHEEP BARN

Public Service Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** helped cut the ribbon at a 26,000-square-foot lambing barn in Houston County. The barn is owned and run by Silicon Ranch, one of the biggest solar farm owners in Georgia. So why is a solar farm company breeding sheep?

Sheep raised at the new 700-acre site will help clear grass and vegetation under solar panels across the state.

Silicon Ranch hopes to have 30,000 sheep working among Georgia solar panels by 2030. Company officials say using sheep instead of mowers and work crews saves an estimated 20-percent of overhead costs.



*Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** helps hold the grand opening ribbon.*



The sheep also get to places under the solar panels that power equipment can't and they help improve soil quality as they work.

Silicone Ranch has worked across the southeast as part of the National Sheep Improvement Program.

## COMMISSIONER ECHOLS TO HEAD NATIONAL NUCLEAR WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has named Georgia PSC Commissioner **Tim Echols** to chair the Nuclear Waste Subcommittee.



The Subcommittee will bring the brightest minds in nuclear energy to three national conferences each year. Commissioner Echols says there will be a focus on small modular reactors. He has long served as Vice-Chair of the Committee and is seen as an expert in the field of nuclear energy and reprocessing. As he has since 2014, Echols is representing the United States at the World Nuclear Exhibition held in France Nov. 28 to 30.

## COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE GOES TO WASHINGTON



Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore**, along with colleagues from regulatory commissions in other states, testified before the U.S. House of Representatives during a hearing of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Pridemore and other Commissioners spoke about the current state of electricity production, changes in electric regulation, electric costs, and electricity reliability.

## FORMER CHAIRMAN STAN WISE HONORED WITH PORTRAIT

Former Public Service Commissioner **Stan Wise** was honored by the PSC with the unveiling of his portrait in the Commission's hall. He is the third former PSC Chairman to be honored with a portrait. In 2021, former Chairman David Burgess, the first African American to serve as a Commissioner, had his portrait unveiled. Fulton County Superior Court Judge Chuck Eaton, also a former PSC Chairman, was honored with a portrait in 2023.



*Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald Jr. thanks former Commissioner Stan Wise for his service*

"Stan was well liked by his staff and respected by fellow regulators and industry leaders," said Chairman **Jason Shaw**. "He remains a respected voice on energy matters in Georgia and nationally."

Wise served on the Public Service Commission from 1995-2018. In 2003, Wise was elected president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

## ACCOLADES FOR FORMER COMMISSIONER

*Congratulations*

2024 **CRYSTAL AWARD** for Distinguished Contribution



*Stan Wise*



In addition to a portrait hanging at the PSC (see story bottom left), Former Georgia PSC Commissioner **Stan Wise** was presented with the 2024 Crystal Award for Distinguished Service by the Financial Research Institute.

The Crystal Award was created to recognize an individual who has made outstanding and sustained contributions to the design, implementation or analysis of public utility regulatory policy. The award is presented annually during the FRI Public Utility Symposium.

In addition to his service on the Georgia PSC and on the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, Wise served on the National Petroleum Council and on the U.S. Department of Energy State Energy Advisory Board.

## COMMISSIONER JOHNSON AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS STAFF ATTEND HEAT MEETING



Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** gave the keynote address at the addresses the HEAT annual meeting. Also attending (from left to right) were **Monique Andrews, Maggie Francis, Shaundra Worthy** and **Karen Howell**.

Commissioner **Fitz Johnson** and staff from the PSC Consumer Affairs Unit attended the annual meeting of the Heating Energy Assistance Team — or HEAT.

Commissioner Johnson was honored to be the keynote speaker. He discussed the many ways HEAT helps the disenfranchised in Georgia to ensure they remain warm during the winter.

HEAT began as part of Atlanta Gas Light to help combat the energy crisis of the late 1970s. After 45 years — now a separate non-profit organization — HEAT continues to help those who have a hard time keeping up with a fast-moving society in a rapidly growing state such as Georgia. With the help of concerned citizens, businesses, and public agencies in-

cluding the Georgia Public Service Commission, HEAT helps about 1,000 households each year pay their natural gas bills. Since the program began, more than a quarter million individuals have kept warm through HEAT assistance.

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## NEW FACES AT THE PSC

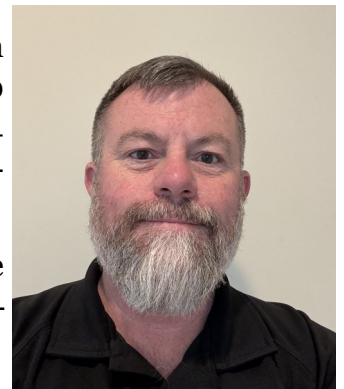


**Glen Murphy**

The PSC's Pipeline Safety Division has hired two new inspectors, **Glen Murphy** was hired in December and **Eric Atkins** was hired in April.

Murphy comes to the PSC with experience in the natural gas industry for more than 30 years. Most recently, he managed a team of 24 as a gas control manager at Southern Company Gas.

Atkins likewise brings many years experience to the PSC. His most recent work involved serving as a gas foreman at Dalton Utilities.



**Eric Atkins**

Both men are married with children and grandchildren. Murphy said he spends his free time fishing, playing golf and spending time with the grandkids. Similarly, Atkins says his favorite hobby is fishing but the highlight of his day is always spending time with the family.

**HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY!**



**5 YEARS**

**Tom Krause**



**15 YEARS**

**Cathy Nesbit**



**Lauren "Bubba"  
McDonald Jr.**



**MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Terry Pritchett**, who spent 16 1/2 years at the PSC making sure the books balanced and the employees all got paid, has retired from the Commission.

When most people were pulling themselves out of bed in the morning, Terry was already at his desk, keeping the PSC's books in line with the highest fiscal standards. He was known for breakfast bull sessions in the cafeteria, a quick chat in the hallways or a cup of coffee available anytime in his office.

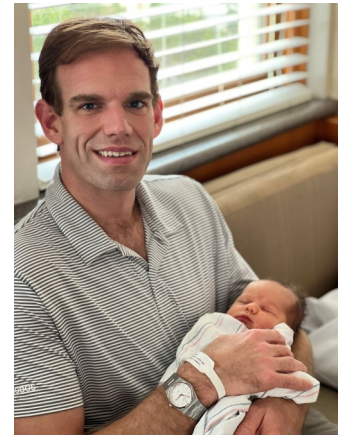
With the PSC finances left fully balanced, Terry plans to spend his retirement with his wife of 51 years as they watch their grandchildren grow.



Consumer Affairs Manager **Monique Andrews** and PSC Chairman **Jason**



**Shaw** were on hand at the Capitol for "Scout Day." The occasion marked the first trip under Georgia's gold dome for Monique's 5-year-old grandson, Zachariah Brown-Robinson.



PSC Attorney **Preston Thomas** and his wife, Sarah, welcomed their daughter Suzi as a late Christmas gift on Dec. 26.



PSC Attorney **Ginny Frazier** (nee Davis) has married Alex Frazier. Following an Atlanta wedding, the couple honeymooned in Europe, visiting Italy and Switzerland.

# COMMISSION CALENDAR

## May 2024

May 2 - Committee Meetings  
May 7 - Administrative Session  
May 16 - Committee Meetings  
May 21 - Administrative Session  
May 27 - Memorial Day Holiday  
May 30 - Committee Meetings

## June 2024

June 4 - Administrative Session  
Jun 11 - 12 - Docket #43820  
AGL Integrated Capacity and  
June 13 - Committee Meetings  
June 18 - Administrative Session  
June 19 - Juneteenth Holiday  
June 27 - Committee Meetings

## July 2024

July 2 - Administrative Session  
July 4 - Independence Day  
Holiday  
July 11 - Committee Meetings  
July 16 - Administrative Session

## UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



**Memorial Day**  
**Monday**  
**May 27**



**Juneteenth**  
**Wednesday**  
**June 19**



**Independence Day**  
**Thursday**  
**July 4**

### 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**.

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**Executive Secretary: Sallie Tanner**