

March 29, 2023



**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

Destruction From State Line to State Line

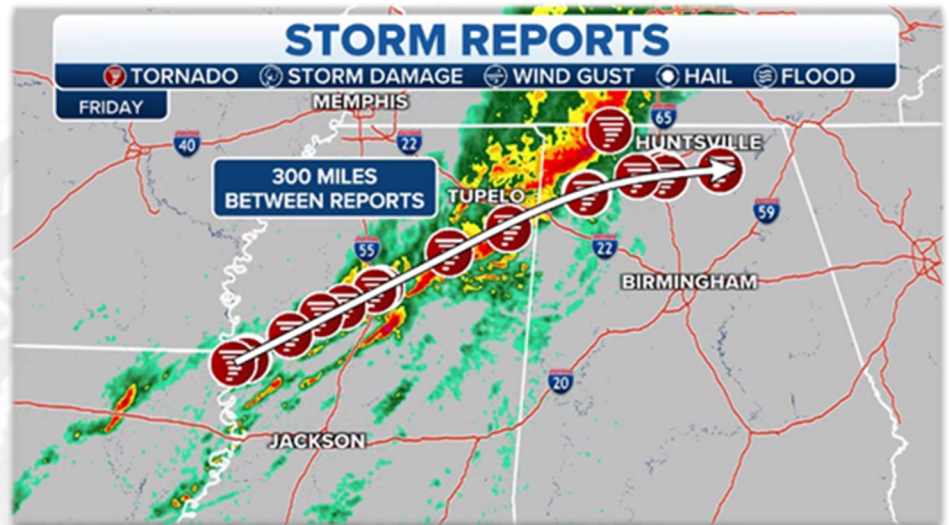
On Friday, March 24, a storm supercell moved out of Lake Providence, LA and across the Mississippi River. From there it moved in a northeasterly direction, spawning one or more long-track tornadoes that reached a preliminary rating of EF-4. An EF-4 tornado has top wind gusts between 166 mph and 200 mph. According to the National Weather Service, the United States averages 1,150 to 1,200 tornadoes per year, and EF4s make up just about 1 percent of the total.

The tornadoes directly hit Rolling Fork, Silver City, Winona, Amory, Wren and numerous other communities before moving into Alabama. At least 21 people lost their lives to the force of the storm. Hundreds, if not thousands more, lost their belongings, homes and sentimental items. Far too often in Mississippi we are reminded of the extreme power of severe weather events and how lives can be changed in moments.

There will be stories of sadness and heartbreak for those who perished. There will be miraculous stories of survival. But there will also be stories of bravery and selfless acts of those who arrived shortly after the storm passed and put themselves in harm's way to conduct search and rescue in the darkness and get severely injured people to hospitals located many miles away.

For the past few days, Americans have seen pictures, videos and other footage of the devastation the tornadoes left across the state. In addition to the destruction of homes, businesses, schools, churches and other buildings, the utility infrastructure in many of the areas hit by the tornadoes was significantly damaged. Tens of thousands of Mississippians lost power, water, natural gas and/or cellular phone service.

Entergy Mississippi itself experienced damage of 948 broken poles, 656 spans of downed wire (over 25 miles), 485 damaged transformers and 467 broken crossarms. The substation in Winona also took a direct hit and three transmission lines serving the town were damaged. The elevated water tower in Rolling Fork was toppled by the tornado. Natural gas service was shut off in multiple towns due to the extensive damage to structures and the threat of fires. Cellular towers were also toppled by the high winds.





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The elevated water tower in Rolling Fork was toppled by the tornado.



*The substation in Winona also took a direct hit.
(Photo credits: Entergy MS)*

Adding to the woes of first responders and utility workers, severe storms again moved across Central Mississippi on Sunday, March 26 and disrupted electrical service for an additional 28,000 people. Winds over 70 miles per hour and golf ball sized hail tormented the Interstate 20 corridor from Vicksburg to Meridian. Entergy Mississippi, Mississippi Power Co. and East Mississippi EPA each experienced extensive outages. Entergy Mississippi itself documented an additional 57 broken poles, 183 spans of downed wire, 24 damaged transformers and 38 broken crossarms. Thousands of lineman and vegetation workers, damage assessment scouts, transmission/substation personnel, and support staff worked simultaneously around the clock to restore power from these two events. Thankfully, there have been no safety incidents. People are asked to give utility workers plenty of space and not interact with them so they can concentrate on their tasks.

We are just one week into Spring and Mother Nature has already demonstrated her power. Unfortunately, the threat of severe weather is back in the forecast. However, it is not too late to prepare for a natural disaster or weather emergency to ensure that your family and community is ready for the worst. Please check out the resources provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at www.ready.gov/publications and other preparedness tools and tips at www.msema.org. Preparedness begins with individuals and families, but a key component is for communities to come together and help one another prepare as well.

Knowing what to do after a severe weather event is just as important as preparing for such an event. Hazards are all around following severe weather – from downed electric lines and equipment to personal generator risks, natural gas leaks, unsafe water, spoiled food or flooding dangers. **Check out the following links to learn how to protect you and your family:**

- Entergy Mississippi: <https://www.entergynewsroom.com/storm-center/safety/>
- Atmos Energy: <https://www.atmosenergy.com/safety/natural-gas-safety-severe-weather-tornado>
- Mississippi Power: <https://www.mississippipower.com/residential/power-outages---storm-center/stay-safe-during-a-storm.html>
- CenterPoint Energy: <https://www.centerpointenergy.com/en-us/residential/safety/weather-safety?sa=ms>
- Mississippi State Department of Health: [Storm Safety and Health](#)

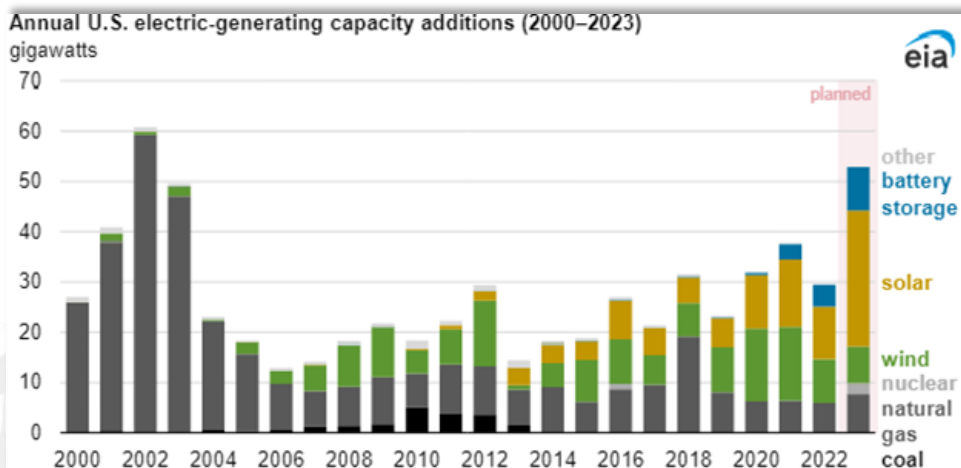


Wind, Solar, Batteries Account for More New U.S. Power Capacity Additions

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) released findings that wind, solar and battery technologies will account for 82% of new utility-scale generation capacity additions in 2023. Over

half of new generating capacity will be solar, making it the most solar capacity added in a single year. Currently, about 73,500 MW of solar capacity is in operation in the U.S.

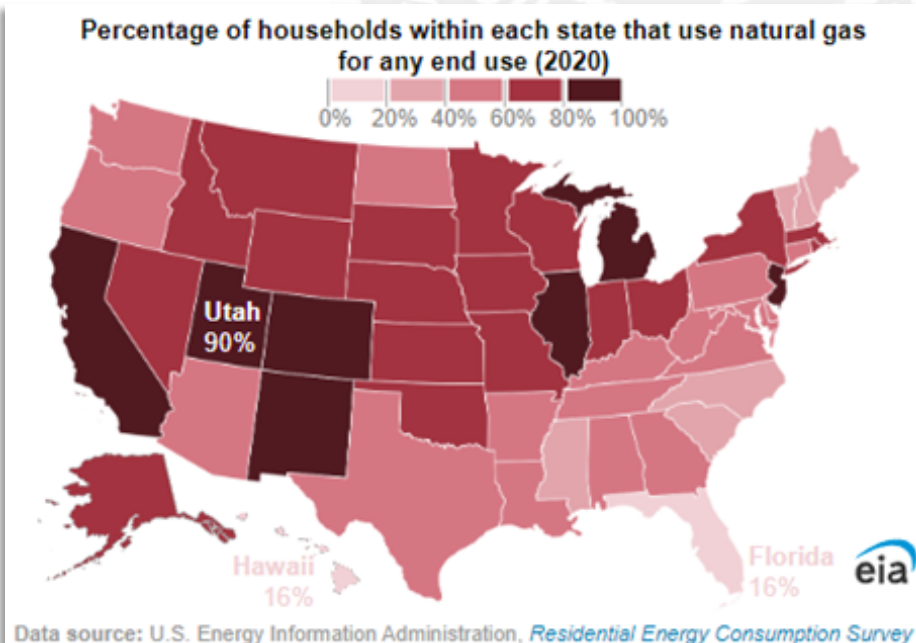
Developers plan to add 7,100 MW of wind capacity in 2023, adding to the 141,300 MW of wind capacity in operation today. In 2023, developers plan to add 8,600 MW of battery storage power capacity to the grid, doubling current battery storage capacity in the U.S.



The chart depicts the transition from heavy investments in fossil fuel-based generation capacity to a more diverse set of energy generation resources. Drivers of this transition includes state and federal tax incentives, reduction in the cost of equipment, renewable energy targets, corporate energy preferences, utility decarbonization efforts and other state and federal policies.

Majority of U.S. Households Use Natural Gas

Late in 2022, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announced that it may consider regulations that aim to curb and phase out the use of natural gas appliances in the name of “protecting consumer health and safety.” There is only one problem: People seem to like the benefits of natural gas.



According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s 2020 Residential Energy Consumption Survey, 61% of U.S. households used natural gas for at least one energy end use. Space heating, water heating, and cooking were the most common end uses; more than half of U.S. households used natural gas for space heating, closely followed by water heating. Natural gas is also used for clothes drying, outdoor grilling, and heating pools and hot tubs. Although 61% of U.S. households used natural gas in 2020, another 12% of households reported having access to natural gas.



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The share of households using natural gas for any end use in 2020 was highest in the Midwest Census Region and West Census Region, both at an estimated 74%. The Northeast share of households using natural gas was 67%. The South had the smallest share of households using any natural gas, at 43%. The South typically has a warmer climate and certain areas of the South emphasized electric heating applications, such as in the Tennessee Valley Authority region.



Mississippi Power Company Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Public Workshop

Mississippi Power Company will conduct its Initial Public Workshop on **Friday, March 31, 2023**, between the hours of **9:00am and 12:00pm** for its Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), in the Commission's hearing room on the first floor of the Woolfolk State Office Building, located at 501 N. West Street, Jackson, MS. The Workshop will also be [streamed live](#). The [link](#) to the live stream can be found on Mississippi Public Service Commission's website after clicking the Executive Secretary tab and then selecting Hearings and Meetings. Interested viewers that would like to participate but cannot attend in person can submit questions to the IRP public workshop presenters at G2MPCIRPPW@southernco.com during the live stream and they will be received and responded to in real time.

A comprehensive IRP should include an analysis of supply and demand-side resources, and consider transmission needs, to satisfy the utility's load requirements while balancing costs, reliability, efficiency, environmental responsibility, risk mitigation, and reasonably priced service for customers. The process should also remain flexible to account for changing conditions that affect resource planning. The purpose of the initial workshop is for the electric utility and interested parties to exchange pertinent information concerning the IRP process, such as resource options, planning assumptions, and inputs that may be used in the development of a utility's Integrated Resource Plan.



Mississippi Public Service Commission Open Docket Meeting

On Tuesday, April 4, 2023, the Mississippi Public Service Commission will conduct an open meeting to consider the proposed Consent Docket and discuss matters pending before the Commission. The meeting will take place in the Mississippi Public Service Commission Hearing Room, 1st Floor, Woolfolk State Office Building, Jackson, Mississippi beginning at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will also be simultaneously broadcast at: <https://www.psc.ms.gov/webcast>.



Legislation Tracker

Each chamber continues to grind through its conference reports calendar to consider, debate, and vote on pending general and appropriation bills. March the 30th marks the deadline for filing conference reports on general bills and constitutional amendments that had been recommitted for further conference, and the following day March 31st is the deadline for adoption after recommitment. This year's 2023 session is scheduled to end Sunday April 2nd. However, Sine Die may be extended by one or more days.

House

HB 288: *Public Utilities Staff; authorize certain personnel to be filled by consulting contract. Signed by Governor*

HB 698: *Municipal water, wastewater and sewer services; require equity-based billing based on use of. Conference Report Filed in House and Senate*



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[HB 809](#): Executive Director of Public Utilities Staff; remove Public Service Commission from the process of appointing. *Signed by Governor*

[HB 1060](#): Electric vehicles; authorize charging by non-utilities. *Signed by Governor*

[HB 1225](#): Telephone solicitation; bring forward provisions of law relating to. *Signed by Governor*

[HB 1620](#): Appropriation; Public Service Commission. *House Conference Report Adopted; Senate Conference Report Adopted*

[HB 1716](#): Appropriation; DEQ for funding the MS Municipality and County Water Infrastructure Grant Program. *Signed by Governor*

Senate

[SB 2102](#): Impending emergency excavation; define, establish advance notice requirements and require premarking for. *Signed by Governor*

[SB 2339](#): Provision of law establishing energy efficiency standards for building construction; extend repealer on. *House Conference Report Adopted; Senate Conference Report Adopted*

[SB 2341](#): Electric transmission infrastructure; maintain state jurisdiction over integrity of. *Signed by Governor*

[SB 2433](#): Regulation of public utilities; exempt distribution of water by eligible homeowners' association to its own residents from. *Signed by Governor*





[SB 2512](#): Counties; authorize to designate ARPA funds to rural water and sewer associations for infrastructure projects. *House Conference Report Adopted; Senate Conference Report Adopted*

[SB 2562](#): Transportation; allow public and private partnerships to establish electric vehicle charging stations. *Signed by Governor*

[SB 2698](#): Ad valorem tax; extend fee-in-lieu qualifying period for renewable energy project. *Signed by Governor*

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.

Last Week at the MPSC

-  **Brightspeed Broadband, LLC** filed its [Notification](#) of name change from **CenturyTel Broadband Services, LLC** to **Brightspeed Broadband, LLC**. The Commission then issued an [Order](#) Approving Name Change of Centurytel Broadband Services, LLC to **Brightspeed Broadband, LLC**.
-  **Mississippi Power Company (MPCo)** filed its [Petition](#) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Authorizing the Acquisition, Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of Utility Facilities in a Specified Area of **Hancock County**. MPCo is acquiring the electric distribution facilities of **Buccaneer State Park** from the **Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks**. The total estimated cost allocated to upgrading the electric distribution facilities is expected to be \$1,601,167. This includes equipment upgrades to meet MPCo's operating standards and specifications. The rate impact associated with the acquisition of the electric facilities at **Buccaneer State Park** could result in an increase of approximately \$0.02 on a typical 1,000 kWh residential customer's bill.
-  **BullsEye Telecom, Inc.** and **Lingo Telecom, LLC** filed their [Joint Petition](#) regarding the internal reorganization of **BullsEye Telecom, Inc.** and **Lingo Telecom, LLC** and for approval for transfer of customers from **BullsEye** to **Lingo Telecom, LLC** due to reorganization.
-  **CenterPoint Energy** made their [Compliance Filing](#) for Notification of Customer Assistance Organizations and Programs. The Commission requires certain gas utilities to notify their customers of the various organizations or programs which are available to assist customers with payment of natural gas bills.



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- ✎ An individual filed their [Analysis and Comments](#) regarding **Southern Spirit Transmission, LLC's** Supplemental Petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Proposed **Southern Spirit Transmission Project**.
- ✎ **The Commission** issued a Recommended [Order](#) of the Hearing Examiner in regard to the Petition of **Mississippi Power Company (MPCo)** for a Facilities Certificate authorizing the construction, acquisition, extension, operation and maintenance of a transmission substation and related facilities and rights-of-way in Stone County. **MPCo** specifically requested authority from the **Commission** to construct, acquire, extend, operate and maintain a new 115-12.47 kV two bank substation and associated 2.6 miles of 115kV transmission line facilities to provide service to **Enviva Wood Pellets**, a new industrial customer in Stone County. **MPCo** estimates that the total cost to construct the proposed facilities will be \$8,500,000. The Project is expected to be completed by July 1, 2024.

Photos taken during restoration efforts from both storms since Friday

PHOTO CREDITS: ENTERGY MS

[Click photos to enlarge](#)



Storm damage along Chestnut St near Walnut St in Rolling Fork, MS.



Entergy crews from Baton Rouge repair and replace lines in the vicinity of Hughes St and Central St in Jackson, MS



Mobile substation installation work in Winona, MS



Entergy, Chain Electric, and Kendall Vegetation crews working to restore downed lines along Hwy 82 east of Winona, MS.



Restoration work on East St and West Ave in Rolling Fork, MS by Bright Star crews.



Storm damage in Silver City, MS



CENTRAL DISTRICT SNAPS



On Saturday, Gail from our office joined the American Red Cross of Mississippi at their First Annual Community Advancement 2023 Event at the Rick's Memorial Library in Yazoo City. We appreciate the opportunity to participate and hand out information from the Central District. It was a great turn out and we look forward to next year!



We are excited to be back at my alma mater, East Central Community College, for their Business, Education & Healthcare Expo this morning! George and I are here visiting and sharing information about the PSC and opportunities in the utilities sector with students, faculty and other members of the community. I appreciate ECCC and their President Brent Gregory (pictured left) for the opportunity to attend and participate.



Fun Fact: Back in October, I was inducted into the East Central Community College Athletic Hall of Fame for my time on the football field.

Last week, the Central District received a total of **99** 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.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **23** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	20
Telecommunications	2
Natural Gas	1