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ARIPPA PERIODIC MEDIA NEWS – 8-3-26

(News clips from the previous month)

CFB, COAL REFUSE, ENERGY INDUSTRY

[Power grids can't handle AI boom as summer heat triggers emergency orders](#) - It's happening again. Summer temperatures are soaring in much of the South and Midwest this week, straining the electrical grid. Utility operators reached a conclusion that they, and others, have reached before: To avoid blackouts, they may need to boot data centers off the grid.

[BNEF chip-based model pegs US data center demand at 207 GW by 2033](#) - Two scenarios forecasting U.S. data center electricity demand by 2030 differ by 42 GW, highlighting growing uncertainty about the scale of the buildout even as it accelerates, Bloomberg NEF analysts said Wednesday.

[PJM Board Directs Action on Resource Adequacy, Affordability and Large Loads](#) - The PJM Board of Managers has directed a series of actions to strengthen reliability and manage affordability impacts of Large Loads connecting to the grid at a faster pace than new generation.

[NextEra on track to close Dominion merger by late 2027, executives say](#) - NextEra Energy executives used their Friday morning second-quarter earnings call to tout the benefits of their planned acquisition of Dominion Energy.

[US estimates federal coal could power nation for 600 years](#) - Coal beneath federally managed public lands could supply the United States for at least 600 years at current consumption rates, according to a new assessment, reinforcing the Trump administration's efforts to revive the industry.

[DOE's new power export rule at odds with 'energy emergency' findings: Public Citizen](#) - The U.S. Department of Energy's streamlined rules for companies seeking permission to export U.S. electricity are at odds with the department's finding that there are "energy emergencies" across the United States that justify keeping power plants from retiring, Public Citizen said Tuesday.

[Transparency and independence of PJM in focus as FERC mulls major reforms](#) - U.S. energy officials pushed for more independence and transparency in PJM Interconnection on Thursday as regulators weigh reforms to the country's largest power grid, which faces the growing risk of blackouts as data center demand soars while few new electricity supplies are added.

[Massive disconnect of power roils largest US electric grid](#) - A massive amount of data center power abruptly disconnected from the largest U.S. electric grid on Wednesday, causing a voltage disturbance that could be felt from Washington, D.C., to Chicago, according to experts and data from grid operator PJM.

[PJM states don't think it's too big to fix](#) - As stakeholders head into tomorrow's technical conference to discuss PJM's governance, no one is arguing that the RTO should be broken up into smaller regional grid operators — despite recent comments from Trump-appointed FERC chair Laura Swett that the region at present is "too big to function."

[Planning Process Education Recordings Available](#) - Recordings are available from the July 16 special session of the Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee, a daylong educational meeting on PJM's regional planning process.

[Data centers drove \\$6.3B in PJM capacity auction costs: market monitor](#) - Data centers are responsible for \$6.3 billion, or 38%, of the \$16.4 billion in charges from the PJM Interconnection's just-held capacity auction, Joseph Bowring, president of Monitoring Analytics, said in an email to Utility Dive. Monitoring Analytics is the grid operator's independent market monitor.

[Renewables remain cheapest, but their LCOE is rising: Lazard](#) - The levelized cost of electricity is on the rise for all types of generation, including renewables, but unsubsidized renewable energy “remains the most cost-competitive form of new-build generation,” according to Lazard’s 2026 Levelized Cost of Energy+ report, released Monday.

[PJM capacity prices hit price cap, reserve shortfall grows](#) - Prices in the PJM Interconnection’s just-held capacity auction for the 2028-2029 delivery year hit a \$325/MW-day price cap across its region, as expected, the nation’s largest grid operator said Tuesday.

[A very big Little Blue Project is eyeing the former coal ash disposal site](#) - In satellite images, Greene Township in Beaver County once stood out for the azure blue lake of coal waste that spanned nearly 940 acres and stretched into neighboring West Virginia.

[West Virginia to Host \\$150M Rare Earth Hub for Coal-Tailings Mineral Recovery](#) - A consortium of industrial partners has announced a \$150 million investment to establish a critical minerals processing hub in Greenbrier County, West Virginia.

[Power insurers are pricing grid risk on yesterday's data](#) - PJM Interconnection's capacity auction cleared at \$329.17 per megawatt-day for the 2026-2027 delivery year, up from \$28.92 just two delivery years earlier - a roughly tenfold increase that reflects how tight the region's supply margin has become.

[Reclaiming a ‘black desert’: \\$6.6M project will restore wetlands](#) - For more than a century, a “black desert” of coal refuse has smothered the floodplain at State Game Lands 286, leaving a sterile stretch of invasive weeds as the waste erodes toward the Schuylkill River.

[PJM Serves Load Through Record-Breaking July Heat](#) - PJM maintained reliable operations July 2 through a preliminary energy use record, requiring all available generation to keep the power flowing.

[Can American Coal Survive?](#) - Despite recent growth, US coal production is experiencing a steady, long-term decline as utilities shift to gas, wind, and solar.

[US electricity output hits record high, tops 100,000 GWh for first time, EEI says](#) - U.S. electricity generation hit a record high last week as an intense heatwave across much of the country boosted air-conditioning demand, according to data from the Edison Electric Institute.

[US wholesale power prices to decline 8% this summer: EIA](#) - U.S. wholesale electricity prices will average \$45/MWh this summer, a \$4/MWh decline relative to last year, the U.S. Energy Information Administration said Tuesday in its monthly Short-Term Energy Outlook.

[States are taking action on energy affordability as issue grows: report](#) - U.S. regulators and lawmakers have taken more than 350 energy affordability actions so far this year, but the problem is persistent, say researchers from the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center.

[Extreme heat pushed electricity demand to near record levels](#) - Scorching temperatures pushed electricity demand to near record levels as parts of the eastern U.S. endured temperatures in excess of 100 degrees during last week’s heat wave.

[Why a Calmer Summer Outlook Hasn’t Settled the Capacity Question](#) - A milder reliability assessment, 58 GW of new resources, and softening load forecasts have eased the near-term mood. Analysts and executives warn the breathing room is borrowed time.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: FEDERAL

[EPA Issues Permitting Guidance to Further President Trump’s Agenda Promoting Data Centers and Safeguarding Communities](#) - This month, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued guidance clarifying that the Clean Air Act (CAA) Acid Rain Program (ARP) does not apply to power generation facilities that are not connected to a public electricity grid, commonly referred to as “islanded” power generation facilities.

[Trump administration admits grants for clean energy were canceled based on politics](#) - The Trump administration has acknowledged in court documents that it canceled \$7.6 billion in grants for hundreds of clean energy projects “based solely on the political identity of the grant recipient’s state” — in this case, 16 states that voted for Democrat Kamala Harris in the 2024 presidential election.

[FERC will impose reforms if PJM fails to adopt changes by September, chairman warns](#) - The PJM Interconnection has until the end of September to agree to governance and stakeholder reforms or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will impose them, the agency’s chairman, Laura Swett, said Thursday.

[White House Expands Data Center Ratepayer Pledge as Congress Moves to Codify Protections](#) - Congress and the White House advanced parallel tracks this week to keep large data centers from shifting their grid costs onto electricity customers, reflecting a concern that has gathered momentum among state regulators, consumer advocates, and members of both parties.

[FERC eyes ‘grid-enhancing technology’ incentives: Chairman Swett](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has created a task force on “grid-enhancing technologies” to see how the agency can support them, possibly with incentives, FERC Chairman Laura Swett said Wednesday.

[House passes temporary government funding bill months early to avoid election season shutdown](#) - The House moved Tuesday to head-off a potential government shutdown before this fall’s critical midterm elections by passing a bill to fund the federal government through Dec. 4.

[FERC fails to shield PJM consumers from data center transmission costs: ratepayer advocates](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s effort to create a framework for data centers to connect to the grid in the PJM Interconnection fails to adequately protect other consumers from data center-driven transmission costs, according to five state ratepayer advocates.

[Lawmakers Accuse DOE Of Illegally Using Carbon Capture Funds To Subsidize Coal](#) - Two top Democratic energy appropriators have accused the Department of Energy (DOE) of violating federal law by diverting millions of dollars intended for carbon capture innovation to instead prop up failing coal-fired power plants.

[FERC Orders Mandatory NERC Reliability Standards for Data Center and Other Computational Loads](#) - The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has directed the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) to file one or more new or modified mandatory reliability standards governing the integration of computational loads—a category defined broadly enough to cover generative-AI data centers, cryptocurrency mines, and other information-technology facilities—by Dec. 31, 2026.

[EPA Advances Cooperative Federalism with Potential Approach for Coal Combustion Residuals Permitting Program](#) - Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is seeking public input on a potential new regulatory approach for addressing certain coal combustion residuals (CCR) units as the agency explores pathways that promote cooperative federalism, reduce regulatory uncertainty, eliminate unnecessary permitting delays, and promote electric grid reliability while ensuring a high standard of environmental protection.

[Trump administration rolls back a key protection for imperiled wildlife](#) - The Trump administration finalized a rule Friday that changes how agencies enforce the Endangered Species Act and eliminates a key protection for imperiled wildlife against logging, oil drilling and other activities.

[What can best ease transmission bottlenecks? More transfer capacity, DOE says.](#) - Interregional transmission and links between grid operators have the highest potential for easing transmission congestion and improving resource adequacy, according to a draft transmission report the U.S. Department of Energy released Thursday.

[Former FERC officials concerned about Supreme Court Slaughter decision impacts](#) - The independence of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission could be significantly impacted by the Supreme Court's June 29 decision in Trump v. Slaughter, which significantly expanded the president's ability to fire regulators at will, former FERC commissioners appointed by both Republican and Democratic presidents told Utility Dive.

[MSHA to end 'outdated' regulations on equipment and procedures](#) - The Mine Safety and Health Administration will withdraw regulations governing "outdated effective dates and requirements" for various industry equipment and protocol, effective July 27.

[Bill introduced in Congress to increase black lung benefit stipends for coal miners in WV, beyond](#) - Members of the U.S. House of Representatives introduced a bill this week that, if made law, would increase black lung disability payments for coal miners and their families and tie the stipends to inflation rates moving forward.

[EPA's tougher soot standard upheld in court](#) - The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit on Friday denied a challenge by several states and industry groups to a 2024 Environmental Protection Agency rule revising the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particulate matter, also known as the "soot standard."

[EPA Proposes to Streamline State and Local Permitting Process for Minor Sources](#) - Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to streamline the New Source Review (NSR) permitting process for minor sources by eliminating the minimum federal regulatory requirements for public participation.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ISSUES: STATE

[Veteran state environmental expert to lead Va. energy office](#) - Gov. Abigail Spanberger didn't have to look far for a new leader of Virginia's energy office to carry out her priorities of making energy use more affordable, while balancing environmental protection and economic development.

[Independent Fiscal Office Reports Average Cost Of Electricity In PA Jumped 14.6% Over Past Year, Total Average PA Electricity Bill Has Increased 20.6% Since 2024](#) - On July 27, the Independent Fiscal Office released a report documenting a 14.6% increase in the average cost of electricity in Pennsylvania over the last year, based on the changes in the "price to compare" calculated by each electric utility for default electricity service.

[Despite budget reprieve, Pa. still faces an underlying \\$5B deficit, fiscal agency finds](#) - Gov. Josh Shapiro and lawmakers have inked a 2026-27 spending plan that doesn't require dipping into the state's reserves to balance the budget, despite not authorizing any additional revenue sources.

[Virginia SCC weighs Dominion data center transmission cost allocation](#) - Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger's office, Meta, Google, Amazon, Microsoft and others weighed in on Dominion Energy's proposal for allocating the cost of transmission projects driven by data center development at a hearing held by the Virginia State Corporation Commission on Tuesday.

[Yaw Highlights Energy Wins Included in State Budget Package](#) - Sen. Gene Yaw (R-23), chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, highlighted several major energy policy initiatives included in the passage of the 2026-27 state budget, saying the measures will strengthen Pennsylvania's position as an energy leader while supporting long-term economic growth and electric grid reliability.

[What a court ruling on upholding a Biden-era air quality standard means for Pennsylvania](#) - A federal appeals court ruling late last month upheld a key Biden administration air quality standard for fine particulate matter, or soot.

[Virginia Approves First-of-Its-Kind Data Center Power Tax](#) - Virginia has approved what appears to be the nation's first tax on data center electricity use.

[House Republicans Unveil 11 Bill Energy Package to Keep the Lights On, Costs Down](#) - As PJM issued a Maximum Generation Emergency amid extreme heat and warned of a mounting strain on the regional electric grid, House Republicans yesterday unveiled a comprehensive 11-bill legislative package designed to keep the lights on, lower electricity costs, expand reliable baseload generation, and cement Pennsylvania's role as America's energy leader.