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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 4-1-21

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Reclaiming Abandoned Mines: Turning Coal Country's Toxic Legacy Into Assets](#) - New legislation could help states and tribes clean up decades-old mining liabilities and restore the environment while creating needed jobs.

[Large consumers blame renewables for 2020 declines in C&I power reliability](#) - A new report on the state of commercial and industrial (C&I) power reliability reveals a "dramatic" increase in outages, particularly in short-term interruptions which utilities may not be required to track or report to regulators.

[Coal drops to lowest proportion of US generation since 1949, but EIA doesn't expect it to last](#) - U.S. coal-fired electricity generation fell to 774 million MWh in 2020, dipping below both natural gas and nuclear powered generation, according to an analysis released March 18 by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

[Texas blackouts may bring winterization mandates from FERC, shape federal spending priorities](#) - Policy activity on grid resilience has seen an uptick in the month since an Arctic blast left millions of Texans without power for days, and the federal policy response could bring new requirements for generator winterization and inform stimulus and infrastructure spending priorities, a Washington insider said March 24.

[Texas PUC Chair resigns, following pressure from governor, refusal to reprice \\$16B ERCOT overcharge](#) - Texas Public Utility Commission Chair Arthur D'Andrea resigned Tuesday, upon the request of Gov. Greg Abbott, R.

[ERCOT Lists Generators Forced Offline During Texas Extreme Cold Event](#) - The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) in freshly revealed data on March 4 reported that the Texas grid suffered 1,796 generating or energy storage outages or derates as winter storm Uri bore down on the state in mid-February.

[PJM MOPR in the Crosshairs at FERC Tech Conference](#) - PJM's minimum offer price rule (MOPR) is living on borrowed time if the comments at FERC's technical conference on capacity markets Tuesday is any guide.

[PJM must revise capacity market power mitigation rules seen driving up prices: FERC](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission March 18 ordered PJM Interconnection to revise its capacity market rules to better protect consumers from the exercise of market power by power sellers, in a move that commissioners stressed would not disrupt plans for the region's upcoming capacity auction.

[2020 PJM power prices lowest in history due to lower fuel prices, capacity reform needed](#) - PJM Interconnection real-time load-weighted average power prices in 2020 were the lowest in PJM's energy market history at \$21.77/MWh, and down 20.3% from \$27.32/MWh in 2019, with the largest factor being lower power generation fuel prices, PJM's market monitor said March 11.

[With eye on keeping capacity auctions on track, FERC stands by PJM reserve market overhaul](#) - The US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has denied requests for rehearing of its November 2020 approval of PJM Interconnection's plans to overhaul its reserve market, with Chairman Richard Glick voting in favor while still disapproving of aspects of the grid operator's current market design.

[CO2 emissions prices in the Northeast states reached record levels in most recent auction](#) - The most recent Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) quarterly auction, held on March 3, 2021, resulted in a clearing price of \$7.60 per short ton of carbon dioxide (CO2), surpassing the previous high price of \$7.50 per short ton reached in December 2015.

[Legislation approved to eliminate Ohio nuclear plants bailout](#) - Lawmakers in both the Ohio House and Senate approved legislation this week that would repeal the bailout.

[Ohio bribery probe: FirstEnergy Corp. says subsidiary gave \\$56.6 million to nonprofit that pleaded guilty](#) - Akron-based FirstEnergy admitted a wholly-owned subsidiary paid \$56.6 million to a dark money group that recently pleaded guilty to Ohio's largest bribery scheme, according to a filing this week in federal court.

[Abandoned mine reclamation extension introduced](#) - U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright, D-Lackawanna, said Wednesday he is introducing federal, bipartisan legislation to extend the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund, which provides money to clean up and reclaim abandoned mine land and toxic, mine-tainted water throughout Appalachia and Western mining states.

[Orange water, dirty air: What will it take to clean up abandoned mine land in the Chesapeake watershed?](#) - In dozens of old coal mining towns in Pennsylvania and Western Maryland, black dust swirling off of naked piles of coal waste — called “bony piles” — forces people to hose off their houses and breathe polluted air. It’s been that way for so long that many people did not expect anything to change.

[FEATURE: Despite February storm, US coal plant retirements likely to continue](#) - Despite the Feb. 14 winter storm's triple-digit natural gas prices, massive gas-fired generation outages, soaring power prices and rolling blackouts in the southern Great Plains of the US, coal-fired generation is likely to continue to show net capacity reductions across the Lower 48 in the next few years.

[Can Biden Keep Coal Country From Becoming a ‘Ghost Town’?](#) - For nearly 60 years, presidents have promised to lift up Appalachia, but many communities remain on the brink.

[What’s really driving coal power’s demise? It’s not what you think | Analysis](#) - People often point to plunging natural gas prices as the reason U.S. coal-fired power plants have been shutting down at a faster pace in recent years.

[Energy-related emissions up in December despite pandemic](#) - Global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions rose slightly in December compared with the same month of 2019, indicating the sharp drop seen due to the pandemic was short-lived.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[Biden visits Pittsburgh, calls huge infrastructure plan ‘a once in a generation investment in America’](#) - President Joe Biden on Wednesday outlined a \$2.3 trillion plan to reengineer the nation’s infrastructure over the next eight years in what he billed as “a once in a generation investment in America” that would undo his predecessor’s signature legislative achievement of giant tax cuts for corporations in the process.

[EPA dismisses dozens of key science advisers picked under Trump](#) - The Biden administration says it needs to restore trust in the agency by “resetting” membership on two key science advisory panels.

[Biden lays groundwork for environmental regulations](#) - The Biden administration is poised to take significant action on a range of environmental issues.

[Biden boosts offshore wind energy, wants to power 10M homes by 2030](#) - The Biden administration is ramping up efforts to sharply increase offshore wind energy along the East Coast.

[Red tape or climate protections? Infrastructure bill puts new spotlight on federal permitting](#) - As Congress begins to assemble a once-in-a-century federal investment in infrastructure, the Biden administration is taking steps to redefine the process for permitting such projects.

[Bipartisan House lawmakers to reintroduce grid security bill after Texas outages, SolarWinds attack](#) - A bipartisan group of lawmakers in the U.S. House plan to reintroduce HR 5760, the Grid Security Research and Development Act, which would require the Department of Energy (DOE) to bolster the cyber and physical security capabilities of the electric grid.

[U.S. House Hearing On Reauthorizing Federal Abandoned Mine Lands Program: We Don't Deserve To Wait Any Longer For Clean Streams, Diversified Economies](#) - On March 18, Robert Hughes from the Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation told the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources-- "We don't deserve to have to wait any longer for clean streams, green spaces, vibrant and diversified regional economies, and communities in which our children can safely recreate, live, work, and play."

[EPA Finalizes Rule to Curb Cross-State Pollution](#) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued an update and finalized a pollution rule that will require reductions in ozone emissions from power plants in 12 states this year.

[Future of EPA's Rule on State Water Quality Certification of Federal Permits](#) - High on the list of Trump administration rules that will be reevaluated by the Biden administration is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Clean Water Act (CWA) section 401 rule on state water quality certifications of federal permits.

[In 1st prime-time address, Biden tells nation all adults will be eligible for vaccines by May 1](#) - One year after the nation was brought to a near-standstill by the coronavirus, President Joe Biden pledged in his first prime-time address Thursday night to make all adults eligible for vaccines by May 1 and raised the possibility of beginning to "mark our independence from this virus" by the Fourth of July. He offered Americans fresh hope and appealed anew for their help.

[What's inside the \\$1.9T COVID-19 bill passed by Congress](#) - The sweeping pandemic relief package awaiting President Joe Biden's signature aims to help the U.S. defeat the virus and nurse the economy back to health

[Senate confirms Michael Regan as EPA chief](#) - The Senate on Wednesday confirmed Michael Regan as the next administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), putting him in charge of an agency that will play a key role in implementing President Biden's climate agenda.

[GAO urges FERC, DOE to develop national resilience strategy as senators focus on obstacles](#) - To avoid billions in potential costs associated with severe-weather power outages due to climate change, the U.S. government, particularly FERC and the Department of Energy, needs to develop a nation-wide resilience strategy, according to new research by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

[Senate Democrats plan to reintroduce energy tax reform bill, focus on long-term incentives](#) - Senate Democrats are retooling energy tax reform legislation that was first proposed two years ago but which failed to advance in a Republican-led Congress.

[Energy Department announces \\$76 million toward carbon capture, industrial assessment centers](#) - The Department of Energy in recent days announced two major initiatives that will put more than \$75 million in projects that seek to make industry more efficient and advance carbon capture technology.

[Federal Courts Help Biden Quickly Dismantle Trump's Climate and Environmental Legacy](#) - Trump's success in appointing conservative judges has so far been no match for his team's own ineptitude, the skill of the environmental bar and industry's desire to work with the new administration.

[Biden faces steep challenges to reach renewable energy goals](#) - President Joe Biden wants to change the way the U.S. uses energy by expanding renewables, but he will need to navigate a host of challenges — including the coronavirus pandemic and restoring hundreds of thousands of lost jobs — to get it done.

[AP Interview: DOE reviving loan program, Granholm says](#) - As part of its clean-energy agenda, the Biden administration is reviving an Energy Department program that disbursed billions of dollars in loan guarantees to companies such as electric car maker Tesla and the failed solar company Solyndra, Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm says.

[House Democrats introduce bill with pathway to 100% clean energy by 2035](#) - House Democrats unveiled legislation on Tuesday that would bring economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to net-zero by 2050, and cut emissions 50% below 2005 levels by 2030 or sooner.

[Interior Investing Over \\$260 Million to Help Create Jobs and Revitalize Land in Coal Communities](#) - As part of the Biden-Harris administration's commitment to helping stabilize communities hit hardest by the decrease in demand for coal energy, the Department of the Interior today announced the availability of more than \$260 million for states and Tribes to support reclamation efforts in fiscal year 2021.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Pennsylvania will make all residents eligible for COVID-19 vaccine on April 19; speeds up timetable for upcoming phases](#) - Pennsylvania is speeding up its timetable for upcoming phases of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, allowing all adult residents to schedule appointments starting April 19, Health Department officials announced Wednesday.

[Senate bill proposes expansion of Pennsylvania's renewable energy targets](#) - A bill pending in the state Senate proposes expanding Pennsylvania's renewable energy targets to keep it a competitive place for investors as surrounding states race toward lowered carbon footprints.

[Gov. Wolf Announces Largest Government Solar Energy Commitment in the U.S.](#) - Governor Tom Wolf announced today a major clean energy initiative that will produce nearly 50 percent of state government's electricity through seven new solar energy arrays totaling 191-megawatts to be built around the state.

[New streams in Pennsylvania to be tagged as High Quality for extra protections](#) - Forty-one streams, creeks, brooks and runs, some so small they don't have names, are finally flowing toward the more stringent water quality protections that will come with their reclassification as "High Quality — Cold Water Fisheries."

[Four Pa. legislative special elections set for May 18 primary day](#) - State Rep. Jeff Pyle's retirement this week will trigger a special election coinciding with the May 18 primary, the Pennsylvania House Speaker announced on Wednesday.

[Pa. Capitol to reopen to the public on March 22](#) - In another sign of life starting to return to "normal," the Pennsylvania Capitol will reopen to the public on Monday, March 22, with enhanced security protocols in place.

[Legislative action on increasing Pennsylvania's alternative energy goals appears unlikely](#) - Pennsylvania's targets for renewable energy are set to max out this year unless the General Assembly takes action, and Republican leaders seem ready to leave increasing goals for green energy up to the private sector.

[Gov. Wolf: Effective April 4, More Options for Restaurants and Other Businesses, Mass Gathering Maximums Increase](#) - As COVID-19 cases have declined and vaccination rates are climbing, Governor Tom Wolf today announced the lifting of some targeted restrictions on restaurants and other businesses, as well as increased gathering limits.

[U.S. aid to Pa. draws GOP warning to use it for 1-time costs](#) - Pennsylvania state government is expected to receive more than \$7 billion from the \$1.9 trillion covid-19 rescue package making its way through Congress, or almost one-fifth of its operating costs this year, with some warning that the one-time aid should be used only for one-time costs.

[Gov. Wolf Revises Mitigation Order on Gatherings and Lifts Out-of-State Travel Restrictions](#) - As COVID-19 cases continue to decline and the state's vaccination plan is amplified, the Wolf Administration announced revised and lifted mitigation restrictions that are effective statewide today.

[One day, two hearings: Fossil fuels shift climate change messaging; Dems show rift on green transition](#) - Natural gas and coal boosters across Pennsylvania logged on to video meetings Wednesday and told Democrats and Republicans in the state legislature that: Yes, there is a bright future for fossil fuels.