

January 12, 2022



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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## Let's Start the Year by Committing to Save Money by Saving Energy

It took a while, but Old Man Winter finally came to Mississippi after weeks of balmy conditions throughout the holiday season. Now that cooler temperatures have become the norm, we may be spending more time indoors with the lights on and heaters turned up, thus increasing our energy use. Americans are highly dependent on electricity and natural gas and use a lot of it to keep our homes warm during the winter and cool during the summer. Heating and cooling costs are some of the most expensive bills that we pay throughout the year and complaints to this office tend to increase when outside temperatures significantly increase or decrease.

However, we have numerous options when it comes to conserving energy in our homes and in turn saving money. Simple tasks such as taking shorter showers, keeping thermostats turned down, and unplugging unused appliances can all make a difference. The less energy we use, the more we can save.



January 10<sup>th</sup> was **National Cut Your Energy Costs Day**, and the Central District created a [short video](#) to remind customers how they can manage their energy use – especially as many people spend more time at home due to the pandemic. Researchers with the U.S. Department of Energy estimate the typical household can save up to 25% on utility bills by being more mindful of their energy use as well as implementing money-saving, energy reduction measures.

***Here are some things you can do to stay warm (or cool), use energy wisely and avoid significant spikes in utility bills:***

- Weatherproof your home; seal cracks around windows and doors
- Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters that are in unconditioned spaces
- Make sure home is properly insulated
- Replace old windows with new energy-efficient windows
- Replace old HVAC with new energy-efficient HVAC
- Properly maintain HVAC and change filters regularly
- Turn down thermostats
- Turning off lights when leaving a room
- Use energy-efficient LED light bulbs
- Run dishwasher and washing machine only when fully loaded
- Lower water heater temperature
- Take shorter showers
- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Carpool whenever possible



*Continued...*

The above list is just some of the many ways to conserve energy. Use these tips, along with utility-offered energy efficiency programs, and you will be able to create energy and financial savings the entire year. With each improvement, you'll be one step closer to an energy-efficient home all year long. Get the whole family involved and show them how saving energy puts money back into the family budget. The savings could be enough to pay for a family vacation! ***So, where will you start making changes to cut energy costs?***



## Other News

### U.S. Treasury Provides Added Flexibility and Clarity with Final ARPA Rule

State and local governments receiving \$350 billion in federal pandemic aid payments under the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), a part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), gained new flexibility and further clarity with how they can use the funding, under a final rule that the U.S. Treasury Department issued. In May 2021, the State of Mississippi received over \$903 million from the U.S. Treasury. This represents 50% of the funds to be allocated to the State of Mississippi. In addition, \$578 million is allocated to Mississippi counties, \$101 million for metropolitan cities and \$268 million for local governments with populations of less than 50,000 individuals.

The [437-page rule-making document](#) released Jan. 6 provides additional information on how aid recipients can spend money from the American Rescue Plan Act on capital expenditures, employee pay and water, sewer and broadband projects, among other areas. The final rule broadens the set of eligible water, sewer, stormwater and broadband infrastructure investments that recipients may undertake. See pages 37-40 at the link above to learn more about eligible projects and technical standards.

### Higher Natural Gas Prices Push Electricity Prices Higher

The cold weather in February 2021 caused natural gas price spikes throughout the United States, which led to increased electricity prices. The cost of natural gas can be a significant driver of electricity prices, especially where natural gas is the dominate fuel for generating electricity. Natural gas prices have remained relatively low in recent years. The cost of natural gas delivered to electric generators averaged \$2.40 per million British thermal units (MMBtu) in 2020.

However, natural gas prices trended higher over the last year as the delivered cost of natural gas to electricity generators grew from \$3.19/MMBtu in January 2021 to an estimated \$5.04/MMBtu in the fourth quarter of 2021. For many utilities, this resulted in an under-recovery of purchased fuel costs in 2021. These costs will have to be recovered by utilities in 2022. The Commission will be evaluating how to best accomplish this with the Mississippi investor-owned electric utilities.

Average U.S. cost of natural gas delivered to electric generators (Jan 2015–Dec 2021)  
dollars per million British thermal units



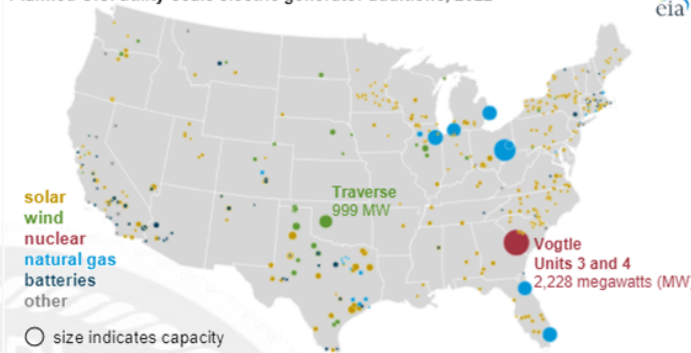


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## EIA Predicts Solar Will Account for Nearly Half of New Generation Capacity Additions in 2022

In 2022, the U.S. Energy Information Administration expects 46.1 gigawatts (GW) of new utility-scale electric generating capacity to be added to the U.S. power grid, according to their [Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory](#). Almost half of the planned 2022 capacity additions are solar at 46%, followed by natural gas at 21%, wind at 17% and nuclear at 5%. Most solar and wind additions will be in Texas. Almost all planned natural gas capacity is located Ohio, Florida, Michigan and Illinois. The planned nuclear capacity will come from two new reactors at Plant Vogtle in Georgia. Utility-scale battery storage is expected to grow by 5.1 GW. On the other end of the energy spectrum, utility operators have scheduled 14.9 GW of electric generating capacity to retire in the United States during 2022. Most of the scheduled retirements are coal-fired power plants (85%), followed by natural gas (8%) and nuclear (5%).

Planned U.S. utility-scale electric generator additions, 2022



## Legislation Tracker

On Tuesday, January 4, the [Mississippi State Legislature](#) began the 2022 Legislative session. With the impacts of the pandemic still hanging over the state, it will be interesting to see how leadership at the Legislature navigates the legislative process. Major issues such as medical marijuana, teacher pay, ARPA and IIJA spending decisions, legislative districts, agency budgets and record revenue collections are just some of the issues the Legislature will be dealing with. I wish them good health and a clear vision for the state of Mississippi. The complete and latest Social Calendar, as it currently stands, can be viewed [here](#).

Bills are currently being drafted and introduced daily. The first deadline to make requests for general bills and constitutional amendments to be drafted is TODAY, Wednesday, January 12. Deadlines will roll around quickly given it's a 90-day session. A full list of deadlines can be viewed [here](#). The Commission will be watching numerous bills that could impact customers, certain utilities, or the MPSC. Some of these include:

- **HB 52:** Local governments capital improvements revolving loan program; include municipal natural gas facilities.
- **HB 163:** Administrative Procedures Act; amend to require proposed agency rules to be approved by the state auditor.
- **HB 325:** Electric Power Association Law; bring forward entirely and amend election provisions of.

Please note that identification of a bill in this newsletter does not indicate support or opposition to a measure. Each bill is simply identified as an example of legislation that has been assigned to Energy, Public Utilities or other committees with oversight of these matters. Bills being tracked could change from week to week.



The MPSC's December Regular Docket Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, January 18. The meeting is open to the public and will be streamed online.





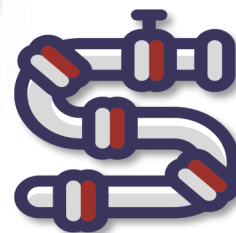
## Last Week at the MPSC

- ✎ **Rankin County** filed its [Motion](#) to Suspend **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** filings and/or rate increases pending discovery and requests by intervening party (**Rankin County**) in regards to **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** Notice to increase rates based on its fuel under-recovery. **Rankin County** also filed another [Motion](#) to suspend **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** filings and/or rate increases based upon **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** Power Management Rider, Restructuring Rider, and Unit Power Recovery Cost Rider.
- ✎ **Assurance Wireless USA, L.P.** filed its [Mississippi Tariff P.S.C No. 1](#). The purpose of this filing is to update and clarify the Tariff with regards to the customer's service plan once they no longer qualify for Lifeline Service.
- ✎ **Great River Utility Operating Co., LLC** filed its [Verification of Notice](#) to Customers that customers have been provided a notice of **Great River's** proposed establishment of initial and temporary rates for Wastewater Disposal Service for the **Lake Forrest** Subdivision in **Warren County**. The proposed initial and temporary rate for wastewater disposal service is twenty-seven dollars (\$27.00) per month. **Great River Utility Operating Co., LLC** also filed its notice of the Company's Wastewater System Rehabilitation Project for the following Sewer Systems in **Warren County**: [The Trace](#); [T&J](#); [Silverleaf](#); [Ring Road](#); [Pine Woods](#); [Pecan Village](#); [Leland Pointe](#); [Camden Place](#)
- ✎ **Bellsouth Telecommunications, LLC d/b/a AT & T Mississippi** filed its [Notice of Service](#) of First Set of [Data Requests](#) to **Airus, Inc.**

Our Pipeline Safety Division completed **2** construction inspections in the Central District during the month of December 2021.

The total costs for construction notices that were received by the Commission in the Central District during the month of December is approximately **\$3,957,042**.

***"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, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **34** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	23
Telecommunications	8
Water/Sewer	2
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **214** 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.***