

March 15, 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*

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## Protecting Our Energy Infrastructure Involves All Stakeholders

Last week, I reported that the White House released its [National Cybersecurity Strategy](#). This document sets new priorities for action, including "Defend Critical Infrastructure." Americans have been and should continue to be concerned about bad actors' cyber-attacks targeting the energy sector and the potential impact on grid reliability and customer safety. While these threats are a part of life, we must have confidence that utilities and governments are taking all actions possible to reduce and negate cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities and are implementing protections to reduce such risks.

While cyber-based threats have typically taken much of the attention of media, law enforcement and international coalitions created to counter the threats, vigilance against physical threats to the nation's energy and power systems must be increased given the recent increases in physical attacks on electrical substations. Impacts to critical infrastructure could have disastrous consequences for public infrastructure and health should hospitals, energy facilities, small businesses, individuals and more endure an unexpected, prolonged disruption in key services.

In early December 2022, two electrical substations were shot by vandals, causing at least 45,000 customers to lose power in Moore County, North Carolina (pictured right). Just three days before the attack on the substations, the federal Department of Homeland Security issued a bulletin warning "lone offenders and small groups" could be plotting attacks and that the nation's critical infrastructure was among the possible targets. The Department of Homeland Security also issued a bulletin earlier in 2022 warning that domestic extremists have been developing "credible, specific plans" to attack electricity infrastructure since at least 2020.



The threat of direct attacks like the ones in North Carolina and subsequent attacks in Florida, South Carolina, Oregon and Washington State, as well as the aforementioned cybersecurity risks, pose serious threats to communities across the nation. Developing strategies to combat those threats is top-of-mind for utilities, organizations and regulators that manage the states' and nation's power grids.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, there are over 3,000 electric utilities and over 75,000 electric substations across the country. The electric grid is complex and takes a lot of sophisticated hardware to operate. However, the grid is also resilient and exhibits certain redundancy features. Moreover, utilities continually review safety and protection systems as well as plan for worst-case scenarios.



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To continue building resilience and help protect critical infrastructure from attacks, stakeholders from across the natural gas and electricity utility industries refine best practices and address shared challenges. In fact, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) recently directed the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to study the effectiveness of the existing reliability standard for physical security of the Bulk Power System and determine whether the standard needs to be improved. FERC approved the current physical security reliability standard in 2014.

The FERC [Order](#) cites the need for continued vigilance against physical threats to the Bulk Power System. The order gives NERC 120 days to submit a report that examines the effectiveness of the current physical security standard, specifically how physical security protections are being applied, whether improvements to existing requirements are necessary, and whether some minimal level of physical security protections should be required for all Bulk Power System stations, substations and associated primary control centers.



While the review of physical security protection systems is important, ongoing work, what can be done to deter attacks on the front end? The "See Something, Say Something" national campaign raises public awareness of the indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime, as well as the importance of reporting suspicious activity to state and local law enforcement. Don't let your community suffer if you have an opportunity to prevent an attack. Our state Legislature can also look into beefing up penalties for those that openly threaten or conduct attacks against critical infrastructure such as electric substations, transmission lines or generation stations.

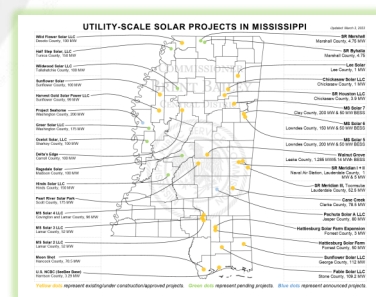
While the electric industry continues to deploy methods to secure the grid, critical infrastructure will likely continue to be a target for today's bad actors and adversaries. Threats will be evaluated to determine what is credible and what is a hoax. Regardless, all threats will be taken seriously, will be dealt with and will have the appropriate safeguards applied.

## Informational Odd and Ends

### Solar Development Across Mississippi

Utility-scale solar developers continue to focus on Mississippi. With affordable land, good transmission infrastructure, access to multiple energy markets, corporate energy diversification goals and federal policy support, billions of dollars of investment is slated for the state.

[Click here for a map of solar projects in the state of Mississippi.](#)



## Power Supply Solution Request for Bids

The City of Gluckstadt, Mississippi will accept sealed bids for the installation and maintenance of an uninterrupted power supply system for seven (7) traffic signals located in the City limits of Gluckstadt. A copy of the specifications for this project is available for pickup at the Gluckstadt City Hall located at 343 Distribution Drive, Madison, MS 39110. Sealed bids will be accepted until April 3, 2023, at 12:00 noon and opened at that time. The phone number for the Gluckstadt City Hall is (769) 567-2306.





## St. Patrick's Day - March 17

St. Patrick's Day is a day to wear green. St. Patrick's Day can also be a day to start saving some green! The first day of Spring is right around the corner which means warmer temperatures will soon be the norm. It is time to start thinking of measures that will cut down on energy use and save money when hot, humid days arrive. These measures include wash clothes in cold water, line dry clothes, tune up your HVAC and replace filters, install programmable thermostat, seal doors and windows, unplug unused appliances and more! It is never too late to start taking steps to be more energy efficient and save some green. Get started this Friday. Wear green; go green; save green!



## Natural Gas Utility Workers' Day - March 18

Safety is a vital aspect of natural gas distribution and the employees of distribution companies endeavor to make natural gas delivery as safe as possible. March 18 of each year is the day that natural gas utility workers around the country will be honored for their hard work to provide safe, reliable natural gas service to local communities. The Mississippi Public Service Commission is proud to recognize the extensive training, commitment to service, and professionalism of the state's natural gas utility workers. Thank you for all you do!



*Pictured at one of Atmos Energy's work sites in Madison County along Yandell Road*



## Fix a Leak Week March 20-26

Mark your calendars for the annual Fix a Leak Week, March 20 through 26, 2023. Fix a Leak Week is geared to teach you how to find and fix household leaks. Household leaks can waste nearly 1 trillion gallons of water annually nationwide, so make a plan to hunt down the drips during Fix a Leak Week.

## Legislation Tracker

The 2023 Regular Legislative session is seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Yesterday was the deadline for floor action on appropriation and revenue bills originating out of the other chamber. The deadline for final adoption of conference reports for appropriation and revenue bills as well as filing of conference reports of general bills is March 27th.

### 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. *Passed Senate → Returned for Concurrence → House Invite Conference*

**HB 809:** Executive Director of Public Utilities Staff; remove Public Service Commission from the process of appointing. *Sent to Governor*

**HB 1060:** Electric vehicles; authorize charging by non-utilities. *Signed by Governor*

**HB 1225:** Telephone solicitation; bring forward provisions of law relating to. *Passed Senate → Returned for Concurrence → House Concurred*



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**Senate**

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

**SB 2339:** *Provision of law establishing energy efficiency standards for building construction; extend repealer on. [Passed House](#) → [Returned for Concurrence](#) → [Senate Invite Conference](#)*

**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. [Passed House](#) → [Returned for Concurrence](#)*









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

**Appropriation, Tax, Bonds or other Funding/Revenue Bills**

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

*Please note that identification of a bill in this newsletter does not indicate support for 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

-  **The Public Utilities Staff** prepared and filed Fuel Audit Summaries and Comments per the independent fuel purchase and management audits of [Entergy Mississippi, LLC](#) and [Mississippi Power Company](#). After review and certification by the **Commission**, the annual audits and management reviews were forwarded to the Legislature per state statute.
-  The following entities filed their motion to intervene in regard to **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** notice of its intent to Establish a Solar for Schools Rate Schedule SFS-1: [Gulf States Renewable Energy Industry Association](#) (GSREIA); [Integrity Energy Partners, LLC](#) (EEP)
-  The following entities filed their motion to intervene in regard to **Mississippi Power Company's** notice of its intent to Establish a Solar for Schools Rate Schedule SFS: [Gulf States Renewable Energy Industry Association](#) (GSREIA); [Integrity Energy Partners](#) (EEP)
-  **The Commission** issued an Order Granting the Request of the motion to intervene in regard to **Entergy Mississippi, LLC's** notice of its intent to Establish a Solar for Schools Rate Schedule for the following entity: [Gulf States Renewable Energy Industry Association](#) (GSREIA)
-  **The Commission** issued an Order Granting the Request of the motion to intervene in regard to **Mississippi Power Company's** notice of its intent to Establish a Solar for Schools Rate Schedule for the following entity: [Gulf States Renewable Energy Industry Association](#) (GSREIA)
-  **The Commission** issued a [Suspension Order](#) in regard to the Matter of a Comprehensive Review of **Atmos Energy Corporation's** Proposed Capital Budget For Fiscal Year 2024.
-  **The Commission** issued an [Order Setting Hearing](#) in regard to the Petition of **SR Marshall, LLC**, for a Facilities Certificate to Construct and Operate a 4.75 MW Solar Electric Generating Facility In **Marshall County**. The hearing will be on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 10:00 am, in the **Commission** Hearing Room, 1st Floor, Woolfolk State Office Building.
-  The following regulated utilities have filed their Annual Reports as required by the Hire Mississippi Rule: [CenterPoint Energy](#)

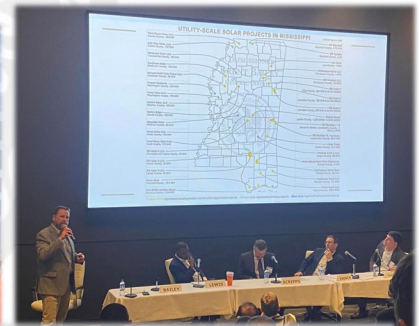




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- ✎ The Commission issued an [Order Approving Compliance Tariffs](#) for **Spire Mississippi, Inc.**
- ✎ **Time Clock Solutions, LLC** filed its [Amended Application](#) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Provide Resold Local Exchange and Interexchange Telecommunication Services in the State.
- ✎ **Fusion Connect, Inc.**; **Fusion, LLC**; **Fusion Cloud Services, LLC**; and the **North Haven Entities** filed their joint [Notice of Consummation](#) to the Commission. The transaction resulted in the **North Haven Entities** acquiring a controlling interest in **Fusion Connect, Inc.** and, indirectly, resulting in a material change in ownership and control of **Fusion, LLC** and **Fusion Cloud Services, LLC**.
- ✎ **Ragsdale Solar, LLC** filed its [Petition](#) Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity Authorizing the Construction and Operation of a 100 MWac Solar Electric Generating Facility in **Madison County**. The Facility will be located on an approximate 1,400 acres, which **Ragsdale** has a portion under lease and the remainder under options to purchase. **Ragsdale** has entered into a Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (VPPA) with a company that seeks to obtain renewable energy credits for one or more of its facilities without directly purchasing energy from **Ragsdale**. Under the VPPA structure, **Ragsdale** will sell the entire electric generation output of the Facility, at wholesale, into the **Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO)** energy market through an interconnection with **Entergy Mississippi**. The capital investment is estimated to be in excess of \$160,000,000 resulting in significant ad valorem tax revenue to **Madison County** and the local school district. A generator interconnection agreement has been executed between **Ragsdale**, **Entergy Mississippi**, and **MISO**. The planned commercial operation date of the Facility is October 31, 2024.

## CENTRAL DISTRICT SNAPS



Thank you to the planning team of the Gulf Coast Power Association (GCPA) for the opportunity to participate in their 9th Annual MISO/SPP Conference last week. Joining my fellow Commissioners Dan Scripps of Michigan, Davante Lewis of Louisiana, and Andrew French of Kansas is always an honor and learning experience. Thanks to Mary, Kim and Robin of GCPA for their wonderful hospitality!



Last week, our Consumer Complaint Specialists handled a total of **26** complaints in the Central District.

Electric Companies	12
Telecommunications	7
Water/Sewer	5
Natural Gas	2

Last week, the Central District received a total of **170** 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.*