

December 21, 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



Merry Christmas from the Central District

As we near the end of another amazing and eventful year, and on behalf of the staff of the Central District, I want to wish each of you a very Merry Christmas. To utility customers: It is our pleasure to serve your needs and we look forward to continuing our service to you in the coming year. To the utilities: We trust that you will continue to be good stewards of consumers' payments and make service as reliable and affordable as possible. To stakeholders: Thank you for your efforts to make this state and its communities a better place to live and do business. To Commission Staff and Public Utilities Staff: A sincere thank you for your commitment to your work and for your dedication to thoroughly investigating matters before the Commission.

My wish for everyone is that you take an opportunity during the holidays to eliminate your stress, fill your heart with love, and help bring joy to your family, friends or a complete stranger. It is the most wonderful time of the year and we hope to put a smile on your face with a [special video](#) of the Central District staffs' reading of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.

Holiday Safety Tips and Reminders

As the holiday season reaches a fever pitch across the country, it can be easy for some of us to lose focus on those commonsense steps and practices that reduce the risk of harm to ourselves or to others. As you spend more time in public places, be aware of the tactics and techniques of criminals that may want to physically harm you, scam you, or steal from you. Be aware of your surroundings and avoid being distracted for long periods. Though it is not pleasant to think about becoming a victim of a crime, some simple awareness techniques can help ensure that you remain safe throughout the holiday season.

The staff of the MPSC Central District wishes you and your family a very Merry Christmas! Please be safe in your travels.

Please note that most state offices, including the MPSC, will be closed on December 23, 26 and January 2.

Prepare for Extremely Cold Temperatures

Local and national weather forecasters are warning of potentially record-low temperatures leading up to Christmas Day. The artic front will bring prolonged freezing temperatures for much of Mississippi, including temperatures that could plunge into the low teens on Thursday night. Whether you plan to travel or stay put at home, be sure to take steps to protect people, pets, plants, pipes and more. Furthermore, do not put flammable materials near space heaters.





Energy Related News and Notes

Congress Set to Act on FY2023 Omnibus Spending Bill

Congress worked through the weekend to finalize text for the \$1.7 trillion fiscal 2023 omnibus spending bill. The bill text was released Tuesday morning and Congress begin moving quickly to secure passage of the bill by the end of the week. The 177th Congress will also finish its work upon final adjournment. The 4,155-page [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#) covers annual spending for every federal agency and supplemental aid for Ukraine and natural disaster victims, as well as an extensive set of unrelated policies.

2023 Energy Efficiency Impact Report Released

The [2023 Energy Efficiency Impact Report](#) quantifies the powerful impact of energy efficiency across key sectors of the American economy and demonstrates how efficiency investments lower energy bills, improve public health and reduce emissions. The report was released by the Alliance to Save Energy, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, and the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and quantifies recent progress on energy efficiency and points to critical opportunities ahead as consumers face increasing energy costs. The report outlines specific opportunities to further cost savings such as adopting stronger energy codes for new buildings and building performance standards for existing ones. Further adoption of industrial efficiency measures can continue to drive down costs for firms, and residential energy efficiency programs can increase the comfort and affordability of homes. Other notable findings from the report include:

- More than 60% of low-income households in the U.S. face a high energy burden, with some paying more than 20% of their income on utility bills
- Investments in energy efficiency have driven down energy consumption per household by approximately 16%
- Energy efficiency investments have reduced today's energy expenditures by approximately \$800 billion and federal funding for energy efficiency programs have increased by 61% in the last decade
- Utility investments in energy efficiency have grown, achieving 16% more electricity savings and 94% more gas savings in 2020 than in 2011

New Data Shows States With Highest and Lowest Number of EV Charging Stations

Mississippi ranks #45 in the nation for both the total number of electric vehicle (EV) chargers at 433 and number of EV charges per 100,000 residents at 14.6. The [data](#) is from DOE's Alternative Fuels Data Center. California has approximately one-third of all the nation's electric vehicle charging stations (41,225), the largest number by volume. However, when the size of the state is accounted for, Vermont leads with 139.7 EV chargers per 100,000 residents.

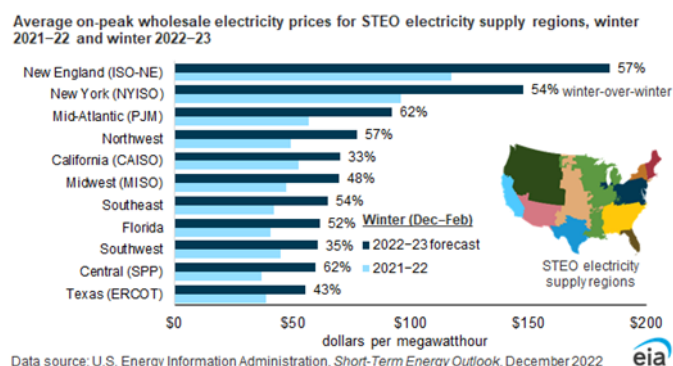
While most EV owners charge their vehicles at home, widespread availability of charging stations would allow people with EVs to travel greater distances more easily. However, more EV chargers will not be sufficient by themselves to increase adoption of electric vehicles and alleviate range anxiety. The number of EV chargers must be distributed evenly, and more direct current (DC) fast chargers (Level 3) must be added to the mix of chargers being installed. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law enacted in 2021 aims to invest \$7.5 billion in a national network of electric vehicle charging stations, with a goal of building out 500,000 EV chargers by 2030.

The costs of preparing the bulk electric network for this new load is still being discussed. A new study suggests that EV charging needs along highways will require interconnection to high-capacity transmission lines. The Electric Highways Study can help utilities and policymakers make smarter decisions about electric grid interconnections and infrastructure, avoiding repeated upgrades.



EIA Expects Higher Wholesale Electricity Prices in the U.S. This Winter

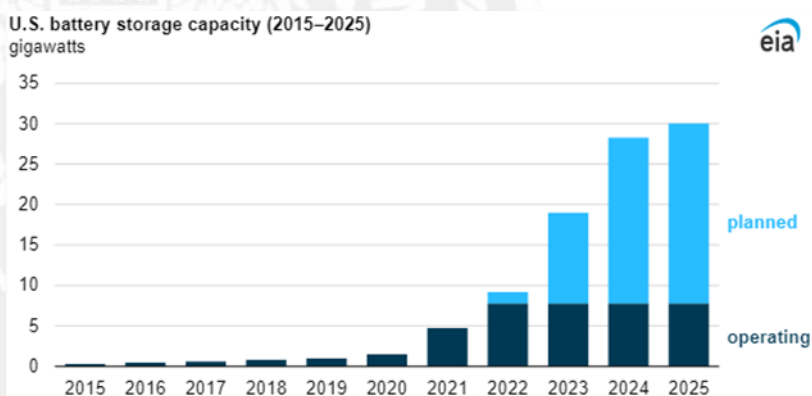
The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) expects higher wholesale electricity prices this winter in every region of the country. According to EIA's December [Short-Term Energy Outlook](#) (STEO), the increase in wholesale winter electricity prices ranges from 31% higher in the Southwest to more than 60% higher in the mid-Atlantic and Central regions. Although the EIA expects that U.S. electricity customers will pay more for electricity, retail electricity prices should not increase as much wholesale prices this winter. EIA forecasts the U.S. residential electricity price this winter will average 14.9 cents per kilowatt-hour, an 8% increase from last winter.



Increases in costs of fossil fuels, particularly natural gas, used to drive electricity generators is responsible for much of the increase in electricity costs. Fortunately, dry natural gas production in the U.S. in 2022 is expected to set an annual record. EIA forecasts production to grow slightly in 2023, averaging between 100 Bcf/d and 101 Bcf/d for the year, about 2% more than in 2022. The additional production should push natural gas prices downward at the Henry Hub benchmark to average \$5.62 per MMBtu in the first half of 2023, compared with an expected December 2022 month average of \$6.34/MMBtu.

U.S. Battery Storage Capacity to Grow Significantly

According to surveys, developers and power plant owners plan to significantly increase utility-scale battery storage capacity in the United States over the next three years, reaching 30.0 gigawatts (GW) by the end of 2025. As of October 2022, 7.8 GW of utility-scale battery storage was operating in the U.S. Battery storage adds stability to variable energy sources such as wind and solar. Batteries help solve the intermittency problem by storing extra energy produced by wind or solar generators for later use. The large amount of existing and planned solar and wind capacity across the nation presents a growing need for battery storage. At present, the 409 MW Manatee Energy Storage in Florida is the largest operating battery storage project in the country. Over 150 MW of battery energy storage projects are planned for Mississippi.



The large amount of existing and planned solar and wind capacity across the nation presents a growing need for battery storage. At present, the 409 MW Manatee Energy Storage in Florida is the largest operating battery storage project in the country. Over 150 MW of battery energy storage projects are planned for Mississippi.

NARUC Submits Letter in Opposition to Federal Transmission Siting Proposal

Last week, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) sent a [letter](#) to Senator Joe Manchin expressing strong opposition to his proposed amendment's broad overreach and infringement on existing state siting authority and cost allocation authority for electric transmission projects. The proposal would give the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission carte blanche jurisdiction over electric transmission siting without respect to local circumstances or needs. I sent copies of the letter to each of our U.S. Senators' offices expressing our support for NARUC's position. The Senate blocked the amendment from getting attached to the National Defense Authorization Act.



Remembering a Special Friend: John E. Mosley

I awoke this morning to the news of the passing of John Mosley. John is best known as the face and voice of Clinton Body Shop. He was an entrepreneur, a community leader, supporter of veterans, and had a deep love of aviation and plane restoration. But most of all, he was one of the most generous, selfless, kind and trustworthy people I had ever had the pleasure to meet and get to know. I can't thank John enough for the advice and support he provided to me. He touched the lives of so many and was always ready to fight for what was right. You can't help but admire that kind of focus, energy and drive.

I pray for comfort and peace for his wonderful family as they adjust to life without the physical presence of John. His legacy and spirit will live on in so many ways and on so many levels. Please say a prayer for the Mosley family.



Congrats to Arkansas PSC Commissioner Kim O'Guinn. She has been chosen by Southwest Power Pool to serve as director of state regulatory policy. [Read more...](#)

CENTRAL DISTRICT SNAPS



The Central District had an introductory meeting with Ted Henifin, Jackson's interim third-party manager of the water system.



Rhonda and I enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Governor's Mansion for their annual Christmas reception.



We were proud to join Atmos Energy at the Salvation Army's Jackson Chapter Center of Hope to present a \$200,000 check to the Salvation Army from Atmos Energy to assist Mississippians who need help with their gas utility bills this holiday season.

We have no new recent filings to report this week.

SAVE THE DATE:

January 3 - 2023
Legislative Session Begins
January 10 - MPSC Docket Meeting



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

Electric Companies	11
Telecommunications	3

Last week, the Central District received a total of **112** 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.