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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 8-1-21

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Burning for Bitcoin: A waste coal-burning, crypto-mining pirate ship sets sail](#) - In March 2017, Bill Spence got suddenly, catastrophically sick. A part of his pancreas died. His gall bladder failed. When he got to the emergency room, the doctors found kidney cancer. "Let's see if you can make it 48 hours," his doctor told him.

[Column: U.S. coal gets boost from higher gas prices: Kemp](#) - Rising gas prices are encouraging U.S. electricity generators to raise output from coal-fired units slightly this summer, providing a temporary reprieve for the beleaguered coal mining sector.

[Renewables became the second-most prevalent U.S. electricity source in 2020](#) - In 2020, renewable energy sources (including wind, hydroelectric, solar, biomass, and geothermal energy) generated a record 834 billion kilowatthours (kWh) of electricity, or about 21% of all the electricity generated in the United States.

[Gassy coal mines can be environmental commodities. CNX shows how](#) - There is so much unwanted gas coming out of American coal mines — those that still produce coal and even those that have long quit — that federal data suggests it outpaces the carbon emissions footprint of the entire U.S. petrochemical industry.

[Data Breaches Cost More Than \\$4 Million Per Incident, Power Industry at High Risk](#) - IBM Security reported on July 28 that the average cost of recent data breaches was \$4.24 million per incident, the highest cost ever recorded by the company in 17 years of tracking the metric.

[Exelon Set to Decommission Illinois Nuclear Plants](#) - Exelon Generation has filed plans to decommission its Dresden and Byron nuclear power plants in Illinois, citing a lack of action from state lawmakers on clean energy legislation that would help save the facilities.

[In 2020, the United States produced the least CO2 emissions from energy in nearly 40 years](#) - In 2020, as the country responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, CO2 emissions from energy consumption in the United States fell to the lowest level since 1983.

[G20 Environment Ministers: No Consensus on Phasing Out Coal](#) - The U.S., UK and other countries want world governments to commit to a phaseout of the use and financing of coal-fired power generation, but officials who met at the G20 Environment Ministers Meeting summit in Naples, Italy, this past week ended their talks without an agreement on the future of the fuel.

[EPRI-NERC partner to improve resilience, resource adequacy after Texas and California blackouts](#) - The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) and the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) on Thursday announced they have renewed and expanded an existing memorandum of understanding (MOU) to address resilience and reliability issues across the electric grid with a goal of "supporting effective deployment of industry resources."

[FirstEnergy Federally Charged in Ohio Nuclear Bailout Scheme](#) - Facing a federal charge for honest services wire fraud in a corruption case related to the billion-dollar nuclear plant bailout in Ohio, FirstEnergy Corp. has agreed to abide by the terms of a three-year deferred prosecution settlement to get the charge dismissed.

[The many faces of AMD: Abandoned Mine Drainage scars thousands of miles of waterways through region](#) - Two creeks flow steadily toward the North Branch of the Susquehanna River in the same general region of Northeast Pennsylvania.

[Cost allocation remains key challenge for FERC ahead of transmission reform, Glick says](#) - As federal regulators begin the long process of tackling transmission reform, one of several outstanding challenges will be how to allocate costs, according to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chair Richard Glick.

[Gridlock in transmission queues spotlights need for FERC action on planning](#) - FERC is calling for stakeholder input to address the backlog in transmission queues holding 70% of the renewables needed for Biden's policy goals.

[GenOn Holdings, LLC Announces Extension of Retirement of Avon Lake and Cheswick Power Plants](#) - In June 2021, GenOn Holdings, LLC (GenOn) announced that it had initiated the process to permanently retire its 627MW Avon Lake Generating Station located in Avon Lake, OH and its 565MW Cheswick Generating Station located in Springdale, PA and anticipated retirement of the plants by September 15, 2021.

[Renewables growth too slow to stall coal bounce back says IEA](#) - Renewables are expanding quickly – but not quickly enough to satisfy a strong rebound in global electricity demand this year, according to the latest report from the International Energy Agency.

[ERCOT, Caught in Political Crossfire, Releases Reliability 'Roadmap'](#) - The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) has unveiled a roadmap outlining crucial improvements designed to enhance grid reliability, taking into account recent legislation, regulatory mandates, and a recent push by the state's governor for market incentives that will help the grid bulk up on "adequate and reliable" resources, like natural gas, coal, and nuclear power.

[PJM Board of Managers Approves Proposal to Address Capacity Market Reform](#) - PJM Interconnection's Board of Managers has approved a proposal to address long-standing concerns with the Minimum Offer Price Rule (MOPR) in the PJM capacity market.

[US 2021 coal production estimates to rise 14.5% on year: EIA](#) - The US is estimated to produce 617.3 million st of coal in 2021, the US Energy Information Administration said in a July 7 report, raising its monthly estimate by roughly 17 million st, or 2.9%, from June to its highest projection for the year.

[Decarbonize the power sector by 2035? 'I'm skeptical,' NRG VP says of Biden plan](#) - Some power providers are doubtful that President Joe Biden's plan to decarbonize the power sector by 2035 can be achieved, though they say reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2030 could be a relatively simple task as clean energy technologies spread.

['What in the world is happening with the weather': Western heat wave raises questions for grid planning](#) - The heat wave that spread across the Pacific Northwest over the weekend, leaving utilities racing to alert customers and prepare their systems, is an indication that the region's power sector will need to take a closer look at their reliability planning, experts say.

[Money Makes the Power and Energy Sectors Go 'Round](#) - If you've seen the musical "Cabaret," you know that "money makes the world go 'round'" in a variety of ways. While it may not indeed make the power and energy sectors "go 'round,'" money does make plants and other projects get built. So, where is cash flowing into the industry these days?

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[As details emerge, bipartisan support solidifies behind \\$1 trillion infrastructure deal](#) - Hours after a bipartisan group of lawmakers clinched a major deal to spend almost \$1 trillion over five years on the country's infrastructure, momentum built in the U.S. Senate on Thursday as staffers scrambled to draft bill text to bring to the Senate floor in the coming days.

[Unrealistic for 'national transmission czar' to override state decisions, FERC member says](#) - State regulators have a crucial role to play in transmission infrastructure buildout and should not be superseded by federal officials, according to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission member Mark Christie.

[Commerce Department announces \\$300M in ARP funds for coal, energy communities](#) - The U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced an allocation of \$300 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds for economic revitalization in hard-hit coal and energy communities.

[Biden orders voluntary cybersecurity performance goals for electric utilities, other critical sectors](#) - Electric utilities and other critical infrastructure sectors could soon be asked to meet voluntary cybersecurity "performance goals" set by the federal government, according to a national security memorandum signed Wednesday by President Joe Biden.

[TU urges Congress to pass Good Samaritan legislation](#) - Lauren Duncan, a Colorado-based mine reclamation specialist for Trout Unlimited, testified Tuesday before the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Energy and Minerals Resources.

[EPA Will Strengthen Limits on Wastewater Pollution from Coal-Fired Plants](#) - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is set to establish more stringent standards on water pollution from coal-fired power plants.

[Barrasso pushes federal relief for coal, nuclear](#) - As tensions mount around President Joe Biden's sweeping infrastructure plan, Sen. John Barrasso is advocating for energy policy intended to bring relief to the struggling coal and nuclear industries — and the Wyoming economy.

[Democrats' 'Hot FERC Summer' campaign aims to boost FERC's visibility on Capitol Hill](#) - What do the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, rapper Megan Thee Stallion and climate change have in common? They're all tied to a new campaign launched on the House floor Tuesday intended to boost FERC's visibility on Capitol Hill.

[Democrats Propose a Border Tax Based on Countries' Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#) - Senators introduced a plan on Monday to tax iron, steel and other imports from countries without ambitious climate laws.

[In energy bill, Manchin seeks to strike compromise in crucial chunk of Biden infrastructure deal](#) - A \$6 billion credit program to help keep struggling nuclear plants in business. Sweeping investment in abandoned mine cleanup and economic development in communities long dependent on coal. Incentives for energy efficiency, grid cybersecurity, and funding for research into rare earth minerals and carbon capture technology.

[Payments or fines: How Dems' CES would affect utilities](#) - Democratic senators agreed in principle yesterday to include a clean electricity standard as part of a sweeping \$3.5 trillion budget package, providing a political pathway for passage of President Biden's signature carbon-cutting policy.

[FERC launches proceeding to reform transmission policy](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on Thursday opened a proceeding to begin examining how it can overhaul federal transmission policy, something experts say will be critical to bringing the U.S. power grid to 100% clean electricity.

[Senators clash over policy to increase FERC transmission siting authority](#) - An attempt to derail Senate efforts to give federal regulators more authority over transmission siting prompted a debate over power line expansion on Wednesday.

[Biden administration officials eye more money for land restoration projects in Pennsylvania](#) - The Biden administration is continuing its push to clean up former mine land and cap abandoned oil and gas wells, with two top officials visiting Pennsylvania on Tuesday to discuss federal funding goals.

[Secretary Deb Haaland, National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy Discuss Investments to Support Reclamation Jobs During Pennsylvania Visit](#) - During a visit to Pennsylvania today, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy discussed federal efforts to reclaim abandoned mine lands, which will help communities eliminate dangerous legacy pollution while creating good-paying union jobs and advancing environmental justice.

[Democrats agree to \\$3.5 trillion budget to advance with infrastructure deal](#) - Top Democrats announced Tuesday evening that they had reached agreement on an expansive \$3.5 trillion budget blueprint, including plans to pour money into addressing climate change and expanding Medicare among an array of other Democratic priorities, that they plan to advance alongside a bipartisan infrastructure deal.

[Biden order could prompt FERC to act on utility-sector competition, experts say](#) - A new executive order issued by U.S. President Joe Biden could serve as an impetus for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to crack down on anti-competitive behavior while encouraging more wholesale power market expansion, according to industry experts.

[Court partially remands FERC's approval of changes to PJM capacity market curve](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission acted reasonably in approving a greenfield gas-fired combustion turbine as a reference resource to set the demand curve in future PJM Interconnection capacity market auctions, a federal appeals court ruled July 9.

[As Chatterjee's tenure ends, FERC could be 'single most impactful agency' on climate: Rep. Casten](#) - The question of who will fill Commissioner Neil Chatterjee's seat took on new urgency last week as the commissioner announced that July would, probably, be his last open meeting.

[Groups ask Congress for first-of-its-kind cost analysis of RTOs amid market expansion debate](#) - A coalition of consumer advocates, pro-market groups and others is calling on Congress to direct an independent agency to conduct a first-of-its-kind cost analysis on organized power markets in the U.S.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Panel to recommend Pa. move to mileage-based user fee as gas tax replacement to fund transportation needs](#) - A mileage-based user fee, package delivery fee and a toll to use limited-access lanes are among the new revenue options a governor-appointed panel is making to meet Pennsylvania's transportation funding needs going forward.

[Pa. Republicans are bringing their election bill back after Gov. Tom Wolf said he's open to voter ID changes](#) - Pennsylvania Republicans plan to reintroduce their election overhaul legislation — which Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed last month — now that Wolf has changed his public position to say he's open to new voter ID requirements.

[Pa.'s participation in regional cap-and-trade program gets a push from state board; it's a cornerstone of Gov. Wolf's climate change policy](#) - Proposed regulations guiding Pennsylvania's entry into a system to push operators of in-state power plants to reduce climate-changing greenhouse gas emissions by making them pay for each ton of carbon dioxide pollution generated were approved by the Gov. Tom Wolf-friendly Environmental Quality Board Tuesday.

[With no signs of a fire, DEP plans to backfill Northumberland County coal mine](#) - The state Department of Environmental Protection is moving forward with plans to backfill an abandoned coal mine in Northumberland County where a fire was discovered in trash April 24.

[Pennsylvania Could Face New Wave Of Abandoned And Hazardous Coal Mines](#) - A new report finds that as the coal industry declines, companies may abandon up to one thousand square miles of coal mines across seven eastern states, including Pennsylvania.

[ERE Chairman Metcalfe Challenges DEP Secretary to Fully Engage with Public Regarding Unlawful, Unconstitutional RGGI Scheme](#) - House Environmental Resources and Energy (ERE) Committee Majority Chairman Daryl Metcalfe (R-Butler) sent the following letter to PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell urging the postponement of the upcoming July 13 Environmental Quality Board (EQB) voting meeting to further advance the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

[Report offers case studies for how Pa. could help areas affected by RGGI](#) - A new report highlights best practices Pennsylvania could use to help coal communities affected by the state joining a regional cap-and-trade program.

[Pa. lawmakers are on summer break. Here are 5 issues they'll face this fall.](#) - Pennsylvania's General Assembly is headed into a long summer recess after a flurry of legislative activity. But several key issues remain unresolved and will have to wait until lawmakers reconvene in the fall.

[Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf vetoes ban on government, college 'vaccine passports'](#) - A Republican-crafted bill to ban so-called COVID-19 "vaccine passports" in some cases and to restrict the health secretary's actions during health emergencies was vetoed Thursday by Pennsylvania's Democratic governor.