

March 1, 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

Federal Trade Commission Reports Top Scams of 2022

Each year, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provides an overview of the prior year's millions of reports about fraud, scams and bad business practices. So, what were scammers up to in 2022? According to the FTC, scammers took a LOT of money from consumers in 2022. The latest FTC data book says people reported losing \$8.8 billion to scams. That's \$2.6 billion more than 2021.



Some of the top scams in 2022 include investment scams, sweepstakes scams, job scams and impersonator scams. Additionally, the biggest reported losses were through bank transfers and cryptocurrency. Interestingly, younger adults (ages 20-29) reported losing money more often than older adults (ages 70-79). However, when older adults did lose money, they lost more than anyone else on an individual basis.

Number of Reports and Amount Lost by Contact Method

Contact Method	# of Reports	Total \$ Lost	Median \$ Lost
Text	321,374	\$326M	\$1,000
Phone call	294,659	\$798M	\$1,400
Email	270,895	\$413M	\$816
Website or Apps	179,560	\$900M	\$333
Social Media	162,863	\$1,228M	\$528
Other	139,236	\$1,139M	\$800
Mail	36,758	\$75M	\$800
Online Ad or Pop-up	36,079	\$181M	\$229

Of the 2,369,527 reports of fraud, 1,441,424 reported the method by which consumers were contacted. Consumers were contacted by text message 22% of the time and were contacted by phone call 20% of the time. The total amount of dollar lost through text message and phone scams was \$1.124 billion. Consumers who were contacted by phone scammers reported the highest median losses at \$1,400 per person. Scams that occurred over social media raked in the most money from consumers at \$1.228 billion.

Mississippi ranked number 27th (fraud reports per 100K population) with a total of 25,984 in fraud and other reports received by the FTC in 2022. There were a total of \$22.9 million in fraud losses and \$500 was the median amount of those fraud losses. Mississippi also ranked 10th in the nation in identity theft reports.

While the Mississippi Public Service Commission takes “do not call” complaints from citizens every day, people can also file a complaint with the FTC through the [National Do Not Call Registry](#). In 2022, 15,689 complaints were filed with 9,478 of the culprits reported to be robocalls.

Protect yourself from scams! Be alert to the fact that scams exist. Scams succeed because they look like the real thing and catch you off guard when you're not expecting it. And scammers are getting smarter, more savvy and utilizing new technologies to convince you to give them your money or personal details. Scams target people of all backgrounds, ages and income levels. Be alert, know who you are dealing with, protect your personal information and if it looks too good to be true, it probably is!



Energy News

Entergy Mississippi Installs Advanced Circuit Breaker

Entergy Mississippi recently completed the installation of only the second U.S. dead-tank BLUE Circuit Breaker in the country at one of its substations in Vicksburg. What's more, the BLUE 123kV High-Voltage Circuit Breaker was manufactured in Richland, MS by Siemens Energy. The BLUE Circuit Breaker uses a clean air mix of 80% nitrogen and 20% oxygen for its insulating medium rather than oil and sulfur hexafluoride, a potent greenhouse gas.

Electricity Production and Delivery Costs Puts Pressure on Rates

For the last several years, electricity production costs have remained steady or declined as natural gas prices fell and low cost renewable generators came online. The costs to produce electricity generally includes the money spent to build, operate, fuel and maintain power plants as well as to purchase electricity from other generators and energy markets. Costs are also impacted by fluctuations in price of capital, labor, materials and fuels.

The costs to deliver electricity includes money spent to build, operate and maintain the substations, wires, poles, towers and meters that make up the transmission and distribution infrastructure. Utilities have been generally increasing spending on its electric delivery system to replace aging equipment, expand transmission infrastructure and install new technologies that increase grid efficiency, reliability, resilience and security.

Inflation, supply chain woes, inputs costs, labor market and shifting customer preference will continue to influence rates and bills. Other costs such as administrative expenses, buildings, taxes and general expenses have to be accounted for as well. The Commission consistently reviews these costs, adjusts on an annual basis and works with utilities to implement just and reasonable rates.

Legislation Tracker

The mid-point of the 2023 Regular Legislative session has passed and March 8 is the deadline for floor action on general bills and constitutional amendments originating out of the other house. March 14 is the deadline for floor action on appropriation and revenue bills originating out of the other house. The final adoption of conference reports containing compromises of bills that pass the two chambers in differing forms for appropriation and revenue bills as well as general bills is March 27th. The Commission is watching numerous bills that could impact customers, certain utilities or the MPSC. This week we update their status.

House

[HB 264](#): Energy Efficiency standards on buildings; extend repealer on statute requiring certain buildings to meet. *Passed Senate Energy Committee*

[HB 288](#): Public Utilities Staff; authorize certain personnel to be filled by consulting contract. *Passed Senate Energy Committee*

[HB 498](#): Municipalities allowed to establish overdue water/sewer payment programs, certain; extend program repeal date. *Referred to House Municipalities → Passed House Municipalities Committee → Died on Calendar*

[HB 697](#): Homeowner associations that provide water to its residents, certain; prohibit PSC from providing certain regulation of. *Referred to House Public Utilities → Passed House Public Utilities Committee → Died on Calendar*

[HB 698](#): Municipal water, wastewater and sewer services; require equity-based billing based on use of. *Passed Senate Energy Committee*

[HB 809](#): Executive Director of Public Utilities Staff; remove Public Service Commission from the process of appointing. *Passed Senate Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency*



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[HB 848](#): Mississippi Digital Asset Mining Act; create. *Referred to House Ways and Means → Passed House Ways and Means Committee → Tabled → Died*

[HB 986](#): "Mississippi Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Act of 2023"; enact to authorize MTC to enter into public-private partnerships. *Referred To House Transportation; Ways and Means → Passed House Transportation; Ways and Means → Passed House → Transmitted to Senate → Referred to Senate Highways and Transportation; Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency → Died in Senate Committee*

[HB 1060](#): Electric vehicles; authorize charging by non-utilities. *Passed Senate Energy Committee*

[HB 1061](#): Electric transmission infrastructure; prescribe requirements for issuance of certificate of public convenience and necessity. *Referred To House Public Utilities → Passed House Public Utilities Committee → Passed House → Transmitted to Senate → Referred to Senate Energy → Died in Senate Committee*

[HB 1067](#): Mississippi Broadband Accessibility Act; create. *Referred To House Public Utilities → Passed House Public Utilities Committee → Passed House → Transmitted to Senate → Referred to Senate Finance → Died in Senate Committee*

[HB 1108](#): Rural water associations; authorize those providing sewer services to participate in the ARPA Rural Water Association Infrastructure Grant Program. *Referred To House Conservation and Water Resources → Passed House Conservation and Water Resources Committee → Passed House → Transmitted to Senate → Referred to Senate Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency → Died in Senate Committee*

[HB 1213](#): Water Infrastructure Grant Program; DEQ shall give priority to applicants not receiving sufficient funding in first round grants. *Referred To House Conservation and Water Resources → Passed House Conservation and Water Resources Committee → Passed House → Transmitted to Senate → Referred to Senate Accountability, Efficiency, Transparency → Died in Senate Committee*

[HB 1225](#): Telephone solicitation; bring forward provisions of law relating to. *Passed Senate Energy Committee*

Senate

[SB 2102](#): Impending emergency excavation; define, establish advance notice requirements and require premarking for. *Passed House Public Utilities Committee*

[SB 2232](#): Community water and wastewater facility system or solid waste program; reduce authorized interim period without certified operator. *Referred to Senate Energy → Passed Senate Energy Committee → Died on Calendar*

[SB 2338](#): Municipal waterworks; ensure just, reasonable and transparent billing in. *Referred To Senate Energy → Passed Senate Energy Committee → Passed Senate → Transmitted to House → Referred to House Public Utilities → Died in House Committee*

[SB 2339](#): Provision of law establishing energy efficiency standards for building construction; extend repealer on. *Passed House Energy Committee*

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

[SB 2433](#): Regulation of public utilities; exempt distribution of water by eligible homeowners' association to its own residents from. *Passed House → Motion to Reconsider Entered*

[SB 2492](#): Electric vehicle charging; allow by non-utilities while maintaining consumer protections. *Referred To Senate Energy → Passed Senate Energy Committee → Passed Senate → Transmitted to House → Referred to House Public Utilities → Died in House Committee*

[SB 2494](#): Mississippi Telephone Solicitation Act; transfer enforcement authority to Attorney General's Office. *Referred To Senate Energy → Passed Senate Energy Committee → Passed Senate → Transmitted to House → Referred to House Public Utilities → Died in House Committee*

[SB 2512](#): Counties; authorize to designate ARPA funds to rural water and sewer associations for infrastructure projects. *Passed House → Motion to Reconsider Entered*

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

Appropriation, Tax, Bonds or other Funding/Revenue Bills (Deadline for action is Feb. 22)

[HB 303](#): Electric vehicle tax; exempt low speed electric vehicles. *Referred to House Ways and Means → Died in House Committee*

[HB 331](#): Helping Mississippians Afford Broadband Act; create. *Referred to House Appropriations → Died in House Committee*



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HB 335: income tax; allow credit for investments in qualified clean-burning motor vehicle fuel property.

Referred to House Ways and Means → Died in House Committee

HB 378: Electric/hybrid vehicles; repeal sections of law authorizing taxes. *Referred to House Ways and Means → Died in House Committee*

HB 871: Ad valorem tax; extend time for partial exemption and fee-in-lieu of ad valorem tax agreement for certain renewable energy projects. *Referred to Senate Finance*

HB 1059: Broadband equipment speed; increase to FCC requirement regarding ad valorem tax exemption.

Referred to House Public Utilities; Ways and Means → Died in House Committee.

HB 1254: Bonds; authorize issuance to assist City of Jackson with making repairs and improvements to water and sewer systems. *Referred to House Ways and Means → Died in House Committee*

HB 1353: Bonds; authorize issuance for construction of a separate water system for Jackson State University.

Referred to House Ways and Means → Died in House Committee

HB 1453: Appropriation; DFA for distribution to counties and municipalities for water/sewer infrastructure projects authorized under ARPA. *Referred to House Appropriations → Died in House Committee*

SB 2020: Electric/hybrid vehicle tax; repeal sections of law authorizing. *Referred to Senate Finance → Died in Senate Committee*

SB 2036: Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds; FY2024 appropriation to City of Rolling Fork for improvement of water system. *Referred to Senate Appropriations → Died in Senate Committee*

SB 2698: Ad valorem tax; extend fee-in-lieu qualifying period for renewable energy project. *Referred to House Ways and Means*

SB 2909: General Fund; FY2024 City of Jackson Water Reimbursement Grant Program. *Referred to House Appropriations → Died in House Committee*

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.

Great River UOC Water and Sewer Rates Hearing

On Monday, February 27, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., the Commission held a Public Hearing regarding the Notices of Intent of Great River Utility Operating Company, LLC to Establish State-Wide Rates for Water and Wastewater Services in Its Certificated Areas in the Commission Hearing Room on the 1st Floor of the Woolfolk State Office Building. This hearing was reserved for public comments and individuals from Hinds and Warren County were present to make their comments on the record. The individuals represented residents of Lafayette County and Warren County.



The Commission then held an Evidentiary Hearing on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., regarding the Notices of Intent of Great River Utility Operating Company, LLC to Establish State-Wide Rates for Water and Wastewater Services in Its Certificated Areas in the Commission Hearing Room, in which Great River Utility Operating Company presented Stipulations for consideration in its state-wide rate case for water systems and its state-wide rate case for sewer systems. The Stipulations as presented would result in a 26% reduction from Great River's original request of \$53.75 a month for sewer service and a 16% reduction from Great River's original request of \$47.21 a month for water service. The Commission took the Company's Stipulation and consultants' reports and recommendations under advisement and will continue to review Great River's request to establish state-wide rates.



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The following sewer systems in the following counties in the Central District will be impacted if approved:

- **Warren County:** Brookwood Place Subdivision; Camden Place Subdivision; Fairways Subdivision; Forest Cove Subdivision; Leland Pointe Subdivision; Openwood Plantation; Pecan Village Subdivision; Pine Woods MHP; Ring Road Subdivision; Silver Leaf Development; The Grove Subdivision; The Trace Subdivision
- **Lauderdale County:** King Farms Subdivision
- **Hinds County:** Ridge Park; Wakeland Hills; and Wildwood Subdivisions



Last Week at the MPSC

- ☞ **City of Brooksville** filed their [Notice of Intent](#) to Increase Water Rates for Service in its Certified Area in **Noxubee County** from \$16.20 to a minimum monthly charge of \$18.20 per month, which includes 0-2000 gallons of usage for residential and commercial customers. The total customers impacted by the increase are 1069. **City of Brooksville** also filed its [Notice to Customers](#) of its change in rates from \$16.20 for 0-2000 gallons to the proposed rate of \$18.20 for 0-2000 gallons.
- ☞ **Cooperative Energy** filed its [Petition](#) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to authorize it to construct, maintain and operate a new single circuit 115 kV transmission line, to rebuild two existing 115 kV transmission lines, to construct two new 115 kV 3-way GOAB switches, and to construct two new 115 kV switching stations on existing and new right-of-way in **Walthall, Lincoln, and Pike Counties**. The estimated cost of the transmission lines, switching stations, and facilities is expected to be approximately \$21,749,000.
- ☞ **The Commission** issued its [Order Canceling](#) Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for **Big River Telephone Company, LLC** approving its request to voluntarily relinquish its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to provide competitive resold and facilities-based local exchange telecommunications services and to withdraw all tariffs on file in the State since the Company does not provide telecommunications services to any customer in the State and has no plans to do so.
- ☞ **Great River Utility Operating Co. LLC** filed its Stipulations for [Water Service](#) and [Wastewater Disposal Service](#) in regards to its Notice of Intent to Establish State-Wide Rates for both in Its Certificated Areas in the State. In both its Water and Wastewater Stipulations, **Great River Utility Operating Co. LLC** stipulated to the following:
 - A rate mitigation plan to address rate shock.
 - No further adjustments to the rate base or expenses.
 - Revise its Formula Rate Plan to provide the **Public Utilities Staff** eighty days to review the Company's Formula Rate Plan Annual Filing.
 - Supplement the list of filing requirements in the Formula Rate Plan.
 - Revise the [Formula Rate Plan](#) to provide for interim rates, subject to refund, and permanent rates following **Commission** approval incorporating any necessary calendar-year surcharge or refund.
 - Amendments to its Schedule of Service Charges and Fees to remove certain bank and credit card fees and including such costs in its annual cost of service, and
 - Various amendments to their Service Rules and Regulations to improve the customer's ability to understand and comply with them.
- ☞ **The Commission** issued its [Recommended Order](#) Granting the Supplemental Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity authorizing **Yokena-Jeff Davis Water District Inc.** to construct, operate, and maintain a water distribution system within a specified area of **Warren County**.



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- Yokena-Jeff Davis desires to install approximately 6,200 linear feet of 6-inch PVC water main along Burnt House Road in Warren County to serve existing and future customers in the revised Certificated Area, after having received requests for water service from various property owners.
- ☞ **Southern Spirit Transmission, LLC** filed its [Amended Certificate of Notification](#) in regards to its Petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Proposed Southern Spirit Transmission Project.
- ☞ **Great River Utility Operating Co., LLC** its Verification of Notice for [Water Service](#) and [Wastewater Disposal Service](#) in regards to publication of its Notice of Intent to Establish State-Wide Rates for Water Service in its Certificated Areas.
- ☞ **Cooperative Energy** filed its [Net Metering and Interconnection Rule Report](#) for the Year 2022 in accordance with the Order Establishing Docket to Investigate the Development and Implementation of Net Metering Programs and Standards.

CENTRAL DISTRICT SNAPS



I had the privilege of joining members of the CenterPoint Energy foundation Monday afternoon for two check presentations. We started off at the Mississippi Children's Museum (pictured above) to present a \$20,000 check in support of the institution's Read to Succeed summer camp that prepares students to successfully pass and/or improve their scores of the 3rd Grade Summative Reading Assessment, promoting them to the 4th grade. The program consists of nearly 100 students from the Jackson Public Schools and this summer will be their third year since their initial start-up.



The second check presentation took place at the Bridge Builders Leadership Initiative (pictured above) after-school (6th-12th grade) program site in the Pearl Parks and Recreation Building. The CenterPoint Energy foundation contributed \$21,755 which provided 11 iPad with STEM learning apps and additionally will help expand their program allowing them to provide more support to low and moderate families in need of hot meals, school supplies and other assistance such as workforce development.



The MPSC's March Regular Docket Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, March 7. The meeting is open to the public and will be streamed online.



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **16** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	11
Telecommunications	2
Water/Sewer	2
Natural Gas	1

Last week, the Central District received a total of **137** 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.