

NEWSLINE

ELECTRICITY • WATER • NATURAL GAS • WASTEWATER • TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Fort Valley

Utility Commission

Since 1891

500 Anthoine Street

Fort Valley, Georgia 31030

(478) 825-7701

(478) 825-7704 FAX

www.fvutil.com

After hours: (478) 825-5482

Follow Us



CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

811 or (800) 282-7411

Elected Commissioners

Dollie Horton

Chairman

Bob Hunnicutt

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.*



February 2017

Editor: Martha McAfee



Photo: Mark Wallheiser, EPA)

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

When devastation hit Southeast Georgia, the Fort Valley Utility Commission extended a helping hand.

In January, Governor Nathan Deal issued a state of emergency for counties in Southeast Georgia after a tornado raged through the area leaving behind a path of destruction that was at least a half mile wide in some places. At least 15 people were killed.

"We cannot bring back the lives of those who perished but we can offer our assistance by helping those families get back a sense of normalcy," stated FVUC Director of Operations, Angie Luna.

The Commission dispatched lineman crews to help restore power to the residents and businesses left in the dark from the catastrophic storms. "We know that they would have done the same thing to help us," further stated Luna. According to the National Weather Service, the tornado packed winds of at least 111 to 135 mph.



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

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



When the average person thinks about *utilities*, several things may come to mind. “When I flip the switch, the lights come on. When I turn the knob in the kitchen sink, the water flows. When I flush the toilet, the waste ‘disappears.’ When I am hot or cold, the heat or air comes on.” All of those things are true and we are here to make sure that when you need those things, they happen.

But we are here to provide so much more.

Quality of life is paramount to the success of any community. Issues such as adequate housing, good schools, quality healthcare, economic growth — all of these issues plus more are key to a not only **surviving** but **thriving** community. We cannot continue to be an island. We must break away from that mentality to be a part of this community and a part of this region. The Commission is committed to doing our part to support efforts to enhance our community.

What are we doing?

“We cannot continue to be an island. We must break away from that mentality to be a part of this community and a part of this region.”

Economic Development: We are an integral part of a recently developed I-75 corridor council. Comprised of persons interested in the growth of Peach and Houston Counties, this group is currently engaged in several projects designed to promote and enhance the areas along Interstate 75 in Peach and Houston Counties. In addition, we are in constant contact with companies that have expressed interest in investing in our service area. Our staff will explore all avenues to help facilitate economic growth in our community and the region.

Community Involvement: We have made a commitment to support and participate in various community initiatives. This past year, our activities included the Annual County-wide Back to School Bash, Fall Festival, Peach Festival, Relay for Life, Customer Appreciation Day, community parades, and even a community visit with Santa! We are looking forward to expanding our presence in the community.

Internal Issues: Major restructuring and redeployment of Commission staff has occurred and is still occurring as we look for ways to ensure that we are providing our customers quality with service in the most efficient manner. We are also exploring the implementation of new technology that will greatly enhance our ability to serve you. We look forward to sharing new developments with you in greater detail in a future Newsline edition.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to thank each of you for your business. We appreciate you as a customer and we are committed to providing to each of you quality service at the best possible rates.

Natural Gas Safety Awareness

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.

In our community, the *Fort Valley Utility Commission* provides natural gas to more than 3,030 customers through a network of underground distribution lines. Main gas lines, typically 2-inch in diameter, 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.

To protect you and others in the community; federal and state government, along with your utility provider have made your safety a high priority. Any time you dig or move earth in any way, you are required to "Call Before You Dig" 48 hours before beginning any digging. When you call **811**, they will contact utility owners who will locate all buried utility lines on your property, so you can safely dig and prevent a potentially hazardous condition. Failure to use the **811** system is a known cause of pipeline accidents. Calling before you dig can prevent a costly or even deadly mistake.

Natural gas is a colorless, odorless gas; however, a chemical that smells like rotten eggs is added to help detect a possible leak. 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 and call the **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/cell phone in the presence of the gas smell, as these devices may be a source of ignition, causing an explosion.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Do your part to familiarize yourself and your family with these natural gas safety tips and continue to enjoy the value, comfort and benefits of America's cleanest, most efficient energy source!

This message is brought to you by **Fort Valley Utility Commission** as a public service. For additional information regarding this message, please call **478-825-7701**.

LOOK

Blowing dirt, bubbling in creeks or ponds, dry spots in moist areas or dead plants surrounded by green live ones could indicate a leak.

LISTEN

A hissing sound that is near gas lines, any appliances or meters could indicate a leak.

SMELL

If you smell the rotten egg odor there could be a leak.

LEAVE

Leave the area immediately .

TELL

Be sure to tell authorities - Notify 911 or call us at 478-825-7701. A faint odor of gas may mean that a pilot light has gone out and should be relit; however a **strong odor** means you should leave the home at once, go to a neighbor's house and call your local utility or emergency number from there.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

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Prefer Predictability? ... Try Budget Billing!

When temperatures drop, our heaters work harder to maintain the temperature we select. The same occurs in the summer when the air conditioner constantly runs to keep us cool. In both instances, utility bills tend to be higher than when temperatures are milder.

If you are struggling with the fluctuation of higher bills in the summer and winter, you may want to consider signing up for the 12-month average payment plan. Once you sign up for the 12-month average plan your payment will be calculated by taking the current month's actual charges (including taxes) plus the actual charges for the 11 preceding months, then dividing by 12 to calculate the 12-month average. This average will be the amount due and will vary slightly from month to month.

To qualify for the plan, you must have resided at your current residence for at least one year, must have a zero balance and have a good payment history for the previous 6 months. When you move or final the account, you will be responsible for any balance due if applicable.

The Fort Valley Utility Commission reserves the right to periodically audit the 12-month average plan accounts and request payment due if the account is building an arrears.

Call Customer Service at 825-7701, option 3 if you would like more information on this plan.

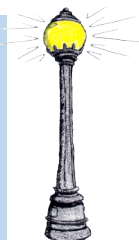


Our littlest customers enjoying the most recent addition to our lobby!

WARNING: You might have to DRAG them away kicking and screaming!



*Tree trimming crews will be working throughout the city for the next few months. Please be careful and **SLOW DOWN** when approaching them.*



*See a street light out?
Call us! 825-7701 option 3.
Help us keep our streets safe!*

Business Matters....

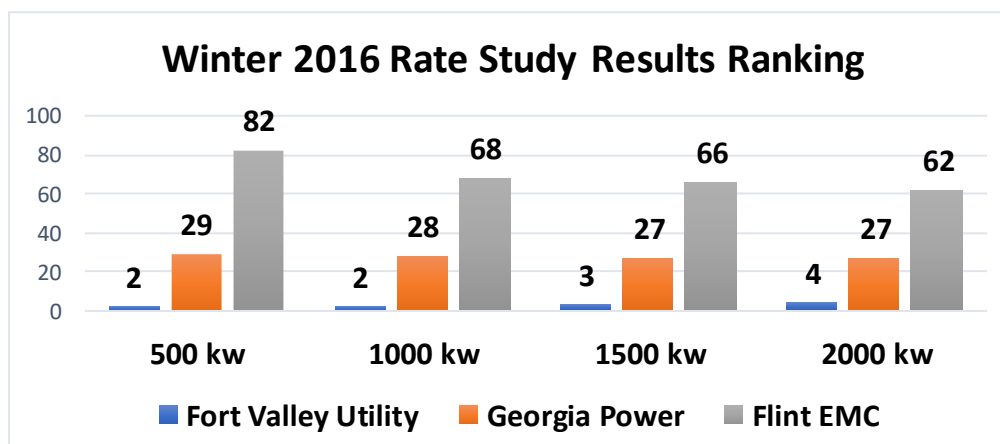
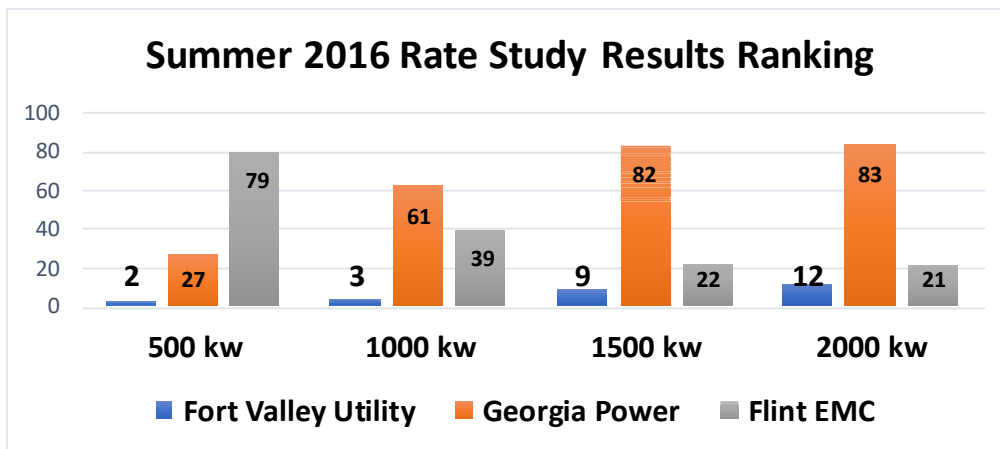
"My bill is so much higher than my friend who lives....."

It is not uncommon for our customers to have this conversation with family and friends who live in other utility service areas.

Let's look at the facts.

The Georgia Public Service Commission publishes Residential Rate Surveys. These surveys rank 94 electric service providers by rates based on total electric usage for 500, 1000, 1500 and 2000 kilowatt hours. The average overall 2016 Summer rate for all kilowatt users for all utilities was **\$154.72** per kw. **Fort Valley Utility Commission's average Summer rate was \$126.38**, Georgia Power's average was \$166.98 and Flint EMC's was \$146.25. For the Winter, the average overall rate for all utilities was **\$141.13**. **Fort Valley's was \$106.58**, Georgia Power stood at \$130.97 and Flint's average was \$149.

In 2016, Fort Valley Utility Commission rates were **consistently within the top 4 lowest in the state** for all kilowatt users and the Winter rates were the **2nd and 3rd lowest** for 500 and 1000 kw users respectively, 9th for 1,500 kw users and 12 for 2,000 kw. See charts below for the comparison to Georgia Power and Flint EMC.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Career Milestones

Our mission is to provide quality utility service to all users in the Fort Valley customer service area at the best possible rates, provide long range planning for upgrades and modernization of utility facilities, infrastructure, and equipment, and to take advantage of the latest usable and practical technology. In order to fulfill this mission, we rely on our employees.

With a combined total of **691 years of experience**, 55 employees work daily to provide quality service to our users. This equates to an average of **12.5 years per employee**. We are proud to have a workforce that is dedicated to the mission. Help us in congratulating these employees who have reached milestones in their careers.



Clifford Snead
Equipment Operator
15 Years



Jason Johnson
Electric Superintendent
15 Years



Connie Tucker
Gas Superintendent
20 Years



Taylor Johnson
Equipment Operator
5 Years



Jason Baker
Gas Foreman
5 Years

Community Engagement



Christmas Parade 2016

a look back at 2016



Back to School Bash 2016

The staff at the Commission is committed to being an integral part of the community. “We are not just ‘the bad guys who turn off lights for non payment of bills’ as we are sometimes affectionally called,” laughed HR/Key Accounts Manager Martha McAfee. “We are human beings, caring individuals with big hearts who have a job to do.”

The Commission was actively involved in several community activities in 2016 including the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life, Back to School Bash, Peach Festival, Fall Festival, and Community parades. A Customer Appreciation Day and a Visit with Santa was also in the mix. “I became a member of the Commission’s team in October and I was very excited to see the activities that the Commission was already supporting and initiating in the community. We are looking forward to engaging further in 2017,” further stated McAfee.

GM/CEO Craig Mims established a Community Engagement Committee that has been given the charge of coordinating and increasing community interactions. Greater is coming in 2017!



Fall Festival 2016



Relay for Life 2016

New Faces!



Brandon Davis
Gas Operator



Martha McAfee
HR/Key Accounts Manager

We are excited to welcome aboard our newest team members. Stop by the office and say hello to them!

Promotions!



Jason Johnson
Superintendent, Electric

Congratulations to these employees who have been promoted.

We wish them the best in their new roles.



Mike Massengale
Foreman, Electric



Erin Jones
Foreman, Water



Gary Moncrief
Senior Foreman, Water

Just For Fun

ELECTRIFYING

F T G I I W N I C R X K T X I G R S Q N
O F C N R N Y U O F E A D S N K O S G Y
C N L H I W S T R D O S J I S Q T P G Y
O H E U L P C U M J R I T X U Z A J U C
E W L I O U P L L L C A M Z L F T B B M
C P B O D R O I L A N O O M A B S W K S
A S O N G O E B R R T S R E T E M R U I
P H O C H M A S E T R O T S I S N A R T
A C C M S T R T C C S W R T O R C H M E
C M S T T O L E L E C T R O N I C S R N
I I P E I A L N S T N P L I E R S X E G
T M R S M W C L H F E T R R Z O V N M A
O Y A O R E S E I G E N E R A T O R R M
R K T R E G R A H C K D E P B O L P O W
W O X F Q M C T E C S D O M Y R T L F V
R H S P I P W R O Z L O U I H L S U S H
N C E S U F W H P O R N X F D N O G N J
K W T G L S S Q S M D K D O Y Q Z N A X
O O V G P F D Z R L A F M E Z S C H R D
R A Z N D E H L E D P L I A B O M U T G

ALTERNATING
AMPS
BATTERY
CAPACITOR
CHARGER
CONDUCTOR
DIODE
ELECTRONICS
FLUORESCENT
FUSE
GENERATOR
INSULATION

INSULATOR
LAMP
MAGNETISM
METER
MOTOR
OHMS
OSCILLOSCOPE
PLIERS
PLUG
PYLON
ROTOR

SHOCK
SOLDER
STATOR
STRIPPING
SWITCH
THERMISTOR
TORCH
TRANSFORMER
TRANSISTOR
VOLTS



Fort Valley Utility Commission recently received a total of \$10,723.58 in grant funds from the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). These funds were used to purchase High Voltage Protective Equipment, Rescue Equipment, a Hazardous Gas Tester, Flashing Lights for Vehicles, Emergency Lighting and Work Zone Signage. Eileen Thomas, Marketing Field Manager for GMA stated, "This program allows each city to stretch their budget dollars and provide a safer work environment for their employees."

Electric Superintendent Jason Johnson serves as the Safety Coordinator for the Commission and is pictured with Pam Helton, who is GMA's Director of Consulting Services.

The I-75 Corridor Council was organized to be a coordinating group and a communication vehicle focused on the development of four I-75 exits (138, 142, 144, and 146.) The Commission is an active part of that group working to promote economic growth, community development, educational opportunities and enhance quality of life along the I-75 corridor for citizens of Middle GA. Pictured below are GM/CEO Craig Mims and Director of Operations Angie Luna at a recent meeting of the Council.





Come MOVE with us!

Every
WEDNESDAY
Beginning
March 1st
6-7 p.m.

Fort Valley
Utility Commission Office
500 Anthoine Street

FREE!
Open to the Public!
All ages
Welcome!
Move at your own
pace!
Call Martha @ 825-7701
ext. 238 for details

UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION FOR OUR DATABASE TO WIN!

In an effort to improve communications with our customers, we are updating our database. Bring or mail your updated information to the Utility Commission office by **April 1, 2017**. A drawing from all submissions will be made for a **\$25.00 gift** certificate to a local business. **Reminder: We do not use your information for solicitation purposes.**

Name: _____ Acct # _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

Email: _____

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEST

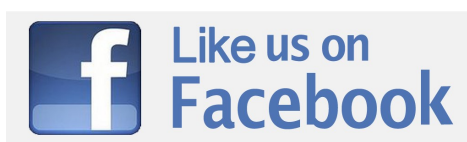
YOUR CHANCE TO **WIN** a **\$25 Gift Certificate**
to a local business.

All you have to do is **Like** our Facebook page
and

then **share** our page using the hashtag
#MYFVUC

Your name will be entered into the drawing.

LET'S GET SOCIAL!



Customer Highlight

Blue Bird Corp. has been awarded \$4.4 million to develop a zero-emission, vehicle-to-grid electric school bus.

Blue Bird was awarded the largest part of \$15 million that the Department of Energy announced in December it would give to organizations "in an effort to accelerate the adoption of advanced and alternative fuel vehicles," according to a release. Blue Bird has sold more than 550,000 buses since it was founded in 1927 and has about 180,000 buses in operation today.



NEWSLINE

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

Contest Winners

*Congratulations to our last edition's Contest Winners!
Check out page 11 for your chance to win. Who knows..YOUR face could be right here!*



Both of these ladies were ecstatic to win our last edition contests. Congratulations Mary Wilder (left) and Verlene Ballard (right) for participating. Both are pictured with Penny Burch, Executive Assistant to the General Manager.

