

2012 News Archive

July 2012

- **Sandy Berg Appointed to NRRI Committee**

PURC Director of Water Studies Dr. Sandy Berg has been appointed to a three-year term on the Research Advisory Committee of the National Regulatory Research Institute (NRRI). NRRI serves state utility regulators by producing and disseminating relevant, high-quality research that provides the analytical framework and practical tools necessary to improve their public interest decision-making. On the committee, Dr. Berg will serve as an expert on water policy issues, and as a representative of the academic community. Be sure to check out [Sandy's Selections](#).

June 2012

- **32nd PURC/World Bank International Training Program on Utility Regulation and Strategy in Gainesville, FL**

In attendance for the 32nd program were 74 participants from 32 nations.

[Find the more information about the program here.](#)

May 2012

- **2nd Annual Conference on Competition, Search, and Social Media Presentation**

Should Google be regulated as a public utility? It shouldn't according to PURC Director Dr. Mark Jamison. Speaking at the Second Annual Conference on Competition, Search, and Social Media at George Mason University, he explained in his presentation, "Ex Ante Regulation of Google?" that Google does not fit any of the criteria that would qualify a business as a public utility (such as an electric utility), a common carrier (such as a telecom company), or a possessor of an essential facility.

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- **Digital Multimedia Management and Regulation**

How can broadcasters, telecom operators, and their regulators deal with technology convergence? That was the theme of the course, Digital Multimedia Management and Regulation, taught at the University of Pretoria, where PURC Director Mark A Jamison served as lead faculty. Dr. Jamison taught sessions on convergence, policy frameworks, radio spectrum management, competition, and leadership, and moderated all other course sessions.

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- **Forum on Broadband Development in Africa**

What are the challenges facing broadband development in Africa? That was the question posed before a panel of government officials from South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, and Tanzania. Moderated by PURC Director Dr. Mark Jamison, the panel examined fiber optic deployment within the continent and around the rim of Africa, business opportunities and challenges, hurdles to policy change, and lessons from historical developments in broadband technologies. The panel was sponsored by the Centre for Dynamic Markets and the Gordon Institute for Business Science at the University of Pretoria.

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April 2012

- **North American Energy Markets Association Presentation**

Public policy, like nature, abhors a vacuum. The federal legislature may not be taking steps to shape

U.S. energy policy, but the past year has seen other federal agencies step up and fill this gap in leadership. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has become the real leader in U.S. energy policy over the past year, and this role has implications for all market participants. PURC Director of Energy Studies Ted Kury shared his views on the state of U.S. energy policy in this evolving environment with participants at the annual meeting and spring conference of the North American Energy Markets Association.

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March 2012

▪ PURC Awards Prize for Best Paper

Sometimes regulations intended to reduce carbon emissions may actually increase emissions if policymakers fail to understand businesses and consumers. That is the conclusion of the paper "Fast and Furious (and Dirty): The Effects of Environmental Policy on the Swedish Car Market" by Cristian Huse of the Stockholm School of Economics. This paper, which received the 2012 PURC prize for best paper in regulation at the 10th Annual International Industrial Organization Conference, examined the Swedish Green Car Rebate, which provides financial incentives to customers to buy new green cars, that is, cars that meet new mileage standards or use fuels other than gasoline or diesel.



PURC Director Mark Jamison, left, presents the PURC Prize for Best Paper in Regulation to Cristian Huse of the Stockholm School of Economics.

Intended to reduce vehicle carbon emissions and the use of imported oil, the program actually increased both. Consumers responded to the lower cost of purchasing new vehicles by buying larger ones, which were more affordable by the rebate. Auto manufactures ensured that larger vehicles qualified for the rebates by designing the vehicles to use alternative fuels. However, the alternative fuels were more costly for consumers than gasoline or diesel, so auto manufacturers made the new vehicles as flexible-fuel vehicles. In a sense, customers were able to have their cake and eat it, too, in that they received rebates for buying the larger flexible-fuel vehicles, but continued to use lower-cost, traditional fuels. Emissions levels of regular cars went down, but this downward trend did not appear to be triggered by the introduction of the rebate.

What can policymakers take away from this research? Whenever policymakers want to change behavior, they should first ask: 1) Is the policy even needed? [If the trend is going in the desired direction, maybe a policy change isn't needed.] 2) Could the incentive system possibly result in the opposite of what was intended? 3) Is there a more direct way to achieve the objective, for example, subsidizing renewable energy or taxing fossil fuels?

February 2012

▪ National Electricity Forum

Presentations and feedback helped attendees at the 2012 National Electricity Forum in Washington, D.C. explore the balance between regulation and market structures to incentivize and facilitate the development of a flexible, environmentally benign, and cost effective electricity system. Florida Public Utilities Professor Dr. Sanford Berg spoke on the theme of this year's forum, "Visualizing the 21st Century Electricity Industry," as one of the panelists in the concluding session on Institutional Solutions.

Joining state commissioners from South Carolina and Washington and the Special Advisor for Renewable Energy and Transmission (office of the Secretary of DOE), he focused on four sources of conflict: facts, values, interests, and authority. Dr. Berg argued that addressing emerging issues requires

that leaders identify the sources of conflicts so that technical studies and adaptive work (dialogues) can move forward. The forum illustrated how stakeholders bring different perspectives (and special interests) to the policy arena.

Find more information about the forum [here](#).

- **39th Annual PURC Conference: “Utility Policy Today: Do We Have Strategies or Just Tactics?” in Gainesville, FL**

2012 Annual PURC Conference speakers included Florida Advisor on Energy Policy Mary Bane, Don Stockdale of Mayer Brown, Katrina McMurrian of the Nuclear Waste Strategy Coalition, and Ed Kee of NERA, among others. Tom Ballinger of the Florida Public Service Commission was the recipient of the 2012 Gerald L. Gunter Distinguished Service Award. Following the conference, Shane Greenstein of Northwestern University delivered the Economics seminar at the UF Warrington College of Business Administration, “Collective Intelligence and Neutral Point of View: The Case of Wikipedia.”

Find the speakers’ presentations and more information [here](#).

January 2012

- **Practicing Leadership in a Political Environment: A One-Day Intensive Training Workshop for Emerging Leaders in Utility Policy in Gainesville, FL**

PURC Director Mark Jamison and Assistant Director Araceli Castañeda delivered a leadership workshop for international regulatory professionals.

Find more information about the program [here](#).

- **31st PURC/World Bank International Training Program on Utility Regulation and Strategy in Gainesville, FL**

In attendance for the 31st program were 66 participants from 22 nations.

Find the more information about the program [here](#).



Above, PURC Director, Mark Jamison, right, presents Shane Greenstein with the 2012 PURC Distinguished Service Award. Below, he presents Tom Ballinger with the 2012 Gerald L. Gunter Distinguished Service Award.

