

July 28, 2021



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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Mississippi Municipal League's 90th Annual Conference



Like so many organizations, The Mississippi Municipal League (MML) was unable to meet in-person in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated health and safety protocols. However, 2021 was a different story as approximately 2,500 mayors, city council members, municipal employees, state agency representatives, state officials, exhibitors and others gathered in Biloxi, MS for MML's 90th annual event. The MML was established in 1931 and represents 289 city, town and village governments in Mississippi.

The theme for this year's event was "Leading with Purpose." City leaders, new and incumbent, have faced unprecedented challenges over the last 16 months. While many local leaders have faced down this global pandemic with steeled resolve, there is still much to be done in towns and cities around the state to fully recover from the economic, educational, cultural, physical and other impacts wrought by the COVID-19. This conference provided these leaders the venue to learn from shared experiences and understand the opportunities that lie ahead.

Among the various educational sessions available to participants, the three Commissioners of the Mississippi Public Service Commission were on hand to provide information on topics of interest to municipal leaders and their citizens. Moderated by Jackson City Councilman Aaron Banks, each Commissioner took turns addressing the audience and responding to questions and comments.



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I started the discussion by providing an update on the Commission's comprehensive review of the state's public utility infrastructure which was initiated following February's extreme winter weather event and the resulting impacts to various utility systems across the state. While many Mississippians experienced power outages that lasted from several hours to several days, we did not experience the type of system-wide failure seen in the state of Texas which resulted in hundreds of deaths in that

state. Furthermore, any disruptions in natural gas distribution was minimal and quickly resolved. However, the biggest impacts were felt by water utilities where outages lingered for weeks in some areas and hundreds of thousands across the state were under some type of boil water notice.



The MPSC has issued questionnaires/data requests to utilities across the state and have received nearly 100 responses to date. The MPSC will be working with a consultant to analyze the responses and conduct further investigations as needed. We will also be working with other state agencies and trade associations to collect information and conduct critical assessments that will be captured in a final report. In

addition to assessing the condition of the physical utility infrastructure of the state, we will also be looking at the operations and maintenance of utility systems, the threat of cyber security attacks of utilities, and communication protocols that utilities enact prior, during and after extreme weather events. We hope to have a report ready by November 1.



Commissioner Maxwell discussed the Commission's efforts to combat illegal telemarketers who violate the Mississippi No-Call Law and prey on our most vulnerable citizens. Commissioner Presley provided an overview of the state of broadband internet development, expansion and investments. I want to thank everyone that attended our program session and it was good to

spend some time with my fellow Commissioners and their staffs.



In addition to participating on the MML program, the Central District was an exhibitor on the Trade Show floor. Being in the exhibit hall provided us the opportunity to visit one-on-one with many municipal leaders from throughout the Central District and throughout the state. Check out some of the photos from our two days at the MML Conference. I look forward to working with municipal leaders from all across the Central District to ensure their citizens have access to reliable, affordable utility services.



Other News

Energy Efficiency Grant Program to Open in August/September 2021



The Mississippi Development Authority's Energy and Natural Resources Office anticipates opening an application cycle for the 2021 Mississippi Industrial Energy Efficiency

Program (MIEEP) in the August/September timeframe.

- MIEEP provides matching grant funds, not to exceed \$50,000, for energy-efficiency upgrades in manufacturing facilities, such as lighting, heating, HVAC, and industrial process improvements.
- Eligible applicants are for-profit businesses engaged in industrial or manufacturing processes, such as those listed under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes 31, 32, or 33, and operating in Mississippi.

An energy audit is required with every grant application, and all applicants are eligible for a partial reimbursement of audit costs.

Application requirements and submission deadlines will be included in the formal funding opportunity announcement. Applications will be due approximately 60 days following the formal announcement. For more information, please contact the Energy and Natural Resources Office at 601.359.6600 or energysmartms@mississippi.org

Mississippi State University Selected as Industrial Assessment Center

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) [announced](#) \$60 million in funding for [32 university-based Industrial Assessment Centers](#) (IACs) across 28 states. Under this program, Mississippi State University will provide site-specific recommendations to small manufacturers with opportunities to improve productivity, secure information, reduce waste and save energy while providing training for undergraduate and graduate engineering students in manufacturing processes, energy assessment procedures, and energy management systems. The program will run from 2022 to 2026.

Call Blocking Tools and Resources

I wanted to remind everyone of the Federal Communications Commission [Consumer Guide to Call Blocking Tools and Resources](#). While this guide had been around for several months, it contains some helpful information about call blocking services and call labeling tools currently available to consumers. The guide also provides tips for legitimate businesses that wish to contact customers yet avoid being labeled as a spam call.

Supporting Electricity Customers Through Times of Crisis

The Critical Consumer Issues Forum released its latest report this week. The report resulted from a collaboration of state commissioners, consumer advocates, and electric company representatives. You can [download the 2021 CCIF Report here](#). The purpose of the dialogue was to identify and address certain residential and small business customer needs that precede and that may continue after the economic impacts related to COVID-19. The dialogue produced nine consensus principles focused on: 1) Identifying Need & Coordinating Assistance to Create a More Seamless Customer Experience; 2) Electric Company & State Solutions for Addressing Customer Needs; and 3) Federal Approaches to Complement Electric Company & State Solutions. I hope you find the report to be valuable as we continue working to support electricity customers impacted by the pandemic.



Last Week at the MPSC

- ✉ **The Commission** issued a [notice](#) of hearing for **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** petition for certificate of public convenience and necessity in Desoto County. **Hernando Ventures, LLC**, as an intervener, made [filings](#) in regards to **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** certificate of public convenience and necessity.
- ✉ **Entergy Mississippi, LLC** filed its [joint application](#) with **Coahoma Electric Power Association** for approving exchange of portions of service areas in Desoto County.
- ✉ **The Public Utility Staff** made its [written request](#) for all documents in the closing of the sale from the owners of certain sewer systems to **Great River Utility Operating Co., LLC**.
- ✉ **Aristotle Unified Communications** filed its [application](#) for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to provide telecommunications services in the state.
- ✉ **Spire Mississippi** filed its [petition](#) for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to enlarge its certificated area in Lamar County.
- ✉ **The Commission** issued a [report and recommendation](#) on Order of the Hearing Examiner regarding **Mississippi Power Company's** petition for a certificate of public convenience and necessity in Forrest, Hancock, Marion, and Pearl River Counties.

LOOKING AHEAD:



The MPSC's August Regular Docket Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, August 3. The meeting is open to the public and will be streamed online.



I will be speaking at the Meridian Rotary Club meeting on August 4 at 12:00 noon at the Northwood Country Club. We are excited to get over to Lauderdale County!

Save the Date

2021 EnHANCE WORKSHOP AND AWARDS LUNCHEON

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

The Westin Jackson

407 S. Congress Street, Jackson, MS 39201

Registration information will be available soon at

www.enhance.ms



Come join us at the Neshoba County Fair tomorrow! We are excited to get back to Founders Square. I will kick off the Thursday morning, July 29 speeches at 9:30 a.m. So, grab some coffee or a mimosa and a fan, and come hear about what the PSC has done this last year.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **17** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	11
Telecommunications	4
Water/Sewer	1
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **358** complaints from consumers against potential telemarketers through our no call app, website and mail-ins.

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.