

NEWSLINE

ELECTRICITY • WATER • NATURAL GAS • WASTEWATER • TELECOMMUNICATIONS

FORT VALLEY UTILITY COMMISSION

Since 1891

500 Anthoine Street
Fort Valley, GA 31030
478-825-7701
478-825-7704 FAX
www.fvutil.com

Follow us on
Twitter & Facebook

After hours:
Call 478-825-5482

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG:
811 or 800-282-7411

ELECTED COMMISSIONERS

Dollie Horton
Chairman

Bob Hunnicutt
Vice Chairman

JoAnn Dankel

Linda Johnson

Mayor Barbara B. Williams

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



October 2016
Editor: Cathy Johnson



Hurricane Matthew

Fort Valley Utility Linemen rush to aid Matthew victims

Above: Mike Massengale, Jimbo Hammock, and Jesse James, scramble to get on the road to aid the stricken communities left in the wake of Hurricane Matthew. Below and right show the men on the job -- getting power back to the hurricane's victims.





Fort Valley Utilities Commission Customers Can Help Low-income Families Stay Warm This Winter

- Thousands of Georgia families – many of them right here in the City of Fort Valley – struggle every year to pay their heating bills. Too many in our community have to choose between staying warm and buying groceries.
- You can help your low-income neighbors stay warm this winter by donating to HEAT – the Heating Energy Assistance Team. HEAT is a nonprofit organization that is Georgia's oldest statewide fuel fund program. The funds donated to HEAT are distributed by the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. Since 1983, HEAT has provided nearly \$23 million for energy assistance to more than 97,000 families in the state. In Peach and surrounding counties, \$18,911 was distributed to 56 households for energy assistance last winter. However, the need is much greater than the funds available.
- Your tax-deductible gift to HEAT will help an elderly couple trying to make ends meet on a fixed income, or a single parent caring for small children or a family whose primary bread winner just lost a job.

Here's how you can help:

- **Through your utility bill** – pledge billing allows you to check off an amount that you agree to donate each month.
- **By mail** – Make your tax-deductible donation payable to HEAT and mail to...
HEAT
P.O. Box 451008
Atlanta, GA 31145
- **Online** – Visit heatga.org to donate online.

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 18-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** has made reliability and safety high priorities. For additional information regarding this message, please call us at **478-825-7701** .

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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Mike Massengale and his team-mates keep our power flowing in Fort Valley

Fort Valley Utility Commission Lineman Mike Massengale brought more than 17 years of experience when he came to work for the Commission. Now his years “in the sky” total 39 - the past 22 spent here in Fort Valley. He enjoys working “with a bunch of good people” and adds that “we try to please everybody.”

He lists a lot of the reasons why he and his fellow workers often are “out on the job while the rest of us are sleeping” are falling trees and critters - mainly squirrels, raccoons, birds and even snakes. The creatures either build nests in or near the wires and/or chew heartily on the aluminium insulation - and often manage to do both. Squirrels are the worst offenders and Mike cannot figure out how they manage to chew through the metal. But they do a champion job and cause many a power outage.

He says the most scary part of his job is during storms at 2:00 a.m. when the lights are out and lightning, wind and rain combine to not only make his job very difficult but very dangerous as well.

The customers sometimes ask for services

that are not the responsibility of the Utilities. Mike explains that the Commission brings power to the top of the mast on the meter box, with all the dials inside, and below that is the customer’s responsibility -- including the fuses.

The linemen wear flame-resistant clothing

as a safety measure but as one can imagine in the hot weather we have had recently, this can be a mixed blessing.

The men attend training sessions in the Newnan, Georgia, training center for several weeks a year, in addition to on-the-job training.

It is interesting how the very large facilities such as Blue Bird Body Company

and Fort Valley State University, manage their power supply. The Utility Commission delivers power to these large companies via a master meter on the perimeter of the premises, and the company manages the power from that point. We do help when the company runs into a problem it cannot handle, he explains.

Mike sums up his work in a few words: “It is a group effort” he says “and it takes all of us to make it happen.”



Linemen Jimbo Hammock and Jason Johnson are up in the clouds doing pole change-outs.

Safety tips from the folks who know best...

During thunderstorms:

- Stay off land lines, cell phones are OK.
- Stay off computers and any electric appliances - **and the most dangerous of all -**
- **STAY AWAY FROM DOWNED POWER LINES - THEY WILL KILL YOU!!!**



The pink ribbon is an international symbol of breast cancer awareness. The first known use of a pink ribbon in connection with breast cancer awareness was in 1991, when the Susan G. Komen Foundation handed out pink ribbons to participants in its New York City race for breast cancer survivors.

In 1992, the pink ribbon was adopted as the official symbol of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of early detection of breast cancer and encourage mammogram screenings.

Every Friday in October, the Utility Commission employees will wear pink T-shirts to help spread the word and to let the community know we care.



Back to School Bash

Staff members helped children get ready for the 2016-2017 school year by donating and handing out school supplies and bags at the Back to School Bash".



First Annual Customer Appreciation Day

Staff from the Operations Department show their appreciation for our customers by handing out hamburgers and hot dogs at our First Annual Customer Appreciation Day event!

**To all Fort Valley Utility Commission natural gas customers:
The Fort Valley Utility Commission would like to ask all natural gas customers
not to attach any device to the natural gas service lines.**

A Special Letter to Our Fort Valley Utility Customers

Fort Valley Utility Commission is currently working on putting together a Weatherization Program that will offer assistance in helping customers to become more energy efficient through weatherization as well as other energy efficiency advice to help customers keep their bills low.

FVUC is working with its partners at Electric Cities of Georgia as well as Fort Valley State University to put together a program that will reach as many customers as possible.

Some of the components the program will be: Weatherization Grants, Energy Efficiency Audits, Energy Efficiency Kits and Workshops. We hope to have the plan in place and begin assisting customers in the Spring of 2017.

Cordially,
Angie Luna, Director of Operations
Fort Valley Utility Commission

Tips You Can Use To Keep Your Costs Down

As the temperatures start to drop, we recommend you winterize your home.

- Caulk or weather strip around doors and windows. A rolled up towel is an inexpensive way to stop drafts.
- Set your thermostat at 68 degrees or less. Dress in warm clothes such as sweaters and sweat shirts. If possible, lower the temperature when you go to bed or are away from the house.
- On sunny days, open the curtains to allow the heat from the sun to penetrate. When the sun goes down, close the curtains.
- Replace window screens with storm windows to provide an extra layer of protection and warmth for the home.
- Ensure the filter in your heating / cooling system is replaced on a regular basis. A dirty filter impedes air flow and reduces efficiency.
- Check registers and radiators to ensure they are not clogged with dust.
- Reverse the direction of the ceiling fan to push warm air downward and force the air to circulate. (Note: As you look up at the fan, the blades should be turning clockwise. The opposite is true for the summer time.)
- Wrap any exposed water pipes to keep them from freezing and possible damage to the pipes.

FunSpot

Fill in the blanks!

- If gas is escaping the pipeline, call _____ then _____ at 478-825-7701.
- The linemen wear _____ clothing as a safety measure.
- Wrap any exposed _____ to keep them from freezing and possible damage to the pipes.

Spot Me



Identify where in Peach County this is located.

Note:

Bring or mail your entry to the
Utility Commission office by
November 25, 2016.

**You may enter either or both
contests, but will only be eligible
to win once per calendar year.**

A drawing from all submissions
will ill be made for a \$25.00 gift
certificate to a local business for
each contest.

**Be sure to include your name,
address, and phone number on
your entry.**

Utility Commission employees
and their family members are not
eligible to participate.

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Emergency Service

Nights and weekends
478-825-5482

Office Hours

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

HOLIDAY INFORMATION

The Utility Commission will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Veterans' Day: November 11:

Thanksgiving: November 24 and 25

Fort Valley State University Office of Student Health & Counseling Services

TEARs2C (Teaching Everyone About the Risks Community Coalition)

PRESENTS

“Wildcat Wisdom”

A Town Hall Meeting on Substance Abuse Prevention

**Fort Valley City Hall
Council Chambers**

204 West Church St.

Fort Valley, Georgia 31030:

October 24 at 6:00 pm

**Come Join In the Conversation As We
Develop Localized Strategies
To Address the Epidemic**

Supported through funding from the Department of Health &
Human Services – SAMHSA Division

FVUC Welcomes incoming FVSU President Dr. Paul Jones

As Chairman of the Board for the Fort Valley Utility Commission charged with providing public energy services and infrastructural support to the residents of the City of Fort Valley, it is indeed my pleasure to endorse the Investiture of Dr. Paul Jones as the tenth President of The Fort Valley State University, my alma mater.

The staff and officers of the Commission stand poised to assist Dr. Jones in his vision of Embracing, Empowering and Engaging the students, faculty and staff of the University and the Fort Valley community as we enter into this era of National, State and local transitioning of leadership. May his vision manifest in “the Valley” with full ILLUMINATION of its might and necessity.

Sincerely,
Dollie Horton