

July 8, 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

HIGHLIGHTS

from the

MPSC July Docket Meeting

On Tuesday, July 7 at 10:00 am, the Mississippi Public Service Commission (Commission) held its monthly meeting to consider and discuss pending docket and administrative matters. The agenda included numerous items that will impact or that could potentially impact certain consumers of the Central District.

BROADBAND INTERNET

One notable agenda item resulted in the Commission voting to establish the "Connect Mississippi Committee." The Committee will study, evaluate and recommend best practices to accelerate the expansion of and strengthening of broadband services in Mississippi to benefit distance learning, telehealth and economic development. The coronavirus outbreak and resulting economic and social shutdown highlighted how critical broadband connectivity is to families and communities across the state. Members of the Committee will be appointed by the PSC Commissioners and will be announced soon.

The Commission also adopted an Order enabling the Commission's assistance and support to the Mississippi Public Utilities Staff (Staff) in the administration of the "Mississippi Electric Cooperatives Broadband COVID-19 Act" (the Act). The Commission's information technology and legal staffs will assist the Staff in the

administration of and funding compliance of the Act. The Act was created by the Legislature near the end of the 2020 Regular Session. The Act makes grants up to \$6 million available from the CARES Act to distribute to electric cooperatives and broadband providers with the goal of escalating broadband services to assist with distance learning, telemedicine and telework. Applicants for grants must commit an equal amount of dollars toward the broadband project(s).

Viasat, Inc. received Approval from the Commission for designation as an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC). Obtaining ETC designation is necessary to receive Connect America Fund Phase II Auction funding. Viasat was the winning bidder to provide satellite-based broadband services to 13,819 locations in 633 census block groups in Mississippi. Viasat will provide the Commission an informational tariff, website, and marketing materials at least 30 days before offering broadband service in Mississippi.



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NATURAL GAS ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Home and appliance energy efficiency improvements can help make energy more affordable, reducing energy burden and increasing economic stability, home indoor comfort, and health outcomes. Utility-administered energy efficiency programs and associated incentives can help reduce barriers to energy efficiency upgrades, create jobs in local communities and accelerate economic development initiatives.

The Commission approved an [Order](#) to continue the [energy efficiency programs](#) offered by CenterPoint Energy and adjust rates commensurate to the budget needed to administer the programs. The rate adjustment resulted in a decrease of 11

cents/month for the average CenterPoint Energy residential gas customers. The decrease can be attributed to an over-collection in rates due to CenterPoint spending only 79% of its projected energy efficiency programs budget in 2019.

The Commission also approved an [Order](#) adjusting the rates that support the continued [energy efficiency programs](#) offered by Atmos Energy. The typical Atmos Energy residential natural gas customer will see an 11 cents/month increase. Atmos Energy increased its energy efficiency program portfolio budget by 12% and is shifting additional resources into its Residential Solutions Program Incentives budget to accommodate increased participation of customers and multi-family properties.

WATER AND SEWER

The Town of DeKalb applied to transfer a portion of Kipling Water Association Certificate and provide water service to an industrial park (Kemper Crossing) owned by the Kemper County Board of Supervisors. The County will fund the installation of the necessary infrastructure with the assistance of grant funding. Customers of DeKalb water utility will not see an increase in rates due to the installation of the infrastructure serving Kemper Crossing. The Commission [Approved the Transfer](#) of Certificate to the Town of DeKalb from Kipling Water Association.

Fannin Water Association applied for and received [Approval for a Supplemental Certificate](#) to extend water service to 17 lots in the proposed Freedom Farms Subdivision in Rankin County. The new infrastructure costs will be paid by the developer and rates for existing customers should not be impacted.

The matter involving the City of Greenville's [Notice to Revise Rates for Sewage Service](#) in Washington County was [Referred](#) to Brent Bailey for hearing, report and recommendation. The matter involving Oakview Utility Company's [Notice of Intent to Set Initial Rates for Sewage Disposal Service](#) in Hinds County was also [Referred](#) to Brent Bailey for hearing, report and recommendation.

ENTERGY MISSISSIPPI

The Commission [approved an Order](#) finding in favor of Entergy Mississippi LLC (EML) that it has the legal right to provide its own auxiliary power to the 810 MW Choctaw Generation Station via integration into the MISO Balancing Authority. Although the Choctaw Generation Station is located within the certificated area of 4-County Electric Power Association, the Commission finds that state law, public policy and precedent support EML's legal right to provide its own auxiliary power to the Choctaw facility.

The Commission secures contractors to provide audits of EML's fuel adjustment clause in accordance with state law and PSC rules. The audit reports ([Horne](#) and [Liberty](#)) contain a number of recommendations associated with EML operations, management, planning and procurement. The Commission issued an [Order](#) addressing the recommendations of the independent auditors and directing EML to file a plan of action in response to certain recommendations.

The City of Clinton filed a [Formal Billing and Services Complaint](#) against EML in regards to monthly fees for street lighting and poles and underground electrical supply lines. Due to the potential ongoing legal exchanges surrounding the billing and services matters, the Commission [Referred](#) the matter to Laura Dixon for hearing, report and recommendation.



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TELEMARKETERS

In cooperation with the Attorney General's Office, six companies have been ordered to appear at the September 2020 Commission docket meeting for failing to answer subpoenas for alleged violations of the Mississippi Telephone Solicitation Act. The six companies include Global Communications, Inc., Veracity Networks, LLC, Nobelbiz Inc., Perfect Pitch Technology, LLC, Intelligent Contacts, Inc., and Brightlink Communications.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue to serve you in the capacity of Mississippi Public Service Commissioner for the Central District. It is both challenging and rewarding to represent your interests on matters such as those addressed above at our most recent Docket Meeting. Please feel free to contact me or the [Central District Staff](#) at any time with any questions or issues you may have.

LAST WEEK at the MPSC

The Legislature wrapped up its business on the evening of July 1. The Senate and House chambers are officially adjourned until a date mutually agreed upon by both the Lt. Gov. and the Speaker before October 5th or on that date. If it is determined by the Lt. Governor and the Speaker that there is no need to return, they will adjourn Sine Die on October 10th. But I anticipate that the Legislature will reconvene at least once between now and then.

The MPSC received the following filings or took the following actions:

- The MPSC [approved](#) the annually submitted redetermination of the [Total Benefits of Distributed Generation](#) under Entergy MS's Net Energy Metering Schedule NEM-1. The Schedule NEM-1 remains unchanged from the previous schedule.
- Comcast Phone of Mississippi, LLC filed its [Certification](#) demonstrating that it has implemented current and applicable technologies to identify and block telecommunications that violate the Mississippi Caller ID Anti-Spoofing Act.
- Numerous Commission-designated Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) filed their annual USF Plans/FCC Form 481/CAF ICC DATA Reports/Annual Reports/ETC Compliance Certifications/Annual Certifications. These documents include certain trade secrets, confidential commercial or financial information and thus are filed as "Confidential Proprietary information" under state law and PSC rules. Many of these filings outline Universal Service Fund utilization plans for 2021. The MPSC will be reviewing these plans to see if these investments are truly targeted for unserved, high-cost areas.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **21** complaints in the Central District.

Telecommunications	11
Electric Companies	7
Water/Sewage	3

Last week, the Central District received a total of **99** 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 credit cards, health products and insurance.

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.