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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 9-1-20

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Colver energy facility, mines sold](#) - As part of its expansion in the renewable and alternative energy generation sector, Generation Holdings LP has agreed to purchase the 110-megawatt Colver Power Project in Colver, Cambria County, and five related mine reclamation sites from interests associated with Northern Star Generation.

[NETL-Supported Project Develops Promising REE Extraction Method from Coal Refuse](#) - In a National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL)-supported project with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), researchers developed a safe and efficient processing technology that extracts and concentrates rare earth elements (REE) from coal refuse material.

[US coal-fired power generation totals 65.5 TWh in June, hitting seven-month high: EIA](#) - US coal-fired power generation totaled 65.5 TWh in June, up 40.8% from May, Energy Information Administration data showed Aug. 25.

[NETL, ORNL, University of Kentucky and Penn State receive US\\$10 million to develop coal-derived carbon products](#) - Two US Department of Energy (DOE) National Laboratories, the National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) and Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), are working with the University of Kentucky and the Pennsylvania State University to further the research and development of coal-derived carbon fibres.

[Coal-Fired Generation Down 30% in U.S., 8% Worldwide](#) - Analysis from a global energy organization said power generation from coal-fired units fell 8.3% in the first half of 2020, with the world's coal fleet running at less than half its capacity. The drop for U.S. coal generation was more steep, with the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reporting the output from the nation's coal units was 30% lower this year compared to the first six months of 2019.

[Ohio AG seeks to halt payouts in nuke plants' bankruptcy](#) - The \$60 million bribery and racketeering scheme which prosecutors believe was masterminded by former Ohio House Speaker Larry Householder has cast "a cloud of suspicion" over federal bankruptcy proceedings used to help save the Davis-Besse and Perry nuclear plants, and is akin to a "hijacking of the legislative process," according to a new court document written by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost.

[Coal country envisions paths forward in manufacturing, reclamation and renewables](#) - The blue rubber rafts shriek as they slide down steep metal rails, each guided by a crew that will soon be floating down a 9-mile stretch of river, replete with Class III, IV and V rapids and the ghosts of now-shuttered coal mines and processing plants.

[California power troubles, rolling blackout threat draw ire over renewable energy transition](#) - Conservation measures helped avoid rolling blackouts in California on Tuesday as a scorching heat wave has stressed the state's electrical system to a point not seen in two decades.

[U.S. coal stockpiles steadily increase after reaching lowest level in a decade in 2019](#) - After reaching their lowest level in more than a decade in March 2019, U.S. coal stockpiles steadily increased to 152 million tons in April 2020, recovering to levels not seen in three years. Total U.S. coal stockpiles have increased as coal-fired generation has fallen to a 42-year low.

['No place to go': US coal employment, production nosedive in wake of pandemic](#) - U.S. coal production and employment took a nosedive in the second quarter as the COVID-19 pandemic delivered a significant blow to demand.

[Wind turbine blades in coal mine pits? There's a new law in Wyoming to allow it.](#) - Wind energy companies will have the option of using decommissioned wind turbine blades as backfill material when reclaiming surface coal mine sites soon, thanks to a new bill signed into law earlier this year.

[Renewable energy prices begin an upward trend, LevelTen data shows](#) - Prices for both wind and solar power purchase agreements (PPA) have experienced year-over-year increases for the first time since renewable energy marketplace LevelTen Energy began publishing PPA data in 2018.

[Illinois officials call Exelon plan to close 4 GW of nuclear a 'threat' to secure more subsidies](#) - Exelon on Thursday announced it would close two of its nuclear plants totaling over 4.1 GW of nuclear power by fall of 2021, blaming in part a 2019 rule implemented by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that raises the bidding price for state-subsidized resources in the PJM Interconnection.

[After ComEd bribery case, Illinois groups push for changes to clean energy bill](#) - Illinois legislators, utility leaders and stakeholders have worked to advance a bill to transition the state to zero emissions by 2030, but an investigation uncovering nearly a decade of alleged bribery activity in the state from Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) threatened the landmark legislation.

[Coal-fired power generation in PJM could see brief 2021 comeback](#) - PJM Interconnection coal-fired power generation could recover from recent low levels in 2021 with an anticipated natural gas price resurgence that would improve coal generation economics, but then coal use could taper off again, S&P Global Platts Analytics said.

[New acid mine drainage treatment turns waste into valuable critical minerals](#) - A new way to treat acid mine drainage (AMD) could help transform the environmental pollution problem into an important domestic source of the critical rare earth elements needed to produce technology ranging from smart phones to fighter jets, according to Penn State scientists.

[Global coal capacity shrinks in first half of 2020 for the first time on record](#) - The world's capacity to produce energy from coal declined during the first half of 2020, the first time this has happened on record, according to new data.

[Nuclear bailout tied to bribery scandal was years in making](#) - A \$1 billion bailout for Ohio's two nuclear plants that's now entangled in a state bribery scandal had little support when the idea came up three years ago.

[EPCAMR receives grant to explore solar energy on coal lands](#) - Abandoned mine lands in the region could one day host solar energy projects. Solar on former coal lands? It is happening in West Virginia. Perhaps Pennsylvania can get in on the action.

[Going Virtual! 2020 PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference Oct. 28-29](#) - The organizers of the 2020 PA Abandoned Mine Reclamation Conference have decided to bring the Conference to you online October 28-29.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[Trump administration finalizes coal plant pollution rollback](#) - The Trump administration on Monday finalized its weakening of an Obama-era rule aimed at reducing polluted wastewater from coal-burning power plants that has contaminated streams, lakes and underground aquifers

[Court finds EPA skirted air laws with 'pernicious loophole'](#) - Environmentalists won their battle challenging the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation of Pennsylvania's air quality, with the court ruling the agency used a "pernicious loophole" when greenlighting laxer standards for coal-fired power plants.

[Brouillette calls California's renewable energy push 'case study in how not to approach our electricity grid'](#) - California's emphasis on renewable energy is "a case study in how not to approach our electricity grid and how not to approach the energy needs of this country," Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette told Fox Business Network's "Varney & Co." on Tuesday.

[U.S. Senate Democrats unveil \\$400 billion-a-year plan to tackle climate change](#) - Senate Democrats on Tuesday unveiled a plan to tackle climate change that calls for the U.S. government to spend more than \$400 billion a year to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

[Groups challenge FERC's PURPA rule, accuse commission of 'actively discouraging' small power facilities](#) - Several organizations challenged federal regulators' July final rule on the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) in protests filed last week, arguing the regulatory body acted unlawfully in its order.

[Biden's clean electricity plan may hinge on FERC](#) - Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden's goal of decarbonizing the power sector by 2035 could hinge on an independent agency that's not part of the presidential Cabinet: the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

[Joe Biden reportedly wouldn't pursue carbon tax as president](#) - Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden will not pursue a carbon tax should he win the November election, according to a report, marking an about-face from an inference made at the Democratic National Convention this week.

[Coal Plants May Get Scrubber Reprieve from Proposed EPA NAAQS Redesignations](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has moved to redesignate four new areas of Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas as being in attainment of air quality standards for sulfur dioxide (SO₂).

[EPA relaxes greenhouse gas emission limits on oil and gas industry](#) - President Trump's administration is undoing Obama-era rules designed to limit greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas fields and pipelines, formalizing the changes Thursday in the heart of the nation's most prolific natural gas reservoir and in the premier presidential battleground state of Pennsylvania.

[U.S. budget deficit climbs to record \\$2.81 trillion](#) - The U.S. budget deficit climbed to \$2.81 trillion in the first 10 months of the budget year, exceeding any on record, the Treasury Department said Wednesday.

[Six former EPA heads call for an agency reset after the presidential election](#) - Six former Environmental Protection Agency chiefs are calling for an agency reset after President Donald Trump's regulation-chopping, industry-minded first term, backing a detailed plan by former EPA staffers that ranges from renouncing political influence in regulation to boosting climate-friendly electric vehicles.

[Trump official says coal isn't dead, it's just waiting to become ceramics, roof tiles, and iPhones](#) - Coal is on its way out when it comes to electricity generation. But at least one Trump administration official has some creative ideas for how to keep it in our lives.

[President Trump extends COVID unemployment benefits, defers payroll tax](#) - Seizing the power of his podium and his pen, President Donald Trump on Saturday moved to bypass the nation's elected lawmakers as he claimed the authority to defer payroll taxes and extend an expired unemployment benefit after negotiations with Congress on a new coronavirus rescue package collapsed.

[At EPA, coronavirus disrupts research and raises questions over air quality impact](#) - A research vessel that has collected data on the Great Lakes for 30 years will remain docked this summer. Government scientists studying the emissions of heavy-duty diesel trucks do not have access to their labs. And Andrew Wheeler, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, is no longer signing critical regulations by hand.

[FERC Commissioner McNamee will end tenure in September](#) - Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner Bernard McNamee has made it clear all year that he is stepping down from the regulatory body. He finally gave the exact date of his exit.

[Trump Signs Landmark Land Conservation Bill](#) - President Trump on Tuesday signed into law the Great American Outdoors Act, a measure with broad bipartisan support that guarantees maximum annual funding for a federal program to acquire and preserve land for public use.

[EPA extends utility coal ash compliance deadline 6 months](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on July 29 finalized their revisions to the federal coal combustion residuals (CCR) rules, lengthening the timeline for some utilities to continue dumping coal ash into unlined basins.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Thwarted at every turn, Pa. GOP lawmakers hatch new plan to curtail Wolf's emergency powers](#) - Thwarted by court rulings and vetoes, Republicans in the legislature unhappy with Gov. Tom Wolf's response to the coronavirus pandemic are plotting two new efforts to curtail his emergency powers.

[PUC again delays discussion about utility shutoff ban](#) - The Public Utility Commission did not take up the issue of utility terminations at its meeting on Thursday, even though Chairwoman Gladys Brown Dutrieuille earlier this month solicited comments and said she would discuss the moratorium on Aug. 27.

[DEP Permit Applicants Advised To Start Using Updated General Information Form Immediately](#) - The Department of Environmental Protection posted a notice on its Alerts webpage it has updated its General Information Form (GIF) used to facilitate coordination between different types of permit or authorization applications for the same project.

[Legalized marijuana, paid family leave and child care: Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf releases fall agenda](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf introduced a broad legislative agenda for the fall, including expanded access to child care, paid family leave for Pennsylvanians, recreational marijuana sales and a host of other items.

[Bipartisan Legislation Introduced To Keep Joint Conservation Committee](#) - On August 18, bipartisan legislation-- House Bill 2797-- was introduced by Rep. Parke Wentling (R- Mercer), Rep. Carolyn Comitta (D-Chester) and others to keep the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee in business.

[DEP Posts Proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Regulations Covering Power Plants 4 Weeks Before Sept. 15 EQB Meeting](#) - On August 18, DEP posted the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction regulations covering power plants and background documents on the Environmental Quality Board webpage.

[Report: Pennsylvania falls behind in Chesapeake Bay cleanup](#) - The Chesapeake Bay Foundation says the health of the nation's largest estuary is continuing to improve. But it says Pennsylvania still isn't doing enough to reduce the amount of pollution that's flowing into the bay from the state.

[Hayley Book, the state's lead in joining a regional carbon reduction program, is nominated to the Public Utility Commission](#) - Gov. Tom Wolf has nominated Hayley Book to fill the vacancy at the Public Utility Commission, paving the way for a tie-breaking vote at the regulatory body that has been stuck in stalemate on issues like utility terminations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Pennsylvania is the second most restrictive state when it comes to coronavirus rules, report shows](#) - Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf has taken the fight against the coronavirus very seriously.

[Pennsylvania says greenhouse gas plan could create jobs and raise \\$300 million in revenue](#) - Pennsylvania could gain 30,000 jobs and see \$300 million in revenue through a program that caps carbon emissions from fossil-fuel power plants, a recent economic analysis for the Department of Environmental Protection showed.

[Tax collections in Pa. rebound on pent-up shopper demand, but state still faces huge budget deficit](#) - Pennsylvania's finances received a welcome — but probably temporary — boost in July, with tax collections up 6.6% compared to the same time last year, according to figures released Monday by the state's Independent Fiscal Office.