

# Support sound energy policies

Since the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) Secretary Roderick Bremby denied the project air permit for the Holcomb Expansion on Oct. 18, Sunflower Electric has endured public criticism from people who contend that Kansas should obtain their energy from sources other than coal. As the manager of Prairie Land Electric Cooperative that provides electric service in 18 counties in northwest and north central Kansas, I'd like to share some information with you about the impact of this project on electric rates.

First, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation is a not-for-profit utility that operates as the wholesale power provider for six rural electric cooperatives based in central and western Kansas. Prairie Land Electric Cooperative is one of those six cooperatives. On behalf of all six cooperatives, Sunflower owns and operates a fleet of generating units that are fueled by coal, natural gas and wind. Sunflower's existing coal plant is a 360 MW plant located south of Holcomb in Finney County and is the cleanest coal plant in Kansas.

The proposed expansion project involves building two additional coal plants at Holcomb Station. The \$3.6 billion project will provide \$750 million in financial benefits to Sunflower; these are costs that won't have to be passed on to its member cooperatives.

These financial benefits, in addition to cash payments, include lower fuel costs, reduced operating costs, and the economies of scale derived from larger operating efficiencies. Power from the two units will be used by members of 67 distribution cooperatives serving rural customers in the region, including cooperative members in Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Texas.

The construction project will create more than 2,400 construction jobs in southwest Kansas. The six-year construction phase would create significant job opportunities for workers in Kansas. After completion, the new power plants would create more than 325 new jobs in Kansas.

### Buy Why Use Coal?

Electric cooperatives are required to provide their members with reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound business and cooperative principles.

The United States has more than one-third of the world's proven coal reserves; we have more coal than Saudi Arabia has oil. If we want to be energy independent, coal is a reliable source of energy that can serve our nation for many generations to come. The abun-

**Guest  
Commentary  
Allan Miller  
General Manager  
Prairie Land Electric**

dance of coal also helps keep the price affordable. Because coal is economical and reliable, for those with a cost bias, it is the fuel of choice.

Other fuels have characteristics that make them less desirable than coal.

Because natural gas is not as plentiful as coal, the law of supply and demand makes it more expensive. Consumers will see a substantial increase in energy prices if a "no-coal" policy is adopted in Kansas.

Hydroelectric generation is not a reasonable alternative in Kansas.

Nuclear plants are prohibitively expensive to build.

Solar energy seems like a logical choice, but this developing technology is not yet advanced for large-scale use, the cost is staggering. In December 2007, Power magazine estimated the production cost for the world's largest solar project in Germany was \$510 per MWh.

Wind energy seems like the solution to many people. However, baseload units such as large coal units operate consistently at 90 percent capacity factors, while wind systems average less than 40 percent in most instances. Since the wind blows intermittently, consumers cannot rely exclusively on wind.

### No Coal? Higher Rates

Understanding "why" coal is the most cost effective requires knowledge of how electricity is measured. A kilowatt (kW) is the basic unit of electric demand, equal to 1,000 watts. A kilowatt hour (kWh) is a unit of energy equal to 1,000 watt hours. For example, a 100 watt light bulb burning for ten hours uses one kilowatt hour. Electric bills are based on the price per kilowatt hour (kWh) and the number of kilowatt hours consumed.

Generation facilities measure output in megawatts (MW), equal to 1,000 kilowatts or 1 million watts. A megawatt hour (MWh) is equal to 1,000 kilowatt hours or 1 million hours.

In 2007, production costs for Sunflower's Holcomb Station averaged \$12.23 per MWh, and production costs for Sunflower's gas-based generation plants were \$68.68 per MWh. The average home uses approximately 1,000

kWh per month, so relying on natural gas would increase members' annual electric rates by more than \$675.

### Stewards of the Environment

Sunflower's member cooperatives primarily serve those who make their living off the land, a large number of large and small businesses, and residential consumers. Knowing that you, our customers, care not only about affordable electric rates but also about living in a healthy environment, we continue to seek and implement technological solutions to upgrade our generation fleet.

Due to the significant investment in these new technologies, today's generation from coal is more efficient and results in lower CO2 emissions and less coal being burned per megawatt. In fact, a comparison of 2006 emission rates from the eight Kansas coal plant facilities shows that Sunflower's coal plant has the lowest emission rate in the state for SO2, NOx, and CO2. Advanced technology used on the new units in the Holcomb Expansion will further reduce emission rates.

Sunflower has also made significant investments in wind. The combined fleet of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas Electric Company (MKEC) has 124 megawatts of wind energy, which equates to more than 12 percent of our native load. Only Midwest Energy, our cooperative neighbor, will have a larger percentage of their load dedicated to wind energy by the end of 2008. Cooperatives are leading the way in wind development in Kansas.

### You Can Help

Currently, your Kansas legislators are deliberating legislation that would help provide customers in central and western Kansas with affordable and reliable electricity. The success of the Holcomb Expansion project will have a definite and immediate impact on you. To help ensure that this project is successful, I encourage you to contact legislators and let them know that people in central and western Kansas deserve the same reliable, affordable energy and economic benefits enjoyed by Kansans elsewhere in the state.

Time is of the essence, so please act today.

To find out how your legislators voted on the pending energy legislation, go to [www.kec.org](http://www.kec.org) and click on **Support Sound Energy Policies in Kansas**.

Please contact your Kansas legislators now in support of the pending sound energy legislation. If you have further questions, please contact our office at (800) 577-3323 or stop in for a visit.

## Hometown 'boy' speaks at banquet

(Continued on Page 1)

tington.

At the beginning of the banquet, Mr. Kaus presented the board and ambassadors. The board consists of himself, Joel Duscher, first vice president; Rich Hageman, second vice president; Kathy Erbert, treasurer; Carol Erlenbusch, Chad Manning, Ron Briery, Scott Sproul, John Tacha, Doug Ray and Diane Becker. Karla Reed is the Chamber's executive director. Ambassadors are Ruth and Denzel Lofgreen, Evelyn and Chriss McDuffett, Georgia and Lyman Rowh, Jean and Warren White, Marcia and Richard Wiltfong, Jake Durham, Shirley Erbert, Norma Howorth, Ruby Pflieger, Genevieve Poage and Alberta Slaby.

Door and raffle prizes were given out.



John Allen came back to his hometown of Norton to tell Chamber banquet attendees about his experiences in major league baseball.

— Telegram photo by Veronica Monier

## Whiskey Falls has an eye on Lenora

The Lenora Jubilee Association reports that the Nashville band, *Whiskey Falls*, has been booked as the opening act for the Jake Owen concert on Friday, June 13. The band's best-known single, "Last Train Running," was released last fall, and you can listen for their third and latest single, "Falling Into You," on the radio in 2008.

Scott Sproul, Lenora Jubilee Association president, said, "This

is no ordinary band. Their sound is a mysterious mix of originality and familiarity, and the four-part harmony is outstanding."

The list of Nashville artists brought in by the Lenora Jubilee just keeps growing. The festival is quickly becoming recognized as a significant music festival in western Kansas.

"With two huge Nashville acts on Friday night, the association

expects record attendance," said Vice-President of Entertainment Nicole Rhea. "It's probably the first time our opening act could also be a legitimate headliner."

Visit our web site at [www.lenorajubilee.com](http://www.lenorajubilee.com) for the latest updates.

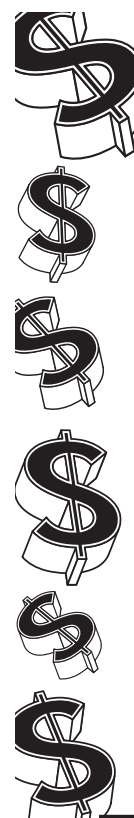
**877-3361**

## Barbershop show slated at Colby

Doo-Wop music, and the 1950's, return to center stage at Colby High School Auditorium on Saturday March 29, as the Tumbleweed Chorus, an affiliate of The Barbershop Harmony Society, presents its annual barbershop show at 2:30 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m.

In their continuing effort to preserve the barbershop style, the chorus members have conscripted the Prairie Statesmen of McCook, Neb., for this year's show. The combined choruses have polished such favorites as "Goodnight Sweetheart" and Billy Joel's "The Longest Time" to transport their audiences back to the marvelous vocal sound of the post World War II era.

Special guest quartet "Ignition" from Denver will follow.



### Be an informed consumer, know your mortgage facts!!

#### What you should know -

Do you have a fixed or adjustable interest rate loan? Is your monthly payment scheduled to increase? When? Have you budgeted for potential increases in payment?

#### What you should do -

If you're having trouble making payments, **Don't Wait!** Contact your lender or servicer (where you send your payments) to discuss options.

#### Take action now to avoid possible foreclosure later.

Consider credit counseling from a reputable Kansas licensed provider, call 1-800-388-2227 for a referral

For help with mortgage or other consumer credit questions call 1-877-387-8523 or click on [www.osbckansas.org](http://www.osbckansas.org)

Consumer and Mortgage Lending Division - Kansas Office of the State Bank Commissioner

**KANSAS**

## Booth space available for Job Fair

If you are looking for a job, or have a job to offer, the Norton County Job Fair was designed for you. It is scheduled for Friday, March 28, from 4-8 p.m. at the Norton Junior High School gymnasium.

Co-sponsored by Norton County Economic Development and Norton Area Chamber of Commerce, the fair is an event that can bring the job seeker and the job provider together.

Booth space is available to employers for \$20. Whether you need full-time, part-time or seasonal help, the booth will provide a place for potential employees to learn more about your business.

## Raile Charolais Raile Gelbvieh

Monday, March 17, 12:30 p.m. (CST)  
St. Francis Livestock Co. -- St. Francis, Kansas

## JOINT PRODUCTION SALE

High performing, Stout, Deep Bodied and Heavy Muscled Cattle that "Grow, Grade and Yield"

**SELLING: 85 bulls: 55 Charolais; 2 Charolais X Red Angus 21 Gelbvieh Balancers; 4 Gelbvieh Purebreds**  
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### Anniversary Specials

*Effective at all Three Locations*

- ✿ Sign Up for All Access Pass for \$19.99 Per Month and Receive a FREE Scoop (after \$50 mail in rebate/requires 2 year service agreement) - \$49.99 Savings to Customer
- ✿ Activate an Air Card (Requires 2 year service agreement) and receive a FREE Razor (V3a Model) with no mail in rebate
- ✿ Buy an Accessory, Get the Second Accessory FREE!
- ✿ All Items Storewide 5 Percent Off
- ✿ Select Models of FREE Phones (Requires 2 Year Service Agreement)
- ✿ \$10 Off Bluetooth Headsets

101 E. Main, Hill City - 785-421-6245  
107 E. Main, Norton - 785-874-4718  
200 W. Mill, Plainville - 785-434-2126

Register for Prizes  
Bluetooth Stereo Headset

Specials good all week long- Monday, March 17 through March 21

Requires two-year service agreement. Other restrictions apply. This is a limited time offer at Kellie's an authorized Alltel Agent in Hill City, Norton and Plainville. Listed in the Nex-Tech Directory