The Hartselle Connection

October 2024

Serving Hartselle's People, Building for Hartselle's Future

General Manager Bob Sittason Retiring After 20 Years

Bob Sittason has been a cornerstone of Hartselle Utilities for 20 years. Hired as Accounting and Finance Manager in 2004, he became General Manager in 2012.

Last fall, Bob was diagnosed with ALS. Though ALS has affected him physically, his commitment to his work and his community has never wavered. He continues to inspire all who know him through his faith and courage.

Bob has chosen to retire in October. He shared these thoughts about his time with Hartselle Utilities.

Retiring General Manager Bob Sittason has been a strong proponent of bringing automated meter reading to Hartselle. He is pictured here, center, during Hartselle Utilities' first electric AMI meter installation in August, along with Bryan Hall, left, and Matthew Reeves.

First, it has been an honor, privilege and blessing to have served alongside the employees of Hartselle Utilities these past 20 years. I believe God opened these doors and I have tried to do my best in honoring and fulfilling that opportunity. I am grateful to the Board for the confidence and support they have shown in me. Hartselle Utilities' most valuable asset is the employees, who are dedicated, committed, and very skilled. They represent Hartselle Utilities in a very positive and professional manner, and they are to be commended.

Together, we have accomplished a lot. In addition to the routine upgrades, maintenance and rehabilitation to our electric, water, sewer and natural gas systems, we completed several critical and major projects. On our Gas System, we expanded our system over nine miles to serve new customers and loop our system in the county.

At our Wastewater Treatment Plant, we installed an effluent re-use water system where we recycle water and use it in our treatment process, saving water costs. We also added new screening and grit removal infrastructure that removes unwanted debris from our treatment process. On our Sewer Collection System, we replaced both Tanner Heights creek crossings, as well as numerous old sewer mains around the city. We also replaced the entire sewer system in the Snow Hill area under a City Development Block Grant.

In our Water System, we built a low-profile water booster station on Bethel Road that enables us to maintain adequate water pressures on our high-level water system. This was an alternative to building a water tower that is both costly and no one wants in their back yard. We also replaced the entire water system in the Snow Hill area under a City Development Block Grant.

On our Electric System, we have built a fiber network that allows us to communicate with our other facilities and substations. We also installed a second 161 KV transformer at our Primary Substation that had a cost of around $800,000. Partnering with the City of Hartselle, we have two separate Electric Vehicle charging station sites in our downtown area. In addition, we implemented a voltage reduction program that is saving Hartselle Utilities over $100,000 a year.

Recently, we have just begun an Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) program that will enable us to provide better customer service and real-time information that will allow our customers to make better use of the utilities they use.

In addition to these projects, two of the memories that stand out are Covid-19 and the tornado in March 2023. In March 2020, when Covid-19 hit our area, people were at home and relied on their utilities even more than normal. We could not shut down; we had to find a way to continue to operate. Our employees responded as best we could while

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Is your older heating & cooling system costing you money?

Your home's biggest energy expense most likely comes from heating and cooling. The average lifespan of an HVAC system is 15-20 years – beyond that, a system becomes less efficient, and more costly.

The Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio, or SEER, measures how much energy is required to operate a cooling system. The higher the SEER, the more energy, and money, you'll save over the life of the product. The Department of Energy began using an updated version of the SEER rating in 2023, which is why you'll often see slightly different SEER and SEER2 ratings.

By law, new air conditioners must meet a minimum 15 SEER or 13.8 SEER2 rating. Due to our area's heat and humidity, the recommended SEER2 rating in Northeast Alabama is 14.2.

Through the TVA EnergyRight program, Hartselle Utilities customers can qualify for HVAC system rebates, ranging from $50 for an HVAC system tune-up to $1,500 for a geothermal heat pump. To qualify, HVAC systems must be installed by a member of TVA's Quality Contractor Network. These contractors are licensed and insured and have been trained to meet EnergyRight quality standards.

Affordable, $0 down financing for home energy upgrades – like a new HVAC unit – is also available through the EnergyRight program. Energy upgrades aren't limited to HVAC systems; EnergyRight financing can be used to repair and replace anything in your home that affects how energy – electricity or natural gas – is used.

For more information about rebates or financing, call Hartselle Utilities Customer Service at (256) 773-3340 or visit the My Home section of energyright.com.

Bob Sittason Retiring *continued from front page*

still trying to keep everyone safe. Over time we gained some confidence in what we were doing, but the first few months were very stressful. Overall, our employees did what they had to do, and we persevered.

Around 12:15 AM on Saturday, March 25, 2023, the first ever tornado to hit our Electric System tore through the north section of the city, knocking down trees which impacted our infrastructure in numerous places. We had 280 customers out of power when it finally left our system. We worked around the clock and with the help of some crews from Decatur Utilities on that Sunday, we had all our primary infrastructure replaced by that evening. Having never experienced anything like this before, our employees responded admirably and had restored power to everyone who did not have damage by Monday afternoon.

Again, I am very thankful for the opportunity Hartselle Utilities gave me to serve and give back to my community. Hartselle Utilities has an impact on our customers' daily lives and I have never lost sight of that. *–Bob Sittason*

Beat the Winter Blues - and Avoid High Energy Bills

As the crisp air of autumn settles over Northeast Alabama, it's time to start thinking about keeping warm without letting your energy costs skyrocket. Here are five simple yet effective tips to help you stay cozy and conserve energy this winter:

❶ **Seal Air Leaks:** Check windows, doors, and other openings for drafts. Use weatherstripping or caulk to seal gaps, preventing warm air from escaping.

❷ **Adjust Your Thermostat:** Lowering your thermostat by just a few degrees makes a big difference. For every degree you lower, you can save up to 3% on your heating bill.

❸ **Use Smart Thermostats:** If you have a programmable thermostat, set it to lower the heat while you're asleep or away to optimize energy use.

❹ **Reverse Ceiling Fans:** In the winter, reverse the direction of your ceiling fans to push warm air back down into the room.

❺ **Use Heavy Curtains:** Insulated or thermal curtains can help trap heat, especially at night.

October 6-12 is Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week!

PUBLIC NATURAL GAS WEEK
OCTOBER 6-12, 2024

Like more than 2,000 utilities across the country, Hartselle Utilities is a community-owned, not-for-profit public utility. During Public Power and Natural Gas Week, we celebrate the value of being community-owned, including: low rates and high reliability, local service, economic development, and local decision-making focused on our community

Holiday Schedule

Hartselle Utilities will be closed on these days:

Veteran's Day: Monday, Nov. 11
Thanksgiving: Thursday, Nov. 28 - Friday, Nov. 29
Christmas: Tuesday, Dec. 24 - Wednesday, Dec. 25
New Year's: Tuesday, Dec. 31 - Wednesday, Jan. 1
Martin Luther King, Jr.: Monday, Jan. 20, 2024
President's Day: Monday, Feb. 17, 2024

Manage Your Account Online

CUSTOMER PORTAL

MOBILE APP

Scan the above codes with your smartphone to access Hartselle Utilities' Customer Portal or to install our Mobile App.

A message from the Hartselle Fire Department

Rate Changes Effective October 1

There will be an increase in Hartselle Utilities' electric rates effective October 1, 2024. HU's residential customer charge will increase by $1.00 per month and the energy charge will increase by $.00120 per kWh. The monthly increase for our average residential customer, who uses 1,129 kWh on average per month, will be $2.35. Also, TVA has implemented a 5.25% increase on our wholesale rate that is being passed through to all our customers. The energy charge on a residential customer will increase $.00372 per kWh. The impact of this monthly increase for our average residential customer will be $4.20.

Sanitation rates for the City of Hartselle are also increasing, effective October 1. The new rates are:

One Container: $17.25
Two Containers: $20.25
Three Containers: $23.25

For questions or concerns about sanitation/ garbage pickup, please call Hartselle Public Works at (256) 773-2643.

Hartselle Recycling Calendar

For the full Recycling Pickup Calendar and Zone Map, visit hartselle.org or call Public Works at (256) 773-2643

October '24

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November '24

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 25	26	27	28	29	30

December '24

Sun	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 30	31				

Zone 1-A / Zone 1-B | Zone 2-A / Zone 2-B | Zone 3-A / Zone 3-B | Zone 4-A / Zone 4-B

Have a non-emergency question or a question about your bill? Email us at inquiries@hartselleutilities.org. We try to respond to billing and general questions within 24 hours; service issues that need investigation may take up to 48 hours. **To report a gas leak, sewer backup or power outage, call our office.** Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During business hours (M-F, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm), call (256) 773-3340. After hours, call (256) 773-2533 or (256) 773-2588.

SMELL GAS? ACT FAST!

256-773-2533 or 256-773-2588 or 911

Hartselle Utilities

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