

NEWSLINE

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Fort Valley Utility Commission

Since 1891

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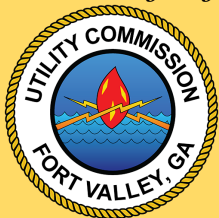
Vice Chairman

Jo Ann Dankel

Linda Johnson

Mayor Barbara B. Williams

The Commission meets the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Fort Valley City Hall.



October 2017

Editor: Martha McAfee

Company Grants Fort Valley Utility Commission Customer Choice Contract

The Fort Valley Utility Commission has been awarded the customer choice contract for a new company locating in Peach County. Southern Flavor Farms has selected Peach County as a site to invest more than \$105 million to build a 75-acre state of the art high tech greenhouse facility and distribution center. The greenhouse will grow tomatoes and cucumbers year-round.



“The economic impact on our community will be substantial,” said Craig Mims, GM/CEO of the Fort Valley Utility Commission. “I am proud of the work that our Director of Operations Angie Luna and other staff members put in to secure the customer choice contract. The Commission being selected as the utility provider for the company is an example of how serious and dedicated we are about being an integral part of economic development efforts in this area.”



Angie Luna, FVUC Director of Operations gives on camera interview

The Commission will be the provider of electric, water, wastewater, natural gas, and telecom services. Southern Flavor Farms will be built in 3 phases over a 5-year period and will create over 200 jobs. When completed, it will be the largest facility of its kind in southern United States.

Several local and state agencies were involved in bringing this company to Peach County. “To say that we are ecstatic about Southern Flavor Farms’ decision to locate in Peach County would be an understatement,” said Fort Valley Utility Commission’s Chair-

man Dollie Horton. “The locating of this company in our service area is a great example of what can be achieved when entities work together.”

The first crop of Tomatoes-on-the-Vine and Long English Cucumbers will be planted in Summer 2018 to be harvested in mid fall that year.

From the General Manager's Desk.....



Public Power Utility and Economic Development

The Fort Valley Utility Commission is proud of the role that we played in landing the most recent economic development prospect in our service area. The announcement that Southern Flavor Farms decided to locate on Highway 96 East in Peach County and chose the Commission as the power provider is a testament to how important a public power utility is in attracting new business and facilitating growth in existing businesses.

The Georgia Territorial Electric Service Act (GTESA) was created in 1973 and assigned power supply areas throughout the state to Electric Membership Corporations, Georgia Power Company, and municipal power systems such as the Fort Valley Utility Commission. This means customers will purchase power from the provider assigned to their service area except for Customer Choice situations. The Customer Choice option gives companies that use power that exceeds 900 kWh, an avenue by which that company can take bids and negotiate contracts with power systems outside of its designated service area. It is a highly competitive process. The fact that the Fort Valley Utility Commission was granted the Customer Choice contract for Southern Flavor Farms is substantial and is indicative of the Commission's plan to continue to seek ways to provide quality, reliable service to all of our customers while also enhancing the community.

"We will continue to look for ways to be a major player in the economic development process. "

The vision, financial investment, and support the Commission provided ensured that the Southern Flavor Farms project would materialize. The investment that this company will make in our community will have a substantial impact for years to come. It is our vision that Southern Flavor Farms is just the beginning.

Moving forward, we will continue to look for ways to be a major player in the economic development process. Reliable and competitive utilities are a critical element for economic development to succeed. Economic development is key to maintaining and growing our system but more importantly, key to helping to create healthy, attractive, equitable, and safe places to live, work, and do business. Better quality of life and sense of community have been shown to result in increased property values, business revenues and attraction of private investment and a skilled workforce. We will continue to pursue economic development projects that fit our community's needs.

We are committed to doing our part.

Fort Valley Utility Commission vs Hurricane Irma



Preparation and persistence paid off as staff members of the Fort Valley Utility Commission braced themselves for the potential effects of Hurricane Irma. When she departed, she left behind a path of destruction consisting of downed power lines and trees, rendering over 5,000 of the Commission's customers without power. "As soon as the weather reports began to come in, we started preparing for the worst," said the Commission's General Manager/CEO Craig Mims. "Our preparations paid off." When it became safe to do so, Commission crews worked almost around the clock to re-

store power. Within 36 hours, all customers had been restored. "I was excited to see all members of the Commission's team pull together to address the needs of our customers," said Angie Luna, Director of Operations. Employees from all departments were dispatched to various locations to assist the Electric Department in getting service restored. Prearrangements were made with private contractors who helped get power back to the homes and businesses quicker. "Sometimes an organization can prepare for events such as Irma and then nothing happens. We wanted to be prepared for the worst just in case and it paid off," said Luna.

A communications center was set up to provide personal contact with those calling in outages and requesting information. "We were really pleased at the patience that our customers showed as we worked diligently to restore power," said Commission Chairman Dollie Horton. Staff answered thousands of phone calls and worked with field personnel to efficiently coordinate restoration efforts. Extra emphasis was placed on providing information on social media. "We wanted to make sure that the public was informed of the status of power outages," further stated Horton.

Hurricane Irma left approximately one million Georgians without power. During wide spread outages, power companies typically follow a specific plan of restoration. "We work to restore power to our medical facilities first and then move to the areas with the largest number of customers affected," said Mims. The Commission's restoration plan also provides that the first repairs made address getting any affected substations back on line followed by repairing primary lines, then secondary lines and finally individual services.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

ORANGE

Our littlest customers!



Susan Miles, Customer Service Supervisor

Call Before You Dig!

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. It's a bad smell that's good!

Some of the signs of a gas leak include seeing bubbling water, hearing a hissing or blowing sound from a pipeline or appliance, dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area, or dirt or dust blowing from the ground, or the smell of rotten eggs.

If you smell gas, or just think you might be smelling gas:

Leave the area immediately!

- **Call Fort Valley Utility Commission at 478-825-7701** or 911 from a neighboring home or business
- **Never** turn on or off switches, open or close garage doors, use a flashlight or phone/cellphone in the presence of the gas smell, because an electric spark could ignite the gas, causing an explosion.
- **Stay** in a safe location until the Emergency Responder arrives and gives you clearance to return to the area

Natural gas, America's most popular home heating fuel, is increasingly popular for use by homeowners, schools, businesses, factories and electric power-generation plants because it is clean, efficient and reliable. In our community, **Fort Valley Utility Commission** provides natural gas to more than **3891** through a network of underground distribution lines. Main gas lines branch into household service lines. The main lines are typically 2-inches in diameter and are located roughly two-feet below the surface, while service lines are typically half-inch to three-quarter-inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18-inches below the surface. However, the depth can vary.

Hitting an underground utility line while digging can cause damage to the environment, serious personal injuries, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially incur fines and repair costs.

That's why it's important to **"Call Before You Dig"** or move earth with mechanical equipment in any way. Whether you're installing an underground dog fence, running water to an outbuilding, excavating a new garden area or post-hole digging for a new mail box post, underground piping and other utilities can be damaged.

When you call Georgia 811, they will answer the call to find out the location and description of your digging site and will notify your utility company, who will then send a professional locate technician to identify and mark the location of lines with colored paint or flags. Once the underground lines have been marked, you will know the approximate location of utility lines and can dig safely.

Calling before you dig can prevent a costly or even deadly mistake. To learn more about our natural gas service and the benefits of natural gas, call 478-825-7701.

Business Matters....

Fort Valley Utility Commission Summer Residential Rates

The Fort Valley Utility Commission electric rates continue to be among the lowest in the state. “We are constantly looking for ways to provide a quality service to our customers at a rate that is consistently below the state average,” said Fort Valley Utility Commission General Manager/CEO, Craig Mims.

The Georgia Public Service Commission publishes Residential Rate Surveys two times a year. The Winter rates are based on the rates charged during the month of January. The Summer rates are published utilizing rates in effect for the month of July.

The survey ranked the 94 electric service providers by rates based on total electric usage for 500, 1000, 1500 and 2000 kilowatt hours. The average overall 2017 Summer rate for all kilowatt users for all utilities was \$157.12 per kWh. Fort Valley Utility Commission’s average rate was \$131.52, Georgia Power’s average was \$166.98 and Flint EMC’s was \$160.13.

The full rate study may be viewed by visiting the Public Service Commission’s website located at psc.state.ga.us.

Customer Highlight



Congratulations **Willie and Alfredia Walker** and the entire staff at Fall Line Electronics. Celebrating 25 years!



Need energy assistance or want to make a charitable donation to help others?

Visit heatga.org!



Congratulations **Blue Bird Body Company**. Celebrating 90 years!



Welcome aboard **Southern Flavor Farms!**

Just For Fun!

Let's Talk Water!

N K R B S M F E B E L N B C N F A J S R
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AQUIFER
 CHLORINATION
 CONDENSATION
 CONSUMPTION
 DROUGHT
 FILTRATION
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 WATERSHED

BACTERIA
 COAGULATION
 CONSERVATION
 DISCHARGE
 EFFICIENCY
 GALLON
 HYDROLOGY
 PRECIPITATION
 SPRING
 WELL

FILL IN THE BLANKS

- Hurricane Irma left approximately _____ Georgians without power.
- Blue Bird is celebrating _____ years in business and Fall Line Electronics is celebrating _____ years!
- The _____ was created in 1973 and assigned power supply areas throughout the state to Electric Membership Corporations, Georgia Power Company, and municipal power systems such as the Fort Valley Utility Commission.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____

Mail or drop your entry by the Utility Commission office by December 5, 2017, to be eligible to win a \$25 gift certificate to a local business. **Utility Commission employees and family members are not eligible to participate**

Community Engagement

Fort Valley Utility Commission Hosts Annual Customer Appreciation Day

Approximately 400 people came out to the Fort Valley Utility Commission's Annual Customer Appreciation Day. Held at Fort Valley Festival Park, an imported beach setting complete with a water slide and bouncy house were a hit for the attendees. "We really do appreciate our customers and enjoy giving back to the community when we can," said General Manager/CEO Craig Mims.

The attendees enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, and snow cones. Music was provided by Utility Commission employee Roy Woodson and head chef Parker Reed coordinated the food. "I always enjoy seeing smiles on faces and there were plenty of smiles to go around!" said Martha McAfee who serves as HR/Key Accounts Manager at the Commission. McAfee chairs the Community Engagement Committee at the Commission which coordinated the event. "We were very pleased with the turnout and anticipate an even larger crowd next year," further stated McAfee.



The Utility Commission provided school supplies to 1,200 students at all 3 Peach County Elementary Schools!

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Emergency Service

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8:00 am - 5:00 pm
Monday - Friday
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Breast Cancer Awareness

