



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **from the Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Municipal Gas Authority Honors East Central Alabama Gas District Leader**

Kennesaw, GA, May 20, 2015 –The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia honored Irving Thompson, General Manager of East Central Alabama Gas District, with the *2014 Billy Hersey Sr. Award* at its Annual Membership Meeting last week. The award is presented annually to a veteran gas system operator known by his peers to exhibit **excellent leadership**, be of **upstanding character** and demonstrate **true commitment** to the natural gas industry, as well as to his community.

This award represents a special tribute in memory of a great man, Mr. Billy Gail Hersey, Sr., the long-time gas director for the City of Douglas, Georgia. Billy would dispute being honored this way because of the true humility he displayed. He never met a stranger or made an enemy, Billy had a special way of making friends from the moment he met someone. He always demonstrated genuine concern for those around him, including employees, supervisors, family, friends and his peers. During his eulogy, Billy's pastor summed up his life best when he said, *"Billy was a man you could follow."* He was definitely a man who could be followed ...in all facets of life. The award winner is chosen each year by a committee of Gas Authority employees who have first-hand working experience with the gas system operators of its Member systems.

The Gas Authority's Chief Membership Officer, Chris Strippelhoff, presented the award to Mr. Thompson, who served the community as an educator for 25 years before entering the natural gas industry. Strippelhoff said, "In 1992 Irving Thompson was elected mayor, which also meant a post on the local gas system board. While serving on the board he became very involved in the gas industry. Upon the retirement of the then General Manager of the utility, Irving retired from education saying 'it was time for me to go.' He was appointed General Manager at the turn of the century and remains there today."

During the award ceremony, Strippelhoff went on to say, “Mr. Thompson’s innovative thinking continues to serve the Gas District and the community well. With the development of natural gas fueling stations, he saw a way to grow the gas system. He installed one of the first natural gas fueling stations in the State of Alabama and began the conversion of the company’s fleet of vehicles. He also encouraged the cities in his service area to begin converting their city vehicles to natural gas. He introduced the concept to the local garbage company. They are presently converting their fleet, eyeing fuel savings of as much as \$20,000 per year, per truck.”

Outside of his career, Mr. Thompson enjoys remodeling homes and has a passion for collecting and restoring antique vehicles. He has been married to Gail for nearly forty years and has two grown children, Kristin and Brett.

The Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia is the largest non-profit natural gas joint-action agency in the United States, serving 79 Members in Georgia, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Florida that meet the gas needs of approximately 250,000 customers. The Gas Authority was formed in 1987 by an Act of the Georgia General Assembly to assist municipal Members who own and operate natural gas distribution systems.

The Gas Authority provides a broad array of gas supply, marketing and financial services, which deliver significant benefits to its Members. Services include gas supply and storage management, supply and capacity planning, regulatory representation, industrial customer assistance, budget assistance, rate design, budget forecasting, market development, communications, project financing, risk management assistance, regulatory compliance, and training.

The Billy Hersey Sr. Award was created in 1999. Past recipients include:

Ron Ogle, East Central Alabama Gas District (1999)	Larry Pratt, City of Adairsville (2007)
Wenzel Bryant, Fitzgerald Utilities (2000)	R. M. “Bubba” Small, City of Millen (2008)
Bob Eick, City of Thomson (2001)	J. Don Rhodes, City of Louisville (2009)
James Adams, Elberton Utilities (2002)	Charles Truitt, City of Elberton (2010)
Henry Barfield, City of Americus (2003)	Mike Atkinson, City of Thomasville (2011)
Ron Tiveron, City of Adel (2004)	Ned Watson, Fort Valley Utilities Commission (2012)
Jason Guess, City of Tifton (2005)	Steve Hotchkiss, City of Statesboro (2013)
Ronnie Stovall, City of Madison (2006)	

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