

April 27, 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

Remember: Call 811 Before You Dig and Mind the Markings

Three weeks ago, this newsletter brought to your attention that April is recognized as National Safe Digging Month. Because it's the time of year when temperatures begin to increase in many parts of the country and springtime construction projects begin, April is an important time to remind people how important it is to contact 811 at least two days before putting a shovel in the ground.

Because of the importance of protecting underground utility infrastructure from being damaged, Governor Tate Reeves has [proclaimed April as Safe Digging Month in Mississippi](#). Governor Reeves recognizes that "excavators and homeowners can save time and money keeping our nation safe and connected by making a simple call to 811 in advance of any digging project, waiting the required amount of time, respecting the marked lines by maintaining visual definition throughout the course of the excavation, and finally, digging with care around the marks."



A utility locator is a professional who is responsible for locating, identifying, and marking underground utilities before the start of construction or other digging projects. Locators are required to read maps and blueprints and use certain electronic tools to

determine where utilities are located. Locators will then use paint and/or flags to mark the approximate location and protect those underground utilities from damage during excavation.

Many times, locators are the unsung heroes of the damage prevention industry. Therefore, each year, the last full week of April is recognized as Locator Safety & Appreciation Week (LSAW). LSAW is about letting locators know how much we appreciate the difficult, challenging, and sometimes dangerous work they do protecting underground utilities. Accurate marks help ensure that excavation professionals tasked with installing and servicing underground infrastructure do not damage existing underground utility systems. Or at least they should....



Continued...



Highly visible, timely, well-placed markings can only do so much. Equipment operators must be experienced and responsible and respect the markings placed by the locator. However, too many times, excavators get impatient, don't pay attention, or focus on speed rather than safe operation of digging equipment. Those actions can result in damage to utilities, utility service outages, and hefty fines and/or repair bills. Some impacts of not calling 811 or not respecting utility markings resulted in recent damages to local utility infrastructure:

- **February 2022:** A telecom contractor was boring a path for fiberoptic cable when it struck a 10-inch water main near the Ross Barnett Reservoir. The water main break caused three elevated water tanks to drain and impacted approximately 3,500 households.
- **December 2021:** An electrical underground line was found to have bored through and severed a homeowner's sewer line causing sewage backups that damaged floors and furnishings in Madison. The electric contractor covered the cost of the home repair.
- **July 2021:** A telecom contractor cross-bored through a water and sewer line at a home causing water and sewer to back up into the home and damage, floors, walls and furnishings in Madison.
- **November 2021:** A contractor was performing repairs on a large drainage structure located in the Belhaven Subdivision in Jackson when a 6" steel natural gas main was struck by a track hoe. A natural gas leak was caused immediately by the impact on the pipe. The contractor was working using markings from an October locate for another contractor. The contractor did not request a utility locate from Mississippi 811 as required by the 811 Law and was billed over \$18,000 for the damages associated with this event.

Atmos Energy share with me their natural gas utility infrastructure damage statistics for the first quarter of 2022 (Jan. 1 - March 31). **Atmos Energy has recorded 102 excavation damages to their buried natural gas lines. The Metro Jackson area has had 44 damages or 43% of total. The Golden Triangle Area is next with 16 damages or 16% of the total.**

The leading reasons for the damages and the corresponding number of damages are: **1) Failure to call 811 and request a locate - 41; 2) Failure to maintain clearance around buried lines - 23; 3) Failure to hand expose lines to verify location - 11.** The type of work associated with damages include sewer (21), water/drainage (17), telecom (16), and cable TV (10).

Much of the damages could likely have been avoided if those doing the digging had called Mississippi 811 for a locate request, spotted all utilities using hand or soft digging techniques, and/or communicated with Mississippi 811 and utilities when facilities were not found.

Federal Actions & New Reports of Interest

Tracing Illegal Robocalls, Explained

Every day, Americans receive millions of illegal robocalls from scammers and spoozers trying to rip off consumers. US Telecom's Industry Traceback Group is a SWAT team of communications providers working with government and law enforcement to track down the source of - and stop - these calls. **Learn more:** <https://www.ustelecom.org/robocalls>.



Video: <https://vimeo.com/407729537/0a996ae4c6>



White House Restores Stricter Environmental Review of Big Projects

Certain provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act that require rigorous environmental, climate and health impact review of major infrastructure projects such as highways, pipelines and oil wells will be restored in late May. The longstanding reviews were scaled back by the prior administration in a bid to fast-track projects and create jobs. Environmental groups hailed the rule change while business groups criticized the rule change, saying it will slow down major infrastructure developments.

FERC Issues Transmission NOPR Addressing Planning, Cost Allocation

During its Open Meeting last week, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) that aims to address regional transmission planning and cost allocation of certain transmission facilities. The NOPR would require transmission planning under multiple, long-term scenarios and consider a broader set of project benefits. In addition, transmission operators would be required to establish a cost allocation methodology across jurisdictions and in compliance with regional cost allocation principles. Comments are due 75 days from the date of publication.

CENTRAL DISTRICT SNAPS



*Thanks to Brandon
Mayor Butch Lee for*

*the opportunity to help make the Garden Clubs of Mississippi feel at home for their
93rd Annual Business Meeting.* April 20, 2022



*Thank you to the Newton Rotary Club
for inviting me to come provide an
update from the Commission. We
thank Mike Butler, Circuit Clerk of
Newton County, for reaching out, and
we appreciate their wonderful
hospitality, fellowship and a good
lunch! I also enjoyed visiting with State
Representative Randy Rushing and
Newton Mayor Antonio Hoyer. Looking
forward to another visit!* April 12, 2022

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I met with Dr. Roderick Jackson, Laboratory Program Manager of Building Technologies Research at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Golden, Colorado. Dr. Jackson is a Madison County native and was back in Mississippi to visit family. I hope to work more with Dr. Jackson and his staff to evaluate measures beneficial to the Central District. *April 12, 2022*



Thank you to Dallas Baker and the planning committee of the Mississippi Energy Coordinators Association Conference for having me kick off one morning with an update on some of the key issues and items we are working on at the MPSC. I also heard



Thanks to the planners of the Magnolia Beef & Poultry Expo for inviting me to participate on a panel discussion on Solar Power in the Poultry Industry. I shared the table with a poultry grower, poultry systems researcher and reps of Cooperative Energy. Solar works well in poultry production and growers can save money! Good to see friends from Mississippi Beef Council, Mississippi Poultry Association, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, TEC, Southern Pine Electric and many more. *April 14, 2022*



great presentations from Chad Wilson (TVA), Allie Harris (Schneider Electric), Danny Kilpatrick (Utility Program Services), Dr. Sumesh Arora (State Energy Office Director), and Heejin Cho (MSU Mechanical Engineering and the MSU Industrial Assessment Center). *April 6, 2022*



I will be participating as a moderator on a webinar—‘Advancing Innovation with CCUS Hubs: A Case Study of Houston, Texas’—for the DOE-NARUC Coal Modernization and Carbon Management Partnership. The webinar takes place on Thursday, April 28, 2-3 p.m. ET. Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ot86lZECTmaJvX3G1xMCzq



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



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **28** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	25
Telecommunications	2
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **172** 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.