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PSC News

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Cathy Hazelwood, Deputy Director and General Counsel of the State Ethics Commission, discussed important aspects of the Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act of 1991.

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PSC Launches Twitter Account

The picture below illustrates the updated DMS Order Detail page under a docket. The notification information includes when the order was served via the system, and the date and time the order has been confirmed by a party. Should an order recipient not confirm the receipt within three business days of the initial notification, the Order Detail information also includes whether a “green card” has been sent via U.S. Mail to a party, and the date and time. The added feature to DMS contributes to the transparency of the Commission’s work, and allows parties of record to stay informed of the order notification process in a docket.
Act 175 created the Public Utilities Review Committee, who oversees the PSC and ORS.

Ten Year Observance of Act 175

February marked a decade since the enactment and beginning implementation of Act 175, where major changes were brought to the activities of the Commission.

The enactment of Act 175 of 2004 brought major changes to the functionality of the Public Service Commission. Prior to Act 175, the PSC handled all aspects of utility regulation in South Carolina. The Act created the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff, tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the non-adjudicative functions associated with utility regulation, specifically: inspecting, auditing, and examining public utilities. On January 1, 2005, the Public Service Commission began operating as a restructured quasi-judicial body, with the principle duty of adjudicating cases involving the State’s regulated utilities. The Act also created the Public Utilities Review Committee, who oversees the activities of the PSC and ORS.

Act 175 impresses a strict ethics policy on the Commissioners and staff of the PSC, which are all bound by the Code of Judicial Conduct. The requirements of Chapter 13 of Title 8 of the SC Code of Laws ensure the PSC upholds its integrity and delivers fair and reasonable outcomes in its utility regulation. The implementation of Act 175 over the past ten years has been credited to the combined efforts of PURC, ORS, and the PSC.

Allowable Ex Parte Briefings

Since the beginning of 2014, the Commission has held seven allowable ex parte briefings. The transcripts from these briefings are available on the PSC’s website.

Community Service

The PSC participated in two Christmas projects this year that focused on outreach to the senior population in SC. The PSC collected 35 gift bags for lonely and needy seniors for the “Santa to a Senior” program by Home Instead Senior Care. Commissioners and staff also contributed enough to provide 70 meals to the “Share the Love” campaign provided by Meals on Wheels.

In honor of the American Heart Association’s National Wear Red Day in February, the PSC sported their RED to bring awareness to the disease affecting millions of Americans each year.

Commission Corner

Congratulations to Commissioner Randy Randall on his appointment to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Committee on Gas and Subcommittee on Nuclear Issues-Waste Disposal. The Gas Committee fosters awareness and understanding of issues affecting the transportation, distribution, and sale of natural gas safely, efficiently, and economically. The Nuclear Issues-Waste Disposal subcommittee focuses on issues affecting the nuclear industry.

In November, the Commission welcomed Commissioner Brent L. McGee, District 2. Commissioner McGee was appointed by Governor Nikki Haley to fill the previously vacated seat. His current term ends June 30, 2014.

Commissioner John “Butch” Howard was recently awarded a Tier I Certificate of Continuing Regulatory Education (CCRE) by the Michigan State University Institute of Public Utilities for obtaining 240 qualified education credits in continuing regulatory education. The CCRE is endorsed by NARUC, and offers three tiers of certificates based on credit hours obtained.
Committee, who oversees the PSC and ORS. Act 175 created the Public Utilities Review Committee, who oversees the activities of the PSC and ORS. Four new Commissioners took their commissionerships in 2004, and the old and new joined together to embrace the Act and make every effort to comply with the intent of the law, not only in the letter, but to ensure our perception was in line with the intention of Act 175. Since that date ten years ago, we have been able to follow the law without incident, and the Commissioners have individually tried to improve their knowledge and skills to the point this Commission is recognized as one of the leaders in the nation. Notably, the Commission constantly receives requests for copies of Act 175, and a number of other states have modeled their utilities commissions after South Carolina. A great deal of Act 175’s success is attributed to PURC and the Commission staff who have worked hard to make its implementation an extraordinary accomplishment. As this Commission continues to move ahead, we will see that it continues to be a model for the nation, and I look forward to what the future holds for us all.

Reflections of Chairman O’Neal Hamilton

As I reflect on the past ten years since the enactment of Act 175, I see how far this Commission has come since that date and time. Dramatic changes were brought to the PSC, and some tough decisions had to be made during the reorganization. The enactment of Act 175 of 2004 brought major changes to the functionalit y of the Public Service Commission. Prior to Act 175, the PSC handled all aspects of utility regulation in South Carolina. The Act created the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff, tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the non-adjudicative functions associated with utility regulation, specifically: inspecting, auditing, and examining public utilities. On January 1, 2005, the Public Service Commission began operating as a restructured quasi-judicial body, with the principle duty of adjudicating cases involving the State’s regulated utilities. The Act also created the Public Utilities Review Committee, who oversees the activities of the PSC and ORS.

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