

May 6, 2020



FROM THE DESK OF
COMMISSIONER
BRENT BAILEY
CENTRAL DISTRICT OFFICE



The Central District is pleased to bring you the latest information concerning utility rates, project developments, Public Service Commission actions and other news you can use. I hope you will find this information to be a useful resource to learn about the Public Service Commission, consumer issues and the continuous work we are doing for the citizens in the Central District and across the state of Mississippi. Thank you again for allowing me to serve you in this capacity.

Brent Bailey

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Our Infrastructure Must Be Ready Should Hurricanes Appear on the Horizon

As you may have seen on the news, this week is [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#). This is the time to assess risks, develop a plan and take steps that will ensure your family and your property are ready for the hurricane season that officially begins on June 1. Even President Trump issued a [Proclamation](#) recognizing the importance of preparing now for what is being predicted to be a very busy hurricane season.

An outlook released by The Weather Company calls for 18 named storms, nine hurricanes and four major hurricanes – these are Category 3 or higher (115-plus-mph winds) on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. While it is impossible to know what areas of the U.S. coastline might be threatened this year, Mississippians should not be complacent or get caught off guard should communications and utility services become disrupted for days, or even weeks.

2020 Hurricane Season Forecast		Atlantic Basin		
	1981-2010 Average	Last Year	Colorado State University	The Weather Company
■ Total Named	13	18	16	18
■ Hurricanes	7	6	8	9
■ Cat 3 or Higher	3	3	4	4

Recent hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin have demonstrated nature's ability to cause extensive power outages, interrupt water and sewer service, and cause communication systems to fail. And the COVID-19 pandemic could add another layer of uncertainty to restoration actions. While we like to think that our manmade systems are resilient, that may not always be the case. We are well aware that the impacts of hurricanes can be felt far inland also.



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The Mississippi Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) conducted an evaluation of Mississippi's infrastructure and released its findings in a new report. The [2020 Report Card for Mississippi's Infrastructure](#) was developed as a public service to citizens and policymakers to inform them of the infrastructure conditions, challenges and needs in the state.

For the key utility systems that we depend on, Mississippi's Energy infrastructure was given a grade of C. Drinking water infrastructure was assessed a grade of D. And our wastewater treatment infrastructure was also given a grade of D.

The report found that natural gas infrastructure (14,000 miles of pipelines and four gas storage facilities) have proven to be reliable. However, electrical transmission and distribution lines are susceptible to weather-related damage as the average Mississippian experiences more than 19 hours of electrical outages each year.

The US EPA estimates that Mississippi needs to invest \$4.8 billion over the next 20 years to maintain safe drinking water for residents. Older systems lose 30-50% of their treated water to leaks and breaks. Billions more are needed to fund operation and maintenance expenses and upgrades to wastewater treatment systems in Mississippi. Over the past five years, 2,715 notices of violations were issued to wastewater treatment plants. Lack of attention to these critical systems pose extreme threats to Mississippians and our natural resources.

Our infrastructure systems play a crucial role in our state's economic prosperity. These systems help preserve – and enhance – the quality of life for all Mississippians. While many Mississippians might not think about utility infrastructure and services every day, we sure miss those services when they are not available. We must continue to prudently invest in and maintain our utility infrastructure systems for the public's health, safety, and welfare while also investigating technologies that allow greater self-sufficiency to lessen total dependence on centralized systems.

LAST WEEK AT THE MPSC

The first of the month is an active time for filing reports at the MPSC. Over the past few days, utilities have been filing their Annual Energy Efficiency Programs Performance Reports. The electric power associations have been filing their Annual Compliance Reports to the Commission. The reports determine compliance with statutory provisions and assess the financial status of the various electric power associations. Utilities have also filed their Annual Workforce Diversity Reports containing workforce diversity information and workforce recruiting/educational outreach event data. I will be reviewing the various reports and breaking down the data over the next couple of weeks and will present my findings in a future newsletter.

- * The Commission issued an [Order](#) to extend the deadline for Entergy MS to hold its initial Public Workshop on Integrated Resource Planning.
- * City of Greenville filed a [Notice of Intent](#) to Revise Sewer Rates for customers served beyond 1 mile of city limits.
- * CenterPoint Energy submitted its [Supplemental Growth Rider](#) filing for 2019.
- * Entergy Mississippi submitted its revised [Net Energy Metering Schedule](#) (NEM-1) effective on July 1, 2020.
- * Fannin Water Association filed a [Supplemental Certificate](#) to add 17 water customers to its service area.
- * T-Mobile USA filed [notification of its completed merger transaction](#) with Sprint Communications.



The May Regular Docket Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, May 12 at 10 am**. The meeting will be held telephonically. Visit <https://www.psc.ms.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/NOTICE-OF-PUBLIC-MEETING-5-12-2020.pdf> for additional details. The agenda will soon be available online.



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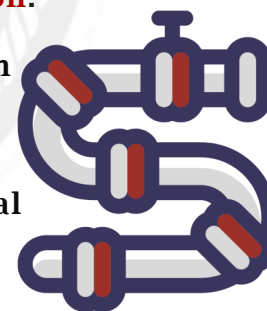
Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **28** complaints in the Central District.

Telecommunications	12
Electric Companies	11
Water/Sewage	5

Our Pipeline Safety Division completed **2** construction inspections in the Central District during the month of April. **This is not a typical number of inspections due to COVID-19.*

The total amount of construction notices that was received by the Commission in the Central District during the month of April is approximately **\$5.2 million**.

“Reporting of Construction Work”- The rule is found in Chapter 57.1: All Construction work involving gas facilities in which the estimated cost of proposed facilities is in excess of eight thousand dollars are related facilities that would be governed by the Federal Minimum Safety Requirements, will be reported in writing, or via telephone to the MS Public Service Commission prior to starting date of such construction. (There are exceptions for emergencies.)



The Commission encourages all intra-state natural gas operators to comply with the rule.

Last week, the Central District received a total of **122** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our no call app, website and mail-ins. The top three general issues reported by consumers are related to insurance, credit cards and auto warranties.

The [Federal Trade Commission](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/04/dont-click-links-unsolicited-text-messages?utm_source=govdelivery) recently reported on scammers sending text messages claiming to be related to the government's help for people affected by the Coronavirus. The PSC received **15** complaints last week from consumers on these types of scams. Don't click on links in unsolicited text messages you may receive. More tips to protect yourself against this type of scams as well as the latest Corona virus related scams seen by the FTC can be found here: https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/04/dont-click-links-unsolicited-text-messages?utm_source=govdelivery

We encourage consumers to file telemarketing complaints with the Federal Trade Commission at <http://www.donotcall.gov/> in addition to filing complaints with the Mississippi Public Service Commission.