



Consumer Connection NEWSLETTER

[PSC Homepage](#)

[Consumer Assistance](#)

[Consumer Brochures](#)

September 2024

Workforce Development Series

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Chairman Mike La Rosa Initiates Workforce Development Series

In August, Chairman Mike La Rosa kicked off a new series highlighting Florida's workforce development programs during the Commission's monthly internal affairs meetings.

"The workforce development series will showcase the excellent programs in Florida's college and university systems that are shaping tomorrow's careers and leaders."

COMMISSION ROUNDUP

BRIEFS

- ◆ NARUC Summer Policy Summit
- ◆ Commissioner Andrew Fay Teaches: How to Be An Effective Witness
- ◆ Commissioner Art Graham Appointed to Federal-State Collaborative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

REPORT ON THE STATUS OF COMPETITION IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

The PSC report compiled data from Florida telecommunications companies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CONSUMER INFORMATION VIDEOS (CLICK TO VIEW)

Florida Lineworker Appreciation Day



August 26 was Florida Lineworker Appreciation Day. Join the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) in celebrating lineworkers and their daily hard work to keep our electricity running. #ThankALineman.

National Preparedness Month



The PSC is promoting readiness during National Preparedness Month (NPM). Observed each September, the goal of NPM is to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies.

Lifeline Awareness Week



The PSC is participating in National Lifeline Awareness Week, September 9–13, 2024, reminding consumers that the federal Lifeline Assistance (Lifeline) program can help eligible residents stay connected.



Workforce Development in Florida will be further explored at future PSC internal affairs meetings.

Chairman Mike La Rosa Initiates Workforce Development Series

“Reaching the next generation to bring and build career awareness is one of my priorities,” Chairman La Rosa said. “The up-and-coming workforce can bring new ideas, processes, and skills to move us forward. The workforce development series will showcase the excellent programs in Florida’s college and university systems that are shaping tomorrow’s careers and leaders.”

In August, Chairman Mike La Rosa kicked off a new series highlighting Florida’s workforce development programs during the Commission’s monthly internal affairs meetings.

Valencia College President Dr. Kathleen Plinske began the series by presenting, “Preparing the Next Generation Workforce.” Valencia established its Advanced Manufacturing Training Center in 2016, and Dr. Plinske said that the Center works with industry partners to design programs that meet industry employment demands. Students can graduate with an industry certificate to immediately begin a career or transfer the certificate to college credit to continue their education.

Workforce programs and degrees offered at Valencia’s Advanced Manufacturing Training Center include:

- ◆ *Electrical Powerline Technician, Accelerated Skills Training in 15 weeks*
- ◆ *Energy Management Controls Technology, Associate in Science Degree*
- ◆ *Cybersecurity & Network Engineering Technology, Associate in Science Degree*
- ◆ *Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, Associate in Science Degree*
- ◆ *Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology, Bachelor of Science Degree*

According to Dr. Plinske, earning an associate degree at Valencia costs about \$6,000, making it affordable for students, who will not start their careers deep in debt. With Valencia’s small class size (averaging 22 students) and affordability, the College is a Florida workforce engine. Valencia College, founded in 1967, has ten locations in Orange and Osceola Counties serving over 70,000 students.



BRIEFS

Chairman Mike La Rosa and Commissioner Gary Clark Participate at NARUC Summer Policy Summit held in Florida



West Palm Beach was the host city for the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' (NARUC) 2024 Summer Policy Summit, July 14-17. It's not often that NARUC chooses a Florida destination for a meeting, so the FPSC was pleased to help make the Summit a success.

Chairman Mike La Rosa opened Monday's General Session by welcoming all conference attendees to the free state of Florida. In the interest of time, Chairman La Rosa provided a Florida "flyover," highlighting what draws millions of visitors to our state every year, from beautiful beaches, to the Everglades, the Space Coast, theme parks, and much more. Of course, the Chairman

highlighted how the Commission helps keep Florida great, in part, by reviewing plans for additional electric and water resource capacity. He also touched on how Florida strives to be the Gold Standard in both hurricane response and recovery.

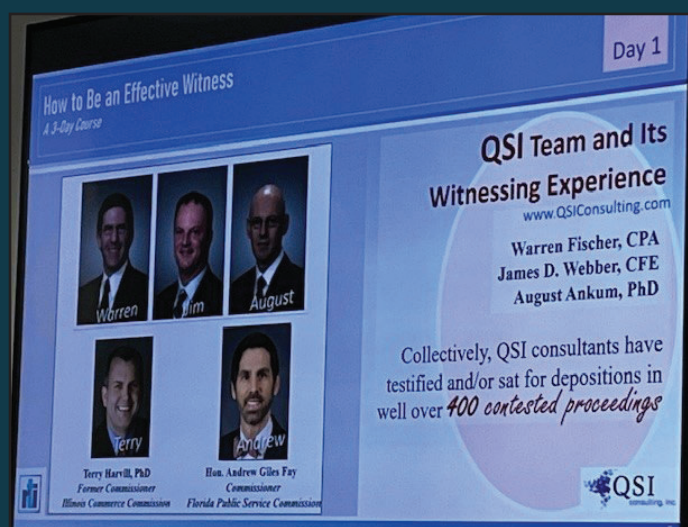
Commissioner Gary Clark served as a panelist on the Critical Consumer Issues Forum (CCIF) on Customer Engagement and Education in relation to rate design to maximize grid benefits and the customer experience. Commissioner Clark emphasized a holistic approach to reach, educate, and engage customers. This approach could include utilizing community partners for outreach, offering tools that allow customers to evaluate the impacts of different rate options available to them, and ensuring rate design mechanisms give customers clear information about their usage which would allow them the opportunity to modify usage patterns. A link to the CCIF report on Exploring Rate Design and other Regulatory Tools is [here](#).



Commissioner Andrew Fay Teaches: How to Be An Effective Witness

Florida PSC staff frequently serve as expert witnesses in rate proceedings, where they may be cross-examined by all parties involved. While PSC staff are highly knowledgeable in their respective fields—such as engineering, economics, finance, and auditing—presenting their expertise effectively as a witness presents an entirely different challenge.

Commissioner Andrew Fay is helping to address this challenge by teaching PSC staff from across the nation strategies in *How to Be An Effective Witness*. NARUC's Regulatory Training Initiative (RTI) course, held September 10-12, covered the essentials of being a witness in an administrative proceeding, including preparing written and oral testimony, taking the witness stand, and responding to both direct and cross-examination. Course content reviewed how administrative agencies—like the PSC—implement their key purpose, promotion of the public interest, through witness testimony. Attendees received guidelines for writing sound and persuasive testimony and insights in how commissioners, judges, and other "finders of fact" review and evaluate testimony.



Commissioner Fay serves as the Chair of NARUC's Critical Infrastructure Committee where he leads a national effort to enhance the resiliency and reliability of America's energy grid. He also serves on NARUC's Subcommittee on Education and Research where he is the lead faculty member of the nation's premier utility rate development program, also known as Rate School.

Commissioner Art Graham Appointed to Federal-State Current Issues Collaborative



On August 12, Commissioner Art Graham was appointed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to serve on the new Federal and State Current Issues Collaborative. The new Collaborative is intended to expand on the body of work from the last three years of the Joint Federal-State Task Force on Electric Transmission.

As noted by FERC, the Collaborative "will provide a venue for federal and state regulators to share perspectives, improve understanding and, where appropriate, identify potential solutions regarding challenges and coordination on matters that affect specific state and federal regulatory jurisdictions. Potential topics include exploring where best to coordinate between state and federal regulators on issues ranging from electric reliability and resource adequacy to natural gas-electric coordination, wholesale and retail markets, new technologies and innovations, and infrastructure."

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) nominated Commissioner Graham to serve on the Collaborative. NARUC received nearly 30 applications from state commissioners for 10 positions on the Collaborative. Two commissioners were chosen to represent each of the five NARUC regions across the United States: Mid-Atlantic, Mid-America, New England, Southeastern, and Western.

In addition to Commissioner Graham, Commissioner Kimberly Duffley of North Carolina will represent the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners on the Collaborative.

"This Collaborative is an important and necessary step in continuing constructive dialogues between federal and state regulators," said NARUC President Julie Fedorchak. "Challenging issues such as resource adequacy, natural gas-electric coordination and infrastructure are among the matters facing state commissions."

Appointed participants will serve one year terms that can be renewed for a total of three years.



Report on the
**Status of Competition in
the Telecommunications
Industry**



AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023



Florida Public Service Commission

Florida Landline Service Continues its Decline in PSC Telecom Report

In 2023, Florida's business and residential telecommunication wireline markets continued to follow the national trend with significant decreases, according to the Florida Public Service Commission's (PSC) annual "Report on the Status of Competition in the Telecommunications Industry."

AT&T and CenturyLink experienced overall access line losses in Florida, while Frontier had a slight gain, due to an increase in business customers. Overall, carriers reported approximately 764,000 total landlines in Florida in 2023, about 17.7 percent fewer than in 2022, as Florida consumers continue to move from traditional landline to wireless and business Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services.

For the thirteenth year in a row, the number of business landlines exceeded residential landlines. However, business access lines declined by 15 percent in 2023, while residential landlines declined by 21.8 percent. CenturyLink experienced a 19.9 percent decline in residential lines during 2023, while Frontier fell 25.6 percent. AT&T experienced the biggest residential loss, with a 27.2 percent decline in residential access lines during the same period.

Following the trend of past years, wireless and VoIP services drove the telecommunications markets in 2023. According to the most recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) data, Florida has an estimated 24 million wireless subscriptions and over 4.5 million VoIP connections, far eclipsing the remaining 764,000 landlines in 2023.

Delivered to the Florida Legislature by August 1 each year, the PSC report compiled data from Florida telecommunications companies for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2023. Access the entire report [here](#), found on the PSC website under PSC Publications/Reports and Other Resources/Telecommunications.

For additional information, visit www.FloridaPSC.com.

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