

STAYING current

NRC Stephen Burns has been designated as chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) by President Obama.

FERC In mid-December, the Senate confirmed Colette Honorable to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by voice vote. Ms. Honorable will serve the remainder term (until June 30, 2017) of former Commissioner John Norris, who resigned on August 20, 2014.

EPA The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced a revised schedule for issuing final greenhouse gas emission rules for new, existing and modified/reconstructed power plants. The new time frame projects a mid-summer 2015 schedule. The EPA also anticipates proposing a federal greenhouse gas reduction plan for existing power plants this summer. States can use this model as a guideline when crafting their own rules. If states do not submit plans to achieve the EPA's stated targets for carbon emission reductions, the agency will have its plan ready for implementation.

MEAG Power The Board of Directors approved the substantial form of a contract with PW Power Systems for Long-Term Parts and Outage Services for the Wansley Combined Cycle Unit. The contract, estimated through 2026, should result in savings of more than \$34 million. The Board commended Steve Jackson and his negotiating team for their work on this project.

Yucca Mountain With the NRC release of Volumes 2 and 5 of the Safety Evaluation Report for the Department of Energy's (DOE) Yucca Mountain license application, the evaluation is complete. The conclusion was that the site is safe, but the Commission staff recommended that the NRC should not authorize the construction, as the DOE has not completed an environmental impact supplement or met certain land- and water-rights requirements. While Congress may now take renewed interest in Yucca Mountain, it is unlikely that the DOE will move to complete the named issues, as the current administration opposes the construction.

Congratulations

Ron Mull has been named General Manager of Marietta Power and Water. Doug Lego, formerly MEAG Power's Director of Transmission Operations, is now Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer for the organization. Plus, Marietta Mayor and MEAG Power Board Member, Steve Tumlin, and MEAG Power President and CEO, Bob Johnston, were honored by *Georgia Trend* magazine as being among the 100 Most Influential Georgians.

Solar Power ON THE MOVE



The Georgia General Assembly is considering HB 57, a bill that would allow Georgia property owners to lease solar facilities for placement on their premises. Georgia utilities negotiated throughout the summer with the solar industry to come up with compromise legislation. As of the press date of this article, the bill has passed the Georgia House and is on its way to the Senate for consideration. While the bill allows solar companies, investors and lenders to offer lease plans, it allows utilities to do so as well. Moreover, any power not used by the property has to be sold back to the host utility. The bill also maintains the home rule powers of local governments as it relates to issues such as zoning restrictions and code enforcement, and allows the cities to address local needs related to solar installations.

The bill in its present form limits residential solar installations to 10 kilowatts (kW), and commercial systems cannot generate any more than 125 percent of their total kW demand.

It is expected that the new legislation will increase the number of property owners interested in solar systems, as they will no longer have to buy the panels with upfront funds. The cost for residential solar installations is between \$20,000 and \$50,000, depending on variables such as panel size, quality of panels and mounting systems. Small- to medium-sized businesses are looking at a cost of more than \$200,000 for a typical 100-kW system. The savings one can expect from installing a solar system vary, depending on such factors as rebates, roof type, shade, energy usage and more.

MEAG Power and Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) are ready to answer any questions public power utilities may have concerning the proposed new solar rules. We are also available to discuss how the growing use of solar and other distributed generation technology can impact utility revenue and grid reliability, plus ECG has extensive information on how a community could address retail rates and fees to equitably allocate the cost of the grid for all customers and stay fiscally responsible. To help make important details concerning the solar legislation, as well as the Cogeneration and Net Metering Act of 2001 available, ECG is holding a meeting on Monday, March 9 at 10 a.m. at the MEAG Power Forsyth Training Center. All Participants should consider sending a representative to this event.

Cyber Security AT NUCLEAR PLANTS

The NRC holds the nuclear industry to the highest security standards of any American industry, and the industry exceeds those standards. Computer systems that help operate nuclear power plants and their safety equipment are isolated from the Internet and from internal computer networks. This protects them against outside intrusion. Strict controls govern the use of portable media such as thumb drives, CDs and such. In addition, nuclear plants are designed to automatically disconnect from the power grid if there is a disturbance caused by a cyber attack.

Albany Recognized for their outstanding economic development efforts, Albany won gold and platinum awards for its promotional videos at the Audio Visual Arts and International Economic Development Council.

Covington Several large civic works projects are either completed or under construction. Projects include water pipe upgrade, a drainage improvement and a bike-sidewalk path. The water projects are funded by federal and local grants.

Fairburn/Grantville The Fairburn City Council agreed to spend funds to develop walking trails around two community parks. The improvements are the result of a grant awarded to Fairburn on an 80/20 matching basis. Similarly, Grantville has completed its new Park Walking Trail, which ties into existing trails and provides just under a mile of walking space. Coweta County provided the labor, and Grantville paid for the materials.

Palmetto The community is home to a new 10,000-square-foot library, which is part of the Atlanta-Fulton County Library System building program.

2015 MAKE A NOTE

MEAG Power Board Meetings

March 19

April 16 – Washington, GA

May 21

MEET YOUR *colleagues*



Ronnie Johnston
Mayor
City of Covington

Ronnie Johnston became Mayor of Covington in January 2012. He is in the last year of his four-year term. Johnston is currently a business consultant in Covington following a 20-year career as chief operating officer for a chain of dental practices, Nanston, Inc. He lived in metro Atlanta before moving to Covington.

Why did you run for mayor?

I decided to seek election as mayor because I felt I had a contribution to make to this incredible community. I am at the stage in my life when I have time to give back, and I felt that my business background could assist me in my responsibilities as mayor. There is so much opportunity here, and if I can help move this community forward, that is a great thing for me.

What's the best part of the job?

As a people person, I enjoy a positive end-result, but I also enjoy the process of accomplishment. I derive a great deal of satisfaction in seeing others accomplish things. In some ways, it is similar to watching my four children progress toward a goal.

What do you appreciate about the MEAG Power partnership?

MEAG Power is a great partner for Covington. They seem to be focused on what we need. When we meet with our industry users, our MEAG Power representative helps us talk about electric service and its associated costs. Also, MEAG Power really aids our understanding of the wholesale market and power generation. The community's wholesale bill can get complicated, so their explanations are very valuable.

Georgia: A GOOD PLACE FOR BUSINESS

In September of last year, a survey by *Area Development* magazine put Georgia on top as the Number One State for Doing Business. Georgia won this status by being mentioned the most by site consultants in three overall categories and 18 subcategories. The major categories are (1) **Business Environment**, including incentive programs, corporate tax environment, speed of permitting and more; (2) **Labor Climate**, with cost and right-to-work alongside workforce development programs; and (3) **Infrastructure and Global Access**, noting distribution hubs, competitive utility rates, energy reliability and smart-grid deployment as well as other features.

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