NEWSLINE

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Fort Valley

Utility Commission

Since 1891

500 Anthoine Street

Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

(478) 825-7701

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CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Commissioners

Alre' Horton, Chairman

Rose Marie Huff-Thompson

Stephen Lindsey

Joe Mathews

Ned Watson

Darrel West

Mayor Barbara B. Williams

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



Editor: Martha McAfee

Avoiding the Dangers of Downed Power Lines

NOTE: This article is a repeat from last year but due to accidents around the country, please let this serve as a reminder. BE SAFE!

Severe weather happens year-round. Tornadoes, hurricanes and other storms that bring high, strong wind and torrential rain can seriously damage power lines and other electrical equipment. Unfortunately, many electrical safety hazards remain long after the storm has passed, even if the power is out in that area.

When you see power lines on the ground following a storm, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility. Please know that lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines sagging or down could be in contact with an energized power line making the lines also very dangerous, so stay away from all of them.

Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. A downed power line can energize things around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts.

Keep in mind that a line that's indeed "dead" could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.

If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or the electric utility. Also, if you are in a car that has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in the vehicle and wait until the utility has arrived and de-energized the line. If you must leave your car, only in the case of fire, jump free from the car and hop away from it with both feet together.



Photo by Danny Gilleland

Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down. Be careful not to stand under damaged tree limbs or power lines and be especially cautious near metal fences around the area. **Be careful and cautious!**



From the General Manager's Desk...

I am humbled by the Board of Commissioner's decision to tap me as General Manager at the Commission and I pledge that I will do my very best to lead the organization in a manner that will continue to provide quality service to our customers and to take care of our employees.

When I came aboard at the Commission in September of 2019, as Operations Manager over Water and Wastewater, it did not take long for me to realize that I had made a great decision to join this team. I was very impressed with my coworkers' abilities, job knowledge, and professionalism. Those qualities continued to be displayed even during these tough times when the Commission and other entities throughout this nation have

had to reevaluate how we do business.

I was also excited to move into a new role where I could have a greater impact on the quality of services provided to our ratepayers.

It can be tough at times to move from one role in an organization to another, but advancement is not always difficult. A smooth transition can occur when role expectations are made clear. The transition can be even easier when the opportunity has been provided to be involved in the organization in various areas. During my two years at the Commission, I have been provided those opportunities and expectations are clear. I look forward to serving in my new capacity.

Challenges and Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on businesses and organizations throughout the world. The Commission is not immune. From supply chain issues and price increases, to employee recruitment and retention, and even customer engagement, our ability to conduct business has been affected in several aspects. The

pure nature of the Commission being an Utility Company dictates that we learn to manage extreme events such as emergency situations and even natural disasters. The current pandemic forced us to add some pages to our playbook and we will rise to the challenge.

"We are seeking resources that are available to assist with the expansion and upgrade of our infrastructure so that we may be better equipped to serve additional large industrial and commercial customers."

In the very near future, we will be addressing a decline in our revenue due to some customers' inability to pay as well as the closing of some businesses. Increases in the cost of parts and supplies, as well as contract labor have also raised some financial concerns, but we are aggressively exploring ways to mitigate these issues. We are seeking resources that are available to assist with the expansion and upgrade of our infrastructure so that we may be better equipped to serve additional large industrial and commercial customers. These opportunities are presenting themselves and we must be poised to take advantage of them. Our proactive approach will keep us competitive and on the forefront for commercial and industrial growth. We look forward to exploring a variety of economic and community development opportunities.



New Law Expands Commission's Governing Board

The 2021-2022 regular session of the Georgia General Assembly included legislation that changed the make-up of the Fort Valley Utility Commission Board of Commissioners. House Bill 743 amended the number of members that serve on the Commission. In addition, the Bill clarified the method by which vacancies on the Commission should be filled.

Prior to HB 743, the Board of Commissioners consisted of four elected members and the Mayor of the City of Fort Valley. The four members were elected using the same East and West Ward boundaries as defined by the City of Fort Valley. One member was elected from the East Ward, one from the West and two At-Large. The Mayor serves as the fifth member in an ex-officio capacity.

Effective May 2021, HB 743 added three appointed members. Two of the three are appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Peach County. The third new member is appointed by the Board of Commissioners of Crawford County. The Peach County appointed members must reside in Peach County and outside the corporate city limits. The Crawford County appointed member must reside in Crawford County. All three new members must be customers of the Commission. Both Crawford and Peach have appointed members to fill these positions.

HB 743 also clarified that should a vacancy occur among the elected membership of the Commission, the remaining Commissioners shall appoint a qualified resident of the city to fill the vacancy. Vacancies among the appointed membership shall be filled by the appropriated appointing authority.

Just a Few 2021 Notable Accomplishments!

- * Began work on New Water Treatment Plant, Well, and Elevated tank *
- * Extended water service to several customers in the Highway 96 East service area *
 - * Received Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our annual comprehensive financial report *
- * Successfully passed our financial audit by an independent auditing firm with NO FINDINGS *
 - * Extended sewer to New Peach County High School *
- * Established Electric service at New Peach County High School. Load was obtained via Competitive Customer Choice Bid *
 - *Completed CDBG Sewer Project in the Boulevard St/Courtland Ave Neighborhoods*

An Important Message About Damage Prevention Prior to Excavating

This message is brought to you by **Fort Valley Utility Commission**. There are thousands of dig-in damage incidents in the United States every year. Striking an underground pipeline may lead to expensive fines, serious injury or death. Gas pipelines are built with safety and reliability as top priorities. Over the past 20 years, risk exposure has been rising through increased populations, energy consumption and pipeline miles. At the same time, the number of serious pipeline incidents involving death or injury has declined by 50%. Natural gas leaks do happen and may result in fire, explosion, and/or asphyxiation. 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 have a gas leak:

- Leave the area immediately; **Do Not** congregate around natural gas facilities.
- <u>Call</u> 478-825-7701 or 911 from a neighboring home or business
- <u>Never</u> turn on or off switches, open or close garage doors, use a flashlight or phone/cellphone in the presence of the gas smell, as these devices may be a source of ignition, causing an explosion.

Stay in a safe location until the Emergency Responder arrives and gives you clearance to return to the area.

Here are five easy steps to damage prevention:

Survey and Mark – Survey the proposed excavation area and mark the dig sites in white paint.

Call Before You Dig - 48 hours prior to digging, call 811 and get free staking of underground utility lines which helps reduce the chance of injury and unneeded expense. It is the law in Georgia.

Wait! Wait the required time to allow utility owners to locate and mark the lines.

Respect the Marks! Maintain visibility of the marks and safely follow them when digging.

Dig – Dig with care. Hand excavate within 24-inches of each side of the locate marks. If you plan to dig anywhere near a marked area – especially when using mechanized equipment – use a shovel and carefully hand dig to expose the lines.

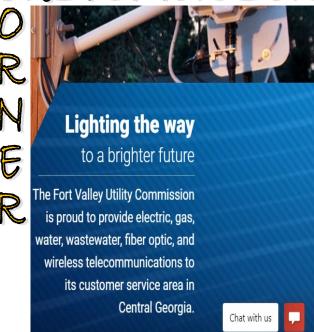
If your equipment contacts a gas line:

- Leave the equipment; jumping clear and shuffling away DO NOT turn off the engine.
- Warn other and leave the area quickly.
- **Do Not operate** any gas pipeline valves or stop the flow of gas or try to fold over plastic pipelines.
- Leave the excavation open.
- If gas is escaping the pipeline, call 911, then Fort Valley Utility Commission at 478-825-7701 If the line is nicked, scraped, gouged, dented or otherwise damaged but not leaking, call Fort Valley Utility Commission at 478-825-7701; these may appear to be minor but can lead to future leaks if not properly repaired.

Natural gas is America's most popular home heating fuel and is increasingly popular for use by homeowners, schools, businesses, factories and electric power-generation plants. Natural gas is efficient, clean, reliable, and a relative bargain compared to alternative energy sources. Natural gas flows through a network of underground main lines that serve approximately **3891** customers in our system. These main lines are typically 2-inch in diameter and branch into household service lines which are typically half-inch to three-quarter-inch in diameter and buried 12- to 18-inches below the surface. The service lines end at each customer's meter where gas is delivered.

This message is brought to you by Fort Valley Utility Commission as a part of our Public Awareness Program. For additional information regarding this message, call 478-825-7701.

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Check out our chat feature on our website!



SIGN UP for e-bill! Call us at 478.825.7701 Option 3 or email customerservice@fvutil.com
You can also sign up by logging into your account on-line.
Visit www.fvutil.com



FVUC Approves Reinstitution of Bill Payment Policy

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fort Valley Utility Commission Board of Commissioners approved to suspended policies governing the collection of bill payments, assessing late fees and other fees, as well as discontinued cut-offs for nonpayment. This was done to help lessen the financial impact of the pandemic on ratepayers. At the November 2021 meeting, the Commissioners voted to begin the process of reinstating those policies.

Staff will continue to work with customers that may have difficulty paying on a case-by-case basis. A repayment schedule has been established for those customers who are in arrears.

In April 2020, the Commission dedicated \$240,000 in funding to assist customers impacted by the pandemic. Some of those funds are still available to those who qualify and are administered through the Fort Valley Cares program (478.825.6025) and the Middle Georgia Community Action Agency (800.525.4972.) Customers may also seek assistance through the Salvation Army and Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Georgia Rental Assistance Program.

Customers who are having trouble paying their bill or who are in arrears should reach out to Customer Service at 478.825.7701 Option 3 to discuss the available options.

For COVID-19 payment assistance call 800.525.4972 or 478.825.6025



Whether you are looking for savings on your energy bills, or to get more comfort and ease for your energy dollar, or simply to do something good for the environment—you can start at your own front door. Take notes as you make a quick room-by-room tour of your house or apartment. Plan to make these easy, low-cost improvements now

and bigger energy-saving changes in months to come.

Entrance. Change outside lights to warm-colored energy-saving LED lamps. Add a photo sensor, and the light will automatically come on to welcome you after dark.

Windows. In summer, block direct sunlight using screens, blinds, or outdoor awnings, vines, and trees. In winter, reverse your thinking and let the sunshine in for free heat during the day. Always cover windows on cold nights for comfort and savings.

Ceiling Fans. Raise your summer air conditioner settings by three to five degrees with no loss of comfort by using ceiling fans. Turn fans off when you leave the room; their benefits are minimal if you are not there to enjoy them.

Air Leaks. A typical home has a half-mile of cracks and gaps around windows, doors, attic hatches, and edges where walls and floors meet! You can buy low-cost supplies to fix this problem from your local home store.

Fireplace Flue. Leaving the damper open after the fire is out can draw out conditioned air and increase energy bills by 15 percent or more. Close the damper whenever the fire is out.

Refrigerator. If you have an old refrigerator or freezer that you barely use, unplug it.
Old appliances can add up to 15 percent to your electric bill. Save energy with your working fridge by placing it in a well-ventilated spot and keeping your fridge and freezer full but not overloaded.

Save Hot Water. You can wash most clothes in cold water, and always rinse cold. You may save hundreds of dollars on water heating each year.

Cool the Dryer. You may air-dry dishes and dry clothes on a cooler setting. These steps will cut drying costs and put less waste heat into your house in summer. For added efficiency, keep that lint trap clean.

Furnace. Change the air filter regularly—once a month in the heating season. Buy multi-packs of replacement filters, so you always have one on hand.

The Switch. Turn lights, appliances, electronics and especially all kinds of heaters off when they are not in use.



LECTRICITY . N F

Tis the Season!

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THANKFUL
SNOWMAN
COOKIES
WREATH
WINTER
GIVING

GREETINGS
BEGINNINGS
CHRISTMAS TREE
SLEIGH
JINGLE BELLS
CANDLE
FRUITCAKE



FVUC Goes Abroad— Well Sort of......

Meet Ollie. Ollie is the son of friends of Commissioner Ned Watson. He lives on the Isle of Jersey, one of the Channel Islands between France and England. On a visit there this summer, Ned presented Ollie with one of the Commission's t-shirts. It is the only shirt like this on the entire Island! Ollie takes great delight in wearing the one-of-a-kind in Jersey FVUC t-shirt and wears it often. His parents say they are going to have to steam it off him to wash it!

Commissioner Watson said that Ollie is an introspective person who embraces a back to the earth lifestyle. He relishes his organic gardening and free spirited lifestyle.

Say hello to our new Ambassador on the Isle of Jersey!

Thanks, Ollie!



Congratulations



Congratulations to Rickey Dawson who has retired from the Commission with over 40 years of service. Gary Dye also retired with 33 years of service. We wish them the best and express our gratitude for their many years of dedicated service to the community.





Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) is a non-profit organization providing strategic and technical services to 52 public power communities with utility operations. Fort Valley is one of the 52 communities and receives services through the Commission. ECG's services are designed to maximize utility performances while creating successful communities with economic prosperity and opportunity.

Services offered by ECG include Aggregated Services, Analytical Services, Economic & Community Development, Engineering & Energy Services, Hosted Solutions, Joint Purchasing, Legislative & Regulatory, Member Training, Pole Attachment Services, and Training & Safety. Pictured here is one of the many times per year ECG staff comes on site and provides hands on training to Commission employees. Training is also provided in areas

of Customer Service, Excellence as a Supervisor, Forman Training, Communications and several others.

Prepared June 2021 Water System ID#2250001

2020 Annual Water Quality Report

The Fort Valley Utility Commission is committed to providing customers with a safe, healthy, and reliable supply of high-quality drinking water. Our water is tested with sophisticated equipment and an advanced procedure multiple times a day. This report details the safety of our water along with the standard parameters. As health scientists learn more about our environment and the effects of substances on human health, new standards will continue to be set for drinking water. The Commission continues to add new technology to meet and exceed new standards. All water sources pass over the surface of the land or through the ground. The water dissolves naturally occurring minerals and materials and can pick up substances relating to the presence of animals, or from human activity. Substances that may be present in source water:

Biological – may come from human, agriculture, or wildlife sources.

Inorganic – can be natural, from storm run-off, or from industrial or domestic wastewater discharges.

Pesticides and herbicides – may come from agriculture, storm run-off or residential use.

Organic chemicals – may come from industrial or domestic processes, storm run-off, and septic systems.

Radioactive materials – can be naturally occurring or the result of mining or other human activity.

To ensure tap water is safe to drink, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain substances in water provided by public water systems.

Where does our water come from?

The Fort Valley Utility Commission gets water from the Tuscaloosa aquifer, which is approximately 500 feet below the surface. This aquifer has, so far, provided the city with safe and dependable supply of water even in the driest years. For information on the Well-Head Protection Plan, contact the Utility Commission's Water Plant at (478)825-5482 or Clay Walker at (478)825-7701 ext. 228.

Treatment Process:

Utility Commission water is disinfected with chlorine to make it biologically safe. The pH is adjusted by adding lime slurry. Fluoride is added to help protect dental health. Phosphate is added to enhance corrosion control.

What is in our water?

More than 7,500 tests are conducted annually at the Fort Valley Utility Commission's Drinking water Lab. These tests monitor tap water for micro-organisms, minerals, and organic substances that could cause disease or other adverse health effects. Testing is done for contaminants, including coliform bacteria, metals, nitrates, and pesticides. The water distribution system is tested on a regular basis.

Contaminants may be found in drinking water that may cause taste, color, or odor problems. These types of problems are not necessarily causes for health concerns. For more information on taste, odor, or color of drinking water, please contact the system's business office.

Immuno-compromised persons such as persons with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, persons who have undergone organ transplants, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly and infants can be particularly at risk from infections. These people should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate ways to lessen the risk of infection by Cryptosporidium and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline (800-426-4791).

If present, elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Lead in drinking water is primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. We cannot control the variety of materials used in plumbing components. When your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize the potential for lead exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using water for drinking or cooking. If you are concerned about lead in your water, you may have your water tested. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods, and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline or at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead.

Lead and Copper

Definitions:

Action Level Goal (ALG): The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. ALGs allow for a margin of safety.

Action Level: The concentration of a contaminant which, if exceeded, triggers treatment or other requirements which a water system must follow.

Lead and	Date Sampled	MCLG	Action	90 th Percen-	# Sites over	Units	Violation	Likely source of contamination
Copper			Level	tile	AL			
Copper	09/10/2019	1.3	1.3	0.21	0	ppm	N	Erosion of natural deposits; Leaching from wood preservatives; Corrosion of household plumbing systems
Lead	09/10/2019	0	15	1.1	0	ppb	N	Corrosion of household plumbing systems; Erosion of natural deposits

Water Quality Test Results

Definitions: The following table contains scientific terms and measures, some which may require explanation.

Avg: Regulatory compliance with some MCLs is based on running annual average of monthly samples

Maximum Contaminant Level or MCL: The highest of a contaminant that is allowed in drinking water. MCLs are set as close to the MCLGs as feasible using the best available treatment technology.

Level 1 Assessment: A level 1 assessment is a study of the water system to identify why total coliform bacteria have been found in the water system.

Maximum Contaminate Level Goal or MCLG: The level of a contaminant in drinking water below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MCLGs allow for a margin of safety.

Level 2 Assessment: A Level 2 assessment is a very detailed study of the water system to identify potential problems and determine (if possible) why an E. coli MCL violation has occurred and/or why total coliform bacteria have been found in our water system on multiple occasions.

Maximum residual disinfectant level or MRDL: The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

Maximum residual disinfectant level goal or MRDLG: The level of a drinking water disinfectant below which there is no known or expected risk to health. MRDLGs do not reflect the benefits of the use of disinfectants to control microbial contaminants.

na: not applicable.

mrem: millirems per year (a measure of radiation absorbed by the body)

ppb: micrograms per liter or parts per billion - or one ounce in 7,350,000 gallons of water.

ppm: milligrams per liter or parts per million - or one ounce in 7,350 gallons of water.

Treatment Technique or TT: A required process intended to reduce the level of a contaminant in drinking water.

Regulated Contaminants

Disinfectants and Disinfection By- Products	Collection Date	Highest Level De- tected	Range of levels de- tected	MCLG	MCL	Units	Violation	Likely source of contamina- tion
Chlorine	2020	1	0-1	MRDLG=4	MRDL=4	ppm	N	Water additive used to control microbes
Haloacetic Acids (HAAS)	2020	1.4	0-1.4	No goal for the total	60	ppb	N	By-Product of drinking water disinfection
Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM)	2020	3	0-3.4	No goal for the total	80	ppb	N	By-product of drinking water disinfection.

Inorganic Contami- nants	Collection Date	Highest Level De- tected	Range of levels de- tected	MCLG	MCL	Units	Violation	Likely Source of Contamina- tion
Fluoride	04/02/2019	0.73	0.61-0.73	4	4.0	ppm	N	Erosion of natural deposits; Water additive whichpro- motes strong teeth; Discharge from fertilizer and aluminum factories.
Nitrate [measured as Nitrogen]	2020	1	0.56-0.95	10	10	ppm	N	Runoff from fertilizer use; Leaching from septictanks, sewage; Erosion of natural deposits.
Radioactive Contami- nants	Collection Date	Highest Level De- tected	Range of levels de- tected	MCLG	MCL	Units	Violation	Likely Source of Contamination
Combined Radium 226/228	07/16/2019	2.8	2.8-2.8	0	5	pCi/L	N	Erosion of natural deposits.
Gross alpha excluding radon and uranium	07/16/2019	7.23	7.23-7.23	0	15	pCi/L	N	Erosion of natural deposits.

Violation Table

Revised Total Coliform R	ule (RTCR)		
	or animal wastes. Hu	man pathogens in the	iseases caused by E. coli. E. coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be se wastes can cause short-term effects, such as diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other children.
Violation Type	Violation Begin	Violation End	Violation Explanation
MONITORING, ROUTINE, MINOR (RTCR)	08/01/2020	08/31/2020	We failed to test our drinking water for the contaminant and period indicated. Because of this failure, we cannot be sureof the quality of our drinking water during the period indicated.

Additional Testing and Research

The EPA has required the Utility Commission and hundreds of U.S. water systems to participate in a major testing program called the Information Collection Rule (ICR). The ICR is intended to provide EPA information about the occurrence of chemical by-products used in disinfecting, plus information about disease -causing pathogens (microorganisms). The data on how public water supply systems control the chemical by-products and pathogens will be used to revise drinking water standards.

Additional Information Sources:

Web sites with information about water quality: www.epa.gov/ow www.awwa.org www.gaepd.org www.amwa.net

Please join us in making our decisions.

We encourage and invite public interest and participation in the decision-making that affects drinking water. The Fort Valley Utility Commission holds regularly scheduled meetings at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of every month. The meetings are open to the public and are held at 500 Anthoine St.

The Fort Valley Utility Commission business office is open daily except for weekends and holidays. Lobby hours are from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The Customer Service telephone number is (478) 825-7701, option 3.

The Drinking Water Quality Lab, and emergency after hours, telephone number is (478) 825-5482.

NEWSLINE

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Fort Valley GA 31030

Emergency Service

Nights and Weekends 478-825-5482

Office Hours

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday - Friday (6:00 pm on Payment Due Dates ONLY)

New Water Tank Underway — Old Water Tank Gets Facelift

The installation of a new water tank is underway. The Utility Commission secured funding for the USDA Water Sys-

tem Improvement Project to serve Fort Valley State University a few years



ago and is excited that work has begun. The tank is located on Friendship Circle and, when completed, this project is designed to increase water pressure and fire protection at Fort Valley State. Bond financing was obtained through United States Department of Agriculture with a 43% grant reimbursement to cover the project cost of \$4,235,000.

The water tank located on Anthoine Street received a much needed "facelift." The maintenance not only improves the appearance but also helps protect the surface of this crucial infrastructure.

When completed, both tanks will look shiny and new!

