Georgia Public Service Commission *Fall 2026*

The PSC Pulse

'Some of the Strongest Residential Ratepayer Protections'



DATA CENTERS

In 2025, the Public Service Commission approved rules to prevent costs associated with data centers from being pushed onto residential and small business ratepayers.

These rules included a provision where the PSC's Public Interest Advocacy Staff reviews contracts between Georgia Power and large-load customers. In September, staff reviewed such a contract and negotiated additional protections ensuring residential ratepayers are not on the hook for costs, even if the data center leaves Georgia before the terms of the contract are complete.

"Our staff attorneys, engineers and financial analysts have ensured this contract has some of the strongest residential ratepayer protections in the nation," said Chairman **Jason Shaw**.

Commissioner **Alicia Johnson** said the protection of ratepayers is paramount when discussing data centers.

"Economic growth must never come at the expense of the people and communities we serve," she said. "This agreement provides meaningful protections against shifting the costs and risks associated with this project onto residential and small business customers."

The PSC does not recruit, certify or regulate data centers. Instead, it uses its jurisdiction in regulating Georgia Power to make certain that contracts between the utility and data centers protect the people.

For more information on data centers and the PSC, visit psc.ga.gov



COMMISSIONER HUBBARD AT 811 SUMMIT



Commissioner **Peter Hubbard**, the PSC's Facilities Protection Committee Chairman, spoke before the Georgia 811 Damage Prevention Summit in Dalton.

The summit offered a free day of damage prevention education and informational sessions at the Dalton Conference Center.

This event was designed to bring together safe digging stakeholders for valuable training, industry updates and networking opportunities.

Attendees had the opportunity to participate in interactive sessions led by Georgia 811 representatives, ask questions and engage with industry vendors who were onsite throughout the day.

PSC HOLDS MEETING, PUBLIC FORUM IN SAVANNAH



The Georgia Public Service Commission held a recent administrative session and a public town hall meeting in Savannah. It was the first such meeting in about 20 years.

The PSC once met regularly on the state's coast.

Prior to 2006, the Commission regulated The Savannah Electric and Power Company and often held rate cases in Savannah. That company merged with Georgia Power in 2006.

At the public forum, coastal Georgians had the opportunity to address Commissioners and to provide comments or concerns. The Administrative Session and forum was simulcast in the Atlanta hearing room for anyone who wanted to watch in the Commission's usual venue.



Like all meetings of the PSC, the session and forum was live streamed on the Commission's YouTube page and can be reviewed there.

The suggestion to hold a session in the southern part of the state was proposed by Commissioner **Alicia Johnson**, who lives in Savannah. Chairman **Jason Shaw**, who lives in Lakeland, immediately embraced the idea.



Most of the meeting involved the OpenAI data center opening in Effingham County. Utilities Director **Tom Bond** gave an overview of the Commission's role in data center operations. The PSC, he noted, does not recruit, site, or regulate data centers. Instead, the PSC regulates Georgia Power and ensures the power company has enough energy to supply all of its customers and does not shift costs from data centers to residential or small business customers.

STAN WISE RETURNS AS INTERIM COMMISSIONER

Stan Wise, who served as a PSC Commissioner from 1994 until 2018, has been appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp to serve as the District 5 Commissioner until the winner of November's election takes office. He succeeds Commissioner Tricia Pridemore. Ironically, it was Pridemore who was appointed by Gov. Deal in 2018 to fulfill Wise's unexpired term.



Stan Wise is surrounded by family as he is sworn in by Gov. Brian Kemp.

Wise has been a prominent voice on the national and regional stages in utility regulatory issues including terms as President of both the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. He also chaired the advisory council to the Gas Technical Institute.

Wise's first election to public office came in 1990 as a Cobb County Commissioner. He had previously served that county as a member of the Cobb County Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Wise was a Board Member of the ten-county Atlanta Regional Commission from 1992-1994. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Cobb YMCA, the Boys Club of Cobb County, the Cobb Educational Foundation Board and the Advisory Board of the North Georgia Law Enforcement Academy.

A former member of the Air Force Reserve, Wise received his B.S. in Business Management from Charleston Southern University in 1974. He and his wife, Denise, have two children, daughter Lindsay and son Adam.

CHAIRMAN SHAW HELPS CUT RIBBON ON MOODY AFB BATTERY STORAGE

Georgia Power has completed construction of a 49.5 megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS) to compliment solar resources at a site adjacent to Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta. PSC Chairman **Jason Shaw** and members of the PSC's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Unit attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



In 2024, the PSC unanimously approved Georgia Power's plans to build the projects, which had a combined capacity of 500MW. The next year, the PSC approved construction of nine additional BESS facilities across eight sites statewide, adding over 3,000MW of planned storage capacity.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON'S 'FIRESIDE CHAT'



Commissioner Johnson answers questions from Jim Claunch, an energy and digital practices expert from Bain & Company

The Energy Conference Network recently held a summit in Atlanta to provide neutral, policy-based information on data centers for Georgia leaders.

Commissioner **Alicia Johnson** gave a "Fireside Chat" on the subject focusing on data centers and energy load growth.

Commissioner Johnson discussed how the PSC evaluates and certifies the resources needed to meet Georgia's data center load and how regulators weigh rapid load growth against ratepayer protection, affordability, and reliability.

She also talked about transparency issues and the scrutiny needed to move forward cautiously with this newly growing technology.

COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE LEAVES PSC

After more than 8 1/2 years as a Commissioner, **Tricia Pridemore** has left the Commission after choosing not to seek re-election.

Her tenure with the Commission included two years as chair and one year as president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. While she served, two new nuclear power units were completed and are now online and generating energy 24/7; the Public Service Commission grew from approximately 70 employees to more than 90; the data center boom began and the PSC adopted some of the strictest financial protections in the country, preventing large-load energy users from shifting costs to residential and small business ratepayers; and the PSC approved the largest expansion of power generation Georgia has seen in recent memory.

After presiding over her final committee meeting, Pridemore thanked PSC staff, intervenors, utility employees (from those who hang wires and dig ditches to top level executives), and her fellow Commissioners, past and present.



"I've enjoyed every minute of it," she said. "It looks simple. I can tell you, it is not."

Chairman **Jason Shaw** offered his sincere appreciation for Pridemore's time at the PSC.

"I can't thank Commissioner Pridemore enough for her expertise in energy and her expertise in public policy that she leveraged here at the PSC for the benefit of all Georgians," Shaw said. "And her contributions don't stop at the state line. Over the past several years, she brought her Georgia-born tenacity and intelligence to the national stage. To say she will be missed is an understatement."

PSC APPROVES 1,137MW OF NEW SOLAR

The Public Service Commission approved 1,137 megawatts of new solar power purchase agreements for Georgia Power's CARES program. It's the largest single solar procurement in Georgia Power's history.

The CARES program (Clean and Renewable Energy Subscription) was developed to allow eligible subscribers to support their sustainability initiatives by purchasing subscriptions for a share of the production of renewable resources.



The latest projects approved by the PSC are expected to begin commercial operation as early as 2029.

COMMISSIONERS, STAFF TOUR HYUNDAI MOTOR GROUP MEGAPLANT



Chairman **Jason Shaw**, Commissioner **Peter Hubbard** and several PSC staffers toured the Hyundai Motor Group Mega Plant in Bryan County.

The state-of-the-art facility includes the latest in robotic technology. Company executives said they work hard to focus on employees' satisfaction with their jobs.



At the mega plant, the innovative manufacturing system is designed to create a human-centered work environment with robots assisting human workers to build more than 500,000 vehicles annually, including Hyundai's luxury brand Genesis.

COMMISSIONER MCDONALD SPEAKS ABOUT TELECOM



Commissioner **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** attended the 2026 Annual Meeting of Georgia's Rural Telephone and Broadband Association.

At the meeting, held in Isle of Palms, S.C., he sat down for a Q&A session with Executive Director Rhonda Chatham.

McDonald discussed all aspects of the PSC's regulatory authority, but primarily how it works in the rapidly evolving world of telecommunications.

His talk included information about Georgia's dig laws, fiber optic cable, and the recent challenges of energy and data centers.

PSC APPROVES $1.2 MILLION FOR HEATING ASSISTANCE

The Public Service Commission has approved $1.2 million for the Heating Energy Assistance Team (HEAT), a statewide Georgia nonprofit dedicated to helping vulnerable households meet their energy needs. The funding, which comes via the Universal Service Fund, will help fund HEAT for the 2027-2029 program period.

The Universal Service Fund assists low-income Georgians, especially senior citizens, who are served by Atlanta Gas Light. HEAT helps households with natural gas disconnection, restoring service to families in crisis and helping vulnerable Georgians maintain safe and warm homes during the winter.

Since receiving its first PSC-approved funding in 2015, HEAT has distributed more than $2.26 million in emergency energy assistance to nearly 8,900 low-income households across Georgia. To qualify, a household must meet certain guidelines for income eligibility. For more information about HEAT, visit **www.heatga.org.**

NOTES FROM HUMAN RESOURCES: OPEN ENROLLMENT TIME

Open enrollment begins October 1 for next year's benefits.

For details of the coverage available, please log on to **www.gaflexiblebenefits.com**

Human Resources encourages everyone to check out the website soon and click on the links to make sure your user name and password are working correctly. This also ensures you know how everything works when the website becomes active on October 1.

State employees have two ways to sign up for flexible benefits.

1. Online

Enroll online at **www.GaBreeze.ga.gov**.

Tip: Make sure you know your User ID and Password before you enroll. But, if you don't, no problem. You can reset them by clicking "Forgot User ID or Password" directly below the Log On button.

2. Mobile

Enroll on the Alight Mobile app, available at Google Play or the App Store.

Tip: Make sure you have a current mobile phone number on file with Alight to receive security codes for logging on to the mobile app.

NEWLY HIRED EMPLOYEES:

When you signed up for benefits, it was for 2026. You will need to go through this enrollment process for 2027 benefits.

Please feel to reach out to Lynn or Millie in Human Resources if you have any questions.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!



10 YEARS

Ben Deitchman

Jack Hewitt

15 YEARS

Erica Wilson

Irma Ormeno

25 YEARS

Jason Smith

WELCOMES, MILESTONES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Public Service Commission welcomes several new employees. They come to us with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds. If you haven't met them yet, make a point of reaching out.



Sadiyyah Ragland, is a Utilities Analyst in Construction Monitoring.



Nabaraj Pokharel, is a Utilities Engineer in the Electric Unit.



Keo Ward, is a Utilities Engineer in the EERE Unit

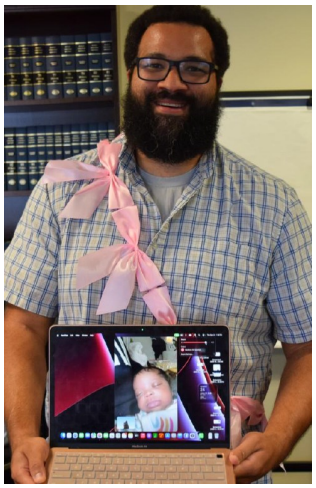


Maggie Hayes, is Executive Assistant to Commissioner Stan Wise.

After 30 years with the Public Service Commission, **Michelle Thebert** has decided to retire.

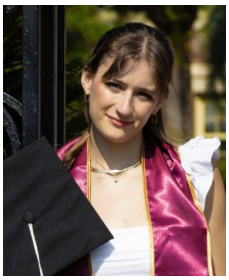


In 1996, with a degree in industrial engineering from Georgia Tech, Michelle was hired as a utilities engineer in the Natural Gas Unit. She was promoted to assistant director of the unit before, ultimately, leading the Facilities Protection Unit as director, a job she took in 2013.



Utilities Engineer **William Threatt** and his wife welcomed their first child, daughter Olivia, in July.

PSC Staff celebrated with a baby shower that featured refreshments, games and many well wishes for father, mother and Olivia.



Alden Krause

PIO **Tom Krause's** daughter, Alden, and Telecom Director **Leon Bowles'** daughter, Sydney, both graduated from Florida State University this summer.

Sydney graduated with a degree in civil engineering and Alden graduated with a degree in linguistics.



Sydney Bowles

COMMISSION CALENDAR

October 2026	November 2026	December 2026
1 - Committee Meetings	3 - Administrative Session	1 - Administrative Session
6 - Administrative Session	12 - Committee Meetings	10 - Committee Meetings
15 - Committee Meetings	12 - Hearing, Docket No. 57171 Real Time Pricing Revenue Credit and Allocation Methodology	15 - Administrative Session
15 - Hearing, Docket No. 57171 Real Time Pricing Revenue Credit and Allocation Methodology	17 - Administrative Session	31 - Committee Meetings
20 - Administrative Session	24 - Committee Meetings	
29 - Committee Meetings		

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



Veterans Day
Wednesday
Nov. 11



Thanksgiving
Thursday/Friday
Nov. 26 & 27



Christmas
Thursday/Friday
Dec. 24 & 25

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COMMISSIONERS

Jason Shaw, Chairman
Lauren "Bubba" McDonald, Vice Chair
Peter Hubbard
Dr. Alicia M. Johnson
Stan Wise

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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