

September 17, 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

Energy Efficiency Projects Earners Big Rebates

This week, I was honored to join Atmos Energy in the delivery of **\$228,450** in rebates for the purchase and installation of energy efficiency equipment at housing complexes in the Central District. Energy efficiency is an effective tool for lowering the total energy costs faced by special needs and low-income customers. Increasingly, utilities such as Atmos Energy are delivering specialized programs designed to lower barriers to participation, such as lack of capital, lack of credit, and aging housing stock that may also need health and safety improvements. These programs offer measures that can deliver deep savings and achieve high participation that improves the quality of life for tenants and the sustainability of the local community.

On Tuesday, I visited the [City of Jackson Housing Authority's](#) (JHA) [Golden Key Apartments](#) on Albermarle Road. ([Click here for a copy of the news release.](#)) In 2019-2020, the JHA conducted a deep renovation of these apartments and installed 149 96% annual fuel utilization efficient (AFUE) natural gas furnaces and 60 tankless water heaters. Not only are these some of the most energy-efficient appliances on the market, the equipment also requires less maintenance and have longer manufacturer's warranty periods.

The JHA received **\$104,000** in rebates for making the bold decision to upgrade the quality and efficiency of the appliances installed. The estimated annual savings for JHA is **\$8,000** while avoiding the use of 12,274 therms of energy. Because the JHA master-meters the energy use at this

facility, the rebate along with the annual savings will allow the JHA to reinvest precious resources back into critically needed amenities at Golden Key Apartments, a home for elderly and disabled residents. Without the rebates available through [Atmos Energy's SmartChoice Program](#), JHA would not have been able to purchase the energy-efficient equipment nor would they have been able to capture the annual savings over the life of the equipment.



Pictured with JHA Executive Director Allison Cox, along with JHA Board Chair Louis Wright and representatives of Atmos.



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Pictured with YCHA Executive Director Ben Washington, along with YCHA representatives and employees, and representatives of Atmos.

\$11,500 annually. The YCHA has been so impressed with the performance of the appliances that they have committed to renovate another 44 units in the coming months and will include these appliances. Like the JHA, the rebate money enabled the YCHA to purchase the energy-efficient equipment that they otherwise would not have been able to within the project budget.



YCHA Executive Director Ben Washington explains the functions and benefits of the new programmable thermostats.

Tenants at the Lindsay Lawn and other apartments are each responsible for their own utilities. The highly efficient equipment mentioned above, along with new programmable thermostats, LED lighting, low-flow showerheads and faucets, and kitchen appliances, will allow low-income eligible tenants to spend much less on their utilities bills than what they likely would have without these upgrades. Not only does this reduce the energy cost burden and reduce the likelihood of utility bills going unpaid, the extra money can be used to buy healthy food, critical medicines, clothing and school supplies.



Pictured with Yazoo City's Mayor Diane Delaware explaining the benefits and positive impacts these updates have on the families who reside in the Lindsay Lawn Apartments.

Household Energy Burdens – Where Does Mississippi Rank?

A [new analysis](#) from the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) studies the levels and impacts of household energy burdens—the portion of income paid toward energy bills. The typical U.S. household spends an average of 3.1% of income on home energy bills. Households that have high energy burdens spend more than 6% of income on home energy bills and those with severe energy burdens spend more than 10% of income on home energy bills. The ACEEE report reveals that a significant number of households in Mississippi experience high and severe energy burdens. States in the East South Central region, including Mississippi, has the greatest percentage of households (38%) with high energy burdens. In addition, 21% of households have severe energy burdens. These figures grow exponentially when focused solely on low-income households. As we all know, Mississippi has the lowest median household income of all 50 states.



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High energy burdens are driven by: housing type, age and condition; types of appliances and lighting utilized; local climate and geography; economic hardships; lack of access to information, programs, or assistance; and/or utility rates. However, investments in energy efficiency and weatherization can provide long-term, high-impact solutions that can help reduce whole-home energy use and thus reduce utility bills. Reducing energy use reduces costs for utilities which benefits all customers. Savings from reduced utility bills can be reinvested into the local economy rather than exported out of state. The current energy efficiency programs offered by Mississippi's regulated electric and natural gas utilities have been found to be cost effective and provide benefits to all ratepayers. However, I pledge to work with these utilities via the new Integrated Resource Planning and Reporting Rule 29 to design and implement more comprehensive energy efficiency program portfolios that save consumers more money, reduce energy burdens and create more prosperous communities.



Here are two photos of the equipment that was installed at the Golden Key Apartments in Jackson. Rheem Tankless water heaters (left) and Lennox HVAC equipment (right), which are both extremely efficient pieces of equipment. Each can be PVC vented as well which cuts down on install costs.



LAST WEEK *at the* MPSC

✉ Mississippi Power Co. (MPCo) filed a [Notice of Intent](#) to discontinue its Swimming Pool Heating rate rider. Only 8 customers utilize this [rate](#) and seasonal pricing across the rate base has reduced the pricing advantage of this rider. MPCo filed a [Notice of Intent](#) to change the [Formulary Facilities Charge](#) (FFC) Rate schedule. The FFC is used to extend service beyond the point of delivery to additional buildings (i.e. school buildings). MPCo filed a [Notice of Intent](#) to establish the LED Lighting Electric Service Rate

Schedule ([LED](#)) and amend the Street Lighting (SL-32) and Outdoor Lighting ([OL-27](#)) Electric Service Rates. In short, this [change](#) simplifies the choice of lighting components being offered and eliminates the installation of non-LED lights, such as incandescent, mercury vapor and sodium vapor. Finally, MPCo filed a [Notice of Intent](#) to create the Power Limited Unmetered ([PLUM](#)) Electric Service Rate Schedule. This rate applies to low-power devices (wi-fi, cameras, etc.) that attach to utility poles but a separate meter is not cost-effective.

- ✉ Windstream Holdings LLC provided the MPSC its [FCC Public Notice](#) granting transfer of control.
- ✉ MPCo filed its [proposal to construct](#) and install 8.7 miles of 144-count fiber optic cable and additional reclosers in Meridian, MS. The project claims reliability, broadband and economic development benefits. Project cost is estimated at \$1.41 M.



Continued...

- ✎ MCI Communications Services LLC filed a [Request for Name Change](#). Velocity, A Managed Services Company, Inc. filed a [Request for Name Change](#) and [Tariff](#). Spectrotel, Inc. filed a [Petition for Transfer of Certificate and Assets](#) to Spectrotel of the South LLC.
- ✎ INFONXX Operating Company [requests a cancellation](#) of its Certificate. Onvoy LLC and TDS TeleCommunications LLC filed an [Interconnection Agreement](#).
- ✎ Russell Utilities, Inc. was issued a [request for more information](#) in regards to acquisition of customers in Lauderdale County.
- ✎ The MSPC issued a [Subpoena](#) to AT&T Mississippi for information related to AT&T Mississippi's utilization of USF funding in the state.
- ✎ Entergy Mississippi LLC (EML) filed its [August 2020 activity](#) for the Energy Cost Recovery Rider Schedule ECR-4 and Power Management Rider Schedule PMR-12.
- ✎ The Public Utilities Staff and CenterPoint Energy filed a [Joint Stipulation](#) for Commission consideration outlining certain adjustments to the Rate Regulation Adjustment Rider 2019 Evaluation Filing.
- ✎ Atmos Energy filed its [Monthly Report on Meter Estimations](#). Approximately 8,500 customers received a third estimated bill due to COVID and contract meter reader resource matters.

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A special meeting of the Mississippi Public Service Commission will take place on **September 22 at 10 a.m.** Like the regular monthly docket meetings, this special meeting will take place telephonically with streaming broadcast over the MPSC YouTube channel at <https://www.psc.ms.gov/webcast>. The [meeting notice](#) is now available and the agenda will soon be available at www.psc.ms.gov.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **14** complaints in the Central District.

Telecommunications	5
Electric Companies	4
Water/Sewage	4
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **143** 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/consolidate debt, 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.