

NEWSLINE

ELECTRICITY • WATER • NATURAL GAS • WASTEWATER • TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Fort Valley Utility Commission

Since 1891

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CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

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Rose Marie Thompson

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Keytrick Jones

Stephen Lindsey

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Darrel West

Mayor Jeffery Lundy

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



December 2022

Editor: Martha McAfee



Tis the Season....Holidays are a special time when families and friends make an extra effort to get together and make new memories and reflect on the past. Those special times are often missed by those employees who are considered mission essential. Professionals such as law enforcement, health care providers, military personnel, firefighters, emergency medical service, and yes, utility workers, often miss the opportunity to spend that quality time with their loved ones in order to fulfill the pledges they took to protect and serve others. We thank them for their service and dedication.

As usual, our message in this December edition is simple... **we hope all of your Holidays are filled with joy, peace, and happiness.**



UTILITY COMMISSION • PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEACH, CRAWFORD & MACON COUNTIES



Clay Walker
General Manager

From the General Manager's Desk...

Another year has come and gone and the work of the Commission continues. As I reflect on 2022, I am pleased with our accomplishments and the progress that was made. Just a few highlights:

Awards/Recognition: The Commission received a clean audit report for fiscal year 2021 with no findings. We also received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for our Annual Comprehensive Financial Report. We are grateful for the commitment from our finance team who work hard at ensuring that our records are properly kept and that we use acceptable governmental auditing standards and follow reporting practices that exceed the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles. We also earned a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) designation from the American Public Power Association for providing reliable and safe electric service.

Economic Development: The State of Georgia in partnership with the

"State ownership of this megasite sets the stage for potential growth in our service area. Almost weekly since the purchase, we have been presented opportunities to participate in the planning of this potential development

Peach County Development Authority purchased a megasite in Peach County. This purchase consisted of 1,100 acres located adjacent to GA Highway 96 with easy access to I-75. State ownership of this megasite sets the stage for potential growth in our service area. Almost weekly since the purchase, we have been presented opportunities to participate in the planning and marketing of this potential development. We also had record breaking new water services coming on board as new construction within our service area increased.

Infrastructure Upgrades: Work funded by the GEFA 2020 Sanitary Improvement Project is nearing completion. This project included the repair and replacement of sewer lines in addition to the installation of the lift station and force main that were constructed for the new Peach County High School.

Customer Experience: The COVID-19 pandemic impacted our ability to provide face to face engagement with our customers. Fortunately, we have been able to fully resume normal operations by reopening our Customer Engagement Center. We also moved into the next generation of metering by upgrading 1,500 of our customers to Advanced Metering infrastructure. This upgrade gives us the ability to provide better customer service and improved reliability.

Team Members: I am proud of the group of dedicated employees that work each day to ensure that our rate payers receive quality service. Many of them received certifications and attended trainings designed to further enhance their ability to serve you. Our electric crews traveled to South Carolina and provided storm restoration aid to those communities affected by Hurricane Ian. This aid is coordinated through our partnership with Electric Cities of Georgia.

I look forward to sharing our future expectations in a later Newsline edition. Peace and blessings to each of you in the New Year.

FVUC Warns of Artificially High Gas Prices

The chill of winter will unfortunately usher higher than normal natural gas prices this home heating season, according to Fort Valley Utility Commission. Consumers have enjoyed low and stable natural gas prices over the last several years, but in recent months prices have risen dramatically due to several factors – some of which can be remedied with consumers’ help.

Today our nation is facing an increased demand for electricity as power generators move away from coal to clean-burning natural gas to lower emissions. In addition, electric power generators are using natural gas to support currently less reliable wind and solar electric generation. This added demand for natural gas is taxing the available natural gas supplies.

Additionally, the natural gas industry is facing increased demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) in European and Asian markets. Gas prices in international markets are even higher than here in the U.S., which is prompting natural gas producers to export natural gas to these markets.

Meanwhile tighter Federal regulations and policies are restricting access to abundant, domestic natural gas reserves. For example, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline project designed to bring natural gas to the Southeast was canceled due to policies and regulations opposing this necessary infrastructure. The Mountain Valley Pipeline project, which began over 7 years ago and is designed to bring natural gas to West Virginia and Virginia, continues to be stalled due to regulatory legal battles. Federal policies continue to create obstacles for producers and stalling the development of projects like these and creating unneeded shortages in natural gas supplies and adversely impacting our energy affordability, security, and energy reliability.

“There is no reason natural gas prices should be inflated to their current levels. We want to encourage our customers to reach out to their State and U.S. Representatives to express concern over these policies that limit natural gas production, increase prices, and harm American households,” said Clay Walker, General Manager FVUC. “The facts are clear. This country has well over 100 years of natural gas supply currently available with the potential for more beyond these estimates. We have a safe and reliable network of over two and a half million miles of pipeline to deliver natural gas where it’s needed every day, and we’ve been providing the most affordable energy to households for decades, but these policies are severely restricting the industry from continuing to serve our customers.”

According to the Department of Energy (DOE), natural gas is used to heat more than half of all US households, as well as providing affordable energy for water heating and cooking. In addition to these higher gas prices impacting consumers directly, the increased use of natural gas to generate a large portion of our nation’s electricity means electricity rates are also headed for unprecedented high levels.

Concerned consumers can reach out to their State and Federal representatives. To learn who your State legislators are visit: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/find-my-legislator> To learn who your Federal congressional delegation is visit: <https://www.legis.ga.gov/find-my-legislator>

Meet Your Commissioners

The property, affairs, and business of the Fort Valley Utility Commission are managed by a Board of Commissioners. The Board consists of eight members. Four members are elected by the voters of the City of Fort Valley, two are appointed by the Peach County Board of Commissioners, and one is appointed by the Crawford County Board of Commissioners. The Mayor of Fort Valley is the eighth member and serves in an ex-officio capacity.



Alre' Horton
Chairman



Rose Marie Thompson
Vice Chairman



Robert L Dickey IV
Secretary



Keytrick Jones



Stephen Lindsey



Jeffery Lundy
Mayor



Ned Watson



Darrel West



REMINDER! Everyday those who work on or near the highway are put in danger. From police officers, utility workers, first responders and wreckers; the moment they step out of the vehicle and onto the shoulder of the highway, the danger begins.

Georgia's Move Over Law originated from efforts to keep these workers safe. The law is helping hundreds of thousands of workers state-wide stay injury free while at work and return home safely every day.

Georgia's Move Over Law reads as follows:

A. The operator of a motor vehicle approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle that is displaying flashing yellow, amber, white, red, or blue lights shall approach the authorized emergency vehicle with due caution and shall, absent any other direction by a peace officer, proceed as follows:

1. Make a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the authorized emergency vehicle if possible in the existing safety and traffic conditions; or
2. If a lane change under paragraph (1) of this subsection would be impossible, prohibited by law, or unsafe, reduce the speed of the motor vehicle to a reasonable and proper speed for the existing road and traffic conditions, which speed shall be less than the posted speed limit, and be prepared to stop.

B. The operator of a motor vehicle approaching a stationary towing or recovery vehicle or a stationary highway maintenance vehicle that is displaying flashing yellow, amber, or red lights shall approach the vehicle with due caution and shall, absent any other direction by a peace officer, proceed as follows:

1. Make a lane change into a lane not adjacent to the towing, recovery, or highway maintenance vehicle if possible in the existing safety and traffic conditions; or
2. If a lane change under paragraph (1) of this subsection would be impossible, prohibited by law, or unsafe, reduce the speed of the motor vehicle to a reasonable and proper speed for the existing road and traffic conditions, which speed shall be less than the posted speed limit, and be prepared to stop.

C . Violation of subsection (a) or (b) of this Code section shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500.00.

In summary: If you are on a highway and are approaching a vehicle with flashing yellow, amber, white, red, or blue lights, start preparations for making a lane change. Slow down and turn on your turn signal to indicate your intention to make a lane change. Check the lane to make sure it is safe to move into the lane, then make the lane change. If the lane change is impossible or unsafe, **slow down** even further to the point in which you would be able to stop at any moment. Pass the vehicle slowly and carefully, staying alert for any individual on foot.. Not only is it safe, **IT'S THE LAW!**

CUSTOMER SERVICE

ORNER



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.

Lighting the way
to a brighter future

The Fort Valley Utility Commission
is proud to provide electric, gas,
water, wastewater, fiber optic, and
wireless telecommunications to
its customer service area in
Central Georgia.

Chat with us



Check out our chat feature on our
website!



For COVID-19 payment assistance call 800.525.4972



Up
to **60 MONTHS**
FINANCING AVAILABLE
MONTHLY PAYMENT ADDED TO YOUR BILL



+
0%

FINANCING AVAILABLE

on qualified natural gas appliances

Ask Customer Service about our Main Street On-Bill
Finance Program
478-825-7701



The DUI School of Fort Valley in partnership with Fort Valley State University's VALUE Initiative provided FVUC employees Youth Mental Health 1st Aid Certification Training. The training is designed to give adults the skills to approach, assess, and assist a young person who may be in the early stages of a mental health problem/crisis. If you or someone you know needs assistance, Georgia has a new suicide & crisis lifeline. **Just dial 988.**



Kudos to our team members who joined in and supported Wind Therapy Riders of Central Georgia's Benefit Poker Chip Run fundraiser for Jason Johnson. Jason was employed by the Commission for 20 years and still supports us in his now role as a Manager, Engineer with Electric Cities of Georgia. Jason was injured in an accident earlier this year. We still consider him family and wish him a speedy recovery! Jason, we are rooting for you!



Be Safe. Dig Smart. Call First.

Call before you dig! When you plan to dig or move dirt with mechanical equipment, call **811** at least 48 hours before you dig. Your call to **811** will be directed to the local One Call Center who will then contact affected utilities to have the facilities in your area marked.

Failure to use **811** is a known cause of pipeline accidents. Calling before you dig is the law and can prevent a costly or even a deadly mistake. Striking an underground pipeline may result in fire, explosion and/or asphyxiation.

Here are some simple steps to damage prevention:

- ◆ **Survey and Mark** – Survey proposed excavation areas and mark the dig sites in white paint
- ◆ **Call Before You Dig** – 48 hours prior to digging, call **811** to have underground facilities located. It is the law in Georgia.
- ◆ **Wait the Required Time** – Allow utility owners time to locate and mark the lines
- ◆ **Respect the Marks** – Maintain visibility of the marks and safely follow them when digging
- ◆ **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 using mechanized equipment, use a shovel and carefully hand-dig to expose the lines.

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 Your Equipment Contacts a Gas Line:**

- **Leave equipment;** jumping clear and shuffling away – DO NOT turn off the engine.
- **Warn others and leave** the area quickly; DO NOT congregate around natural gas facilities
- **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, 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 efficient, clean, reliable and a relative bargain compared to alternative energy sources.

To protect yourself and this community, federal and state government, along with **Fort Valley Utility Commission** have made reliability and safety high priorities. For additional information regarding this message, please call us at **478-825-7701**.



Happy Holidays!



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Sleigh Stocking Poinsettia Nutcracker Noel Nice Naughty
 Nativity Mistletoe Miracle Menorah Manger Kwanzaa
 Kinara Jolly Immanuel Holly Hanukkah Grinch
 Gingerbread Frankincense Feliz Navidad Epiphany Elves
 Eggnog Chimney Christmas Carol Bauble Advent





*Merry Christmas!
from all of us at the
Fort Valley Utility Commission*

From the Archives

Retiring After 21 Years of Service

Henry Coody
receives a plaque
commemorating
his retirement
from the Fort
Valley Utility
Commission from
General Manager
Ned Watson.



2012

Our Employees Out and About in the Community.

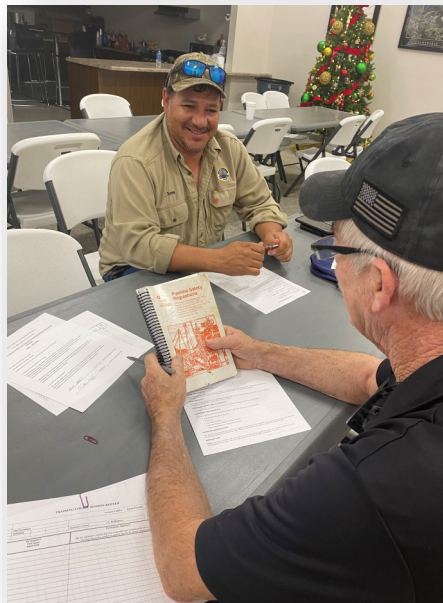


Team FVUC

The Commission's Team consists of 50+ employees engaged in all aspects of providing service within the areas of Water, Wastewater, Gas, Electric, and Telecom. In addition to the operations areas, employees also serve in support and administrative capacities such as IT, Customer Service, Finance, Billing, Metering, and Administration. Here are a few of the faces! Keep a check on our website at fvutil.com and follow us on Facebook for opportunities to join our team.



The Commission strives to provide reliable and quality service to our customers in a safe and efficient manner. An integral part of that is ensuring that our employees receive on-going training to stay abreast of the ever changing utility industry. This training is received in-house as provided by staff as well as by attendance at professional conferences, webinars, and in-person training classes. We are grateful for our partnerships with companies and organizations such as Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG), Jack Sapp Engineering, Georgia Municipal Association, Georgia Rural Water Association, Carl Vinson Institute of Government and many others.



Lynn Buffington with Sapp Engineering provides Gas training



ECG Provides training in Safety and many other areas



O'tania Jenkins with Ga 811 providing training on new 811 law. #CallBeforeYouDig

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Emergency Service

Nights and Weekends
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8:00 am - 5:00 pm
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Happy Holidays