

July 29, 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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Corporate Sustainability and the Impact to Clean Energy Development

Have you seen the [new Amazon television commercial](#) that outlines the company's approach to reducing carbon emissions across its operations? Recently, Amazon has pledged to power its global operations with 100% renewable energy by 2025, add 100,000 electric delivery vehicles to its fleet by 2030, maximize efficiency and sustainability at its 175 facilities, and reach net zero carbon emissions across Amazon by 2040. Furthermore, Amazon is pledging \$2 billion to develop the technologies that will accomplish the goal as well as investing \$100 million in reforestation and other mitigation actions.



Amazon has been investing heavily in north Mississippi. In December 2018, Amazon announced it was locating a [fulfillment center](#) in Marshall County, creating 850 jobs over three years. In November 2019, Amazon decided to locate its [second Mississippi fulfillment center](#) in DeSoto County, creating 500 new full-time jobs at the facility. And just last week, officials announced yet another [Amazon facility](#), this time in an 860,000-square-foot building in Horn Lake, MS. Amazon also has a fulfillment center, a sortation center and a soon-to-be robotics facility in Memphis.

For Amazon to power all these facilities with 100% renewable energy and to reach net zero carbon emissions, they will need access to a diverse portfolio of local generation resources or work with others to build and launch clean energy projects across the region. However, to facilitate those investments in clean energy resources here at home, create new jobs, and strengthen our own energy resiliency across Mississippi, we must take some steps that will help the commercial and industrial sectors make cost-effective renewable energy sourcing decisions.

Unfortunately, Mississippi has not removed policy barriers, marketed our natural resources, or implemented measures that makes the state more attractive for corporations looking to invest in renewable energy projects. **The [Corporate Clean Energy Procurement Index 2020: State Leadership & Rankings](#) ranked Mississippi #46 in the nation based upon the ability of companies to procure renewable energy for their operations within the state.** In short, the development of state policies and regulations that help enable corporations to procure renewable energy—or remove barriers to doing so—is a key driver to the rankings. According to the *Index*, Mississippi could be doing a whole lot better.



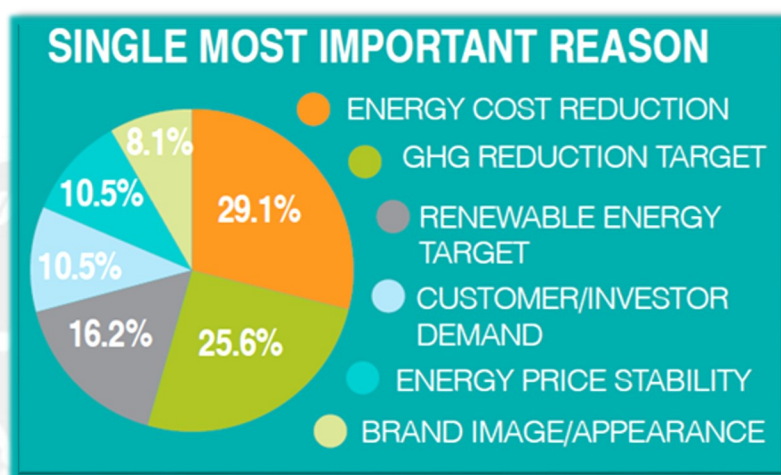


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Renewable energy decisions impact a wide variety of stakeholders, often with competing priorities. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of working together across all interests to evaluate renewable energy options and weigh final decisions on policy frameworks that could influence companies' decisions on where to expand their operational footprint.

At last count, 48% of the Fortune 500 and 63% of the Fortune 100 are publicly vowing to cut their greenhouse gases, increase their use of renewable energy and/or improve their energy efficiencies. Furthermore, [242 companies](#) have made a commitment to go '100% renewable', including Apple, Continental Tire, Johnson & Johnson, Target, Wells Fargo and so many more names that you know.

[Smart Energy Decisions](#) surveyed companies from across the nation to learn about their attitudes and practices in renewable energy. These companies were asked what is the most important reason for considering or committing to renewable energy purchases. The largest share (29.1%) said reducing energy costs was the most important reason for their investments. Only 8.1% cited brand image as the most important factor. What technologies were they investing in? Solar – 91.2%; Wind – 67.6%; Hydro – 30.9%; Biogas – 19.1%; Geothermal – 13.2%.



Regardless of what any one company claims to be their reason to commit to utilizing renewable energy in their operations, it is clear that public corporate sustainability commitments paired with the compelling financial returns of renewable energy purchases are driving procurement decisions. Companies increasingly see renewables as cost competitive sources of new power generation that offer a hedge against price volatility seen in certain traditional energy options. But we must create an attractive investment and procurement environment for the various renewable energy solutions available to fit corporations' diverse needs and priorities. Options such as power purchase agreements (traditional and virtual), direct project ownership, streamlined interconnection, universal net metering, green tariffs, third-party sales, renewable portfolio standards, valuing environmental attributes and more are critical policy considerations that will help companies access the clean energy resources they want.

As corporations continue to advance clean energy initiatives and the value proposition of renewable energy becomes more clear, the steps that Mississippi policymakers take — or not take — has never been more important. The U.S. electricity industry is huge and multifaceted and change can be a complex endeavor. However, lessons learned can be shared across borders and jurisdictions. With all stakeholders working together, we can ensure that the reliable and affordable energy that has powered the country and the industry sectors that move it ahead can increasingly and confidently come from renewable sources. With the right steps, the positive benefits of this diversification can be felt right here in Mississippi.



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LAST WEEK *at the* MPSC

- ✉ The MPSC [approved](#) Mississippi Power Company's [compliance tariffs](#) for the company's Rate Schedule PEP-6 and Rate Schedule ATA-2 filed on July 14, 2020, per the [Stipulation](#) agreed upon on March 17, 2020.
- ✉ The Central District [approved](#) an Order establishing initial rates and tariffs for customers being provided sewer disposal service by Oakview Utility Company in Hinds County. Rates and tariffs will take effect on September 1, 2020.
- ✉ [Entergy Mississippi](#) is modifying its deferred payment plan options as it gains further insight into how COVID-19 impacts its customers. In addition to the 6-month deferred payment plan and levelized billing program, customers in all segments can now enter into a 12-month deferred payment plan option.

The MS Public Utilities Staff announced Tuesday over \$66 million in grants made available for the expansion of high-speed internet access through the *Mississippi Electric Cooperatives Broadband COVID-19 Act*. The grants and matching funds represent over **\$150 million in investment** in our rural communities by fifteen electric cooperatives and four broadband providers. Congratulations to the grantees and thank you to the Public Utilities Staff for processing, reviewing and certifying the applications in a very compressed time frame. Access to affordable, high-speed broadband internet service is key to the future of education, business success and economic development across the state! [Click here for more details.](#)



This past Friday, [Southern Pine Electric Cooperative](#) announced that its Board of Directors voted unanimously to pursue a broadband solution that will bring fiber internet to many of Southern Pine Electric's members that are unserved or underserved. The Board will enter into a collaborative agreement with [TEC](#), a technology company providing fiber internet to people in rural areas of Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee, while also protecting members' ownership in Southern Pine. For more information, you may visit [TEC.com/SouthernPineFiber](#). Information will also be available on Southern Pine's website early this week.



AUGUST



The August Regular Docket Meeting will take place on **August 4 at 10 am**. The meeting will be held telephonically. Visit <https://www.psc.ms.gov/sites/default/files/2020-07/Notice-of-Public-Meeting-8-4-20.pdf> for additional details. The agenda will soon be available online.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **15** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	8
Telecommunications	7

Last week, the Central District received a total of **272** 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 financial/loans, health products/prescription drugs, 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.