

# *It All Started* **100 YEARS** *Ago*

**I**n April the Missouri Public Service Commission will celebrate a milestone when the agency turns 100 years old. The 47th Missouri General Assembly passed legislation sponsored by Carroll County Senator William Busby which created the Missouri Public Service Commission.

Creation of the Commission was supported by Governor Elliott Major. The law creating the Public Service Commission took effect on April 15, 1913. The Commission replaced the Board of Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners which was established in 1875 to regulate railroads operating in Missouri.

“I am proud to be a part of an institution which has such a deep tradition as the Public Service Commission,” PSC Chairman Kevin Gunn said. “To be selected to serve the citizens of Missouri in this capacity is something that I and my fellow colleagues take very seriously. We know the decisions that we make on a daily basis have a profound impact upon the citizens of our state.”

Two Democrats and two Republicans were selected to serve on the first Public Service Commission in 1913. John Atkinson, a former Assistant Attorney General and Speaker of the Missouri House, was named the Commission’s first chairman. Atkinson was from Doniphan, Missouri.

Former Missouri Supreme Court Justice and state senator John Kennish served on the first Commission along with Frank Wightman, a railroad expert from Monett, Missouri. Wightman was also a former member of the Board of Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners. The fourth member of the first Public Service Commission was Howard Shaw, the Dean of the School of Engineering at the University of Missouri-Columbia. A fifth was appointed to the PSC in July of 1913; it was St. Louis attorney William Woerner.

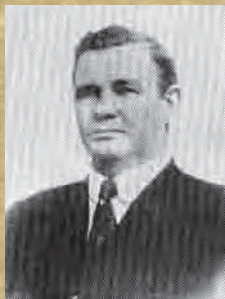
Under the law which created the Public Service Commission, the PSC was to hold its sessions in the State Capitol. Due to the 1911 fire which destroyed a good portion of the Capitol Building, the Commission held its first session in the temporary State Capitol.

## ***PSC Commissioners in 1913***

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*John Atkinson*



*John Kennish*



*Howard Shaw*



*Frank Wightman*



*William Woerner*

The Commission's first order of business was to decide whether to grant an application filed by the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company which sought approval of a certain consolidated mortgage and for the authorization of the issuance of bonds and authority to pledge said bonds as collateral security for the payment of a certain note. The case, which was filed on April 16, 1913, was decided by the Commission a day later.

"We see no valid reason why the bonds, as prayed for, by applicant, should not be issued, and an order will be entered accordingly by this Commission," the Commission said.

After its first session, the Commission moved to the old Supreme Court Building until the State Capitol was rebuilt.

At the close of 1913, there were 877 corporations, municipalities and individuals engaged in serving the public in a capacity that placed them under the jurisdiction of the Missouri Public Service Commission.

Today, the Missouri Public Service Commission regulates investor-owned electric, natural gas, telephone, water, sewer and steam companies operating in Missouri. In addition, the PSC regulates the operational safety of the state's rural electric cooperatives and municipally owned natural gas utilities.



The PSC also regulates manufacturers and dealers of manufactured homes and modular units.

A lot has changed since the Commission's creation, but the same fundamental principles that applied in 1913 apply today at the PSC.

"In an ever changing regulatory environment, we approach all challenges with a great deal of dedication," Chairman Gunn said. "Our goal each and every day is to balance the interests of all that appear before the PSC; working to assure that Missouri's rate paying customers receive safe and adequate service at just and reasonable rates."

## ***PSC Commissioners in 2012***

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***Kevin D. Gunn***



***Terry M. Jarrett***



***Robert S. Kenney***



***Stephen M. Stoll***