

Holcomb plants still an issue

With all of the emphasis on our state's economic well being, there's another issue you may not have heard about that's also very important to all Kansans. What's at stake in this issue is a western Kansas utility seeking legislative approval for two proposed coal-fired power plants.

Sunflower Electric Power Corp. is determined to build these plants near Holcomb in Finney County. Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' administration has been blocking the plants for more than a year because of their potential carbon-dioxide emissions.

Expansion of the Holcomb station is being driven by growing energy needs among electric cooperatives in Kansas and neighboring states. Power generated from the Holcomb station expansion could supply additional electricity for 1.5 million consumers in seven states.

Implications of this decision extend far beyond Holcomb. Concerns about the uncertainty of our state's regulatory environment have been echoed by independent businesses, manufacturers, agriculture producers, and other stakeholders from Scammon to Saint Francis, from Rolla to Reserve, and all points in between — not to mention those outside our state's borders who ever thought to do business in Kansas.

Such demand requires additional generation facilities. These new facilities will not only reinforce this region's power supply needs, but the investment and creation of jobs from plant construction and operations will provide additional

Insight John Schlageck

taxes and employment in western Kansas.

The proposed project is expected to cost more than \$3.6 billion and has the potential for 1,500 construction jobs. The new plants would be located on the existing 360-megawatt Holcomb station site. The two additional supercritical pulverized coal units are each capable of generating 700 megawatts.

Construction of these new units, next to existing generation units, will allow for common use of a number of facilities, including the rail spur, coal receiving and handling system, water treatment, waste disposal system and warehouse and control facilities. This will minimize overall ground disturbance and environmental impacts associated with development of these facilities.

This expansion plan is a solid move to replace an ever increasing demand for cleaner coal generation than Kansas currently has. This project's state-of-the-art technologies will enable it to meet federal regulations in place to protect public health and the environment.

Last year's Kansas Department of Health & Environment's decision to deny the air permit not only denies our state the expansion of much needed electricity generation and increased revenues, it sets a terrible precedent for economic

development in Kansas.

"We believe KDHE exceeded its authority and our members are concerned about what arbitrary decisions could be next that very well could impact agriculture," said Steve Baccus, Kansas Farm Bureau president and an Ottawa County farmer. "Our state legislature attempted to address this in the last session by passing bills to reverse the decision."

Farmer and rancher members of Farm Bureau continue to support regulatory certainty in Kansas, and therefore support efforts to ensure a clean, abundant and affordable energy supply, including coal.

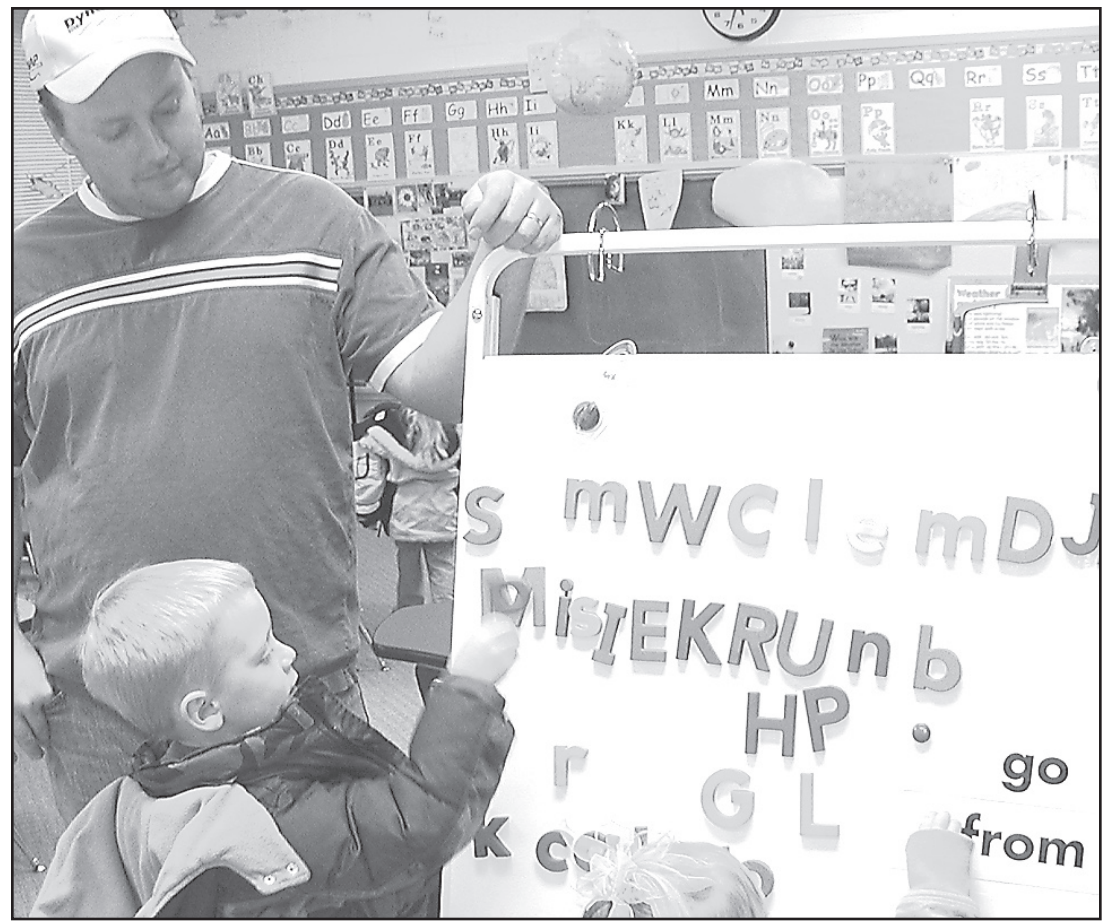
Rural regions of our state are already paying higher energy costs than customers in urban areas. This is due in part to the higher costs to serve areas of sparse population.

"We will continue to seek clarification on this issue and will further develop recommendations for energy policy that is environmentally responsible and promotes a viable economic solution to Kansas energy needs," Baccus promised.

More than two dozen separate pieces of legislation have been introduced on the issue, which will likely be at the forefront throughout the entire session.

(John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.)

Keeping the kids occupied



Stuart Brooks kept a watchful eye on his son, Wesley and daughter, Mia, as they played with the magnetic letters in Gail Roy's kindergarten classroom Monday evening. Eisenhower Elementary held their annual kindergarten round-up, a meeting for parents of students entering kindergarten. Parents who were unable to attend the meeting or did not know about it, may call Eisenhower Elementary at 877-5113 to get information packets from the school.

- Telegram photo by Brandy Leroux

Mental Health First Aid a promising tool

When it comes to mental health issues, one frequently hears about the inherent challenge of the stigma of mental illness. *Stigma* is a feeling of shame or disgrace that also involves a great deal of fear; the fear of not understanding a problem, of doing or saying the "wrong" thing, and of not knowing what to do when someone needs help. Therefore, one of the best ways to decrease stigma is to provide current and accurate information on mental illness and on how to help an individual who is experiencing an emotional crisis.

One of the most promising evidence-based public education programs in the United States today is Mental Health First Aid. This program is a 12-hour training course that is designed to educate people on key skills needed to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis. Just as CPR or basic First Aid training helps a lay person (without a medical background) assist an individual following an accident or heart

Mental Health Ken Loos

attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a lay person assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

The program teaches a five-step process that includes assessing the situation, selecting and implementing appropriate interventions, and helping the individual in crisis connect with appropriate care. Participants learn the

risk factors and warning signs of specific illnesses such as anxiety, depression, psychosis and addiction. Because professional help is not always readily available, this program emphasizes skills that can be used until professional help can be obtained.

Studies have shown that Mental Health First Aid training increases mental health literacy by helping participants identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness, and also helps them to feel more comfortable managing a crisis situation. Interestingly, studies have found another unexpected benefit in that the program

appears to improve the mental health of those who participate in the training. As a result of taking the class, participants say they are better able to monitor and deal more effectively with their own levels of stress and frustration.

If you are interested in learning more about Mental Health First Aid, please contact your local mental health center or the National Council.

(Contributed by Ken Loos, MS, LMLP, LCP Prevention, Education, and Outreach Dept. The views expressed here are those of the individual writer.)

NewsLine:
(785)
877-3361

I'm Not Deaf!

I Just Can't Understand Some Words

Jim Housh
Licensed Hearing
Aid Specialist



"I will be in Norton
EVERY
WEDNESDAY"

Free
Consultation
Free
Hearing Test

Ask About Our Nu-Ear
Digital Hearing Aids

Call My Toll-Free
Number for
an Appointment
1-800-331-7885

Located at: Boxler Insurance
Precision Hearing Aid Center

108 N. First, Norton

* SOFFIT * DOOR AND WINDOW REPLACEMENTS *
* REMODELS * NEW CONSTRUCTION *
* SIDING * SEAMLESS RAIN GUTTERS * FASCIA *

From concrete to roofing and everything in between.

Ron Lucke
CUSTOM BUILDING

Burlington, Co. (719) 346-8840
CELL PHONE (719) 349-8840

PROPERTY TAX REPORT

At Rural Telephone, Nex-Tech and Nex-Tech Wireless, we aim to be good corporate citizens of the region. We understand the need for property taxes to help support our schools and other public resources. For the year 2008, we paid **OVER \$3.3 MILLION** in property taxes in the following counties.

Arapahoe County, CO	\$3,110.55	Kit Carson County, CO	\$10,144.14	Rooks	\$193,375.12
Barber	\$34.79	Labette	\$27.95	Rush	\$19,189.08
Barton	\$74,741.19	Lane	\$5,447.78	Russell	\$199,557.50
Cheyenne	\$10,986.48	Lincoln County, CO	\$3,835.94	Saline	\$317.82
Decatur	\$39,565.39	Logan	\$31,890.73	Scott	\$3,085.98
Edwards	\$4,552.50	Mitchell	\$22.30	Seward	\$162.63
Ellbert County, CO	\$5,070.96	Neosho	\$17.04	Sheridan	\$53,910.09
Ellis	\$410,914.08	Ness	\$16,900.67	Sherman	\$12,473.14
Finney	\$1,806.16	Norton	\$546,413.97	Smith	\$234,413.40
Ford	\$634.95	Osborne	\$247,439.11	Stafford	\$8,393.98
Franklin	\$45.22	Pawnee	\$10,195.47	Thomas	\$27,154.38
Gove	\$146,751.91	Phillips	\$279,836.36	Trego	\$254,613.49
Graham	\$283,554.13	Rawlins	\$21,485.03	Wallace	\$15,246.54
Greeley	\$10,877.53	Reno	\$10,702.87	Wichita	\$2,436.34
Hamilton	\$196.79	Republic	\$55,436.51	Total	\$3,354,682.97
Jewell	\$88,566.19	Rice	\$9,148.79		

These property taxes, together with the dollars we spend on services, payroll and upgrading our plant facilities, help support the local economy.

We would like to thank those of you who continue to put your trust and hard-earned dollars into products and services from Rural Telephone, Nex-Tech and Nex-Tech Wireless. We realize you have a choice when making purchases such as directory yellow page advertising and other telecommunication products and services.

When you choose Rural Telephone, Nex-Tech and Nex-Tech Wireless, you keep your dollars in the local economy to support **YOUR SCHOOLS** and **YOUR PUBLIC RESOURCES**.



Toll Free 1.877.567.7872

www.ruraltelephone.com • www.nex-tech.com www.nex-techwireless.com

Find It in The Norton Telegram

We Have
Something
for Everyone!

Current Events,
Human Interest
Stories, Sports,
Local News,
and Classifieds!
Thanks for
supporting
your
hometown
newspaper!

PLUS . . . If you need a gift idea,
a new subscription to The
Norton Telegram is perfect!!

THE NORTON TELEGRAM

215 S. Kansas, Norton — (785) 877-3361



Current Events, Human Interest Stories, Sports, Local News, and Classifieds! Thanks for supporting your hometown newspaper!

PLEASE SEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS
 PLEASE START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION FOR ME
 PLEASE ADD TO THE FOLLOWING SUBSCRIPTION

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ ZIP: _____
STATE: _____

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION FROM _____ IS ENCLOSED
MY CHECK FOR \$ _____

SUBSCRIPTION RATES—

NORTON, PHILLIPS, GRAHAM
DECATUR & FURNAS COUNTIES:
1 Year \$60.00
6 Months \$32.00
3 Months \$18.00
ELSEWHERE IN KANSAS
AND NEBRASKA:
1 Year \$70.00
6 Months \$37.00
Student (9 Mo.) \$52.50
Less than 6 Mo. would be \$15 per month
ELSEWHERE IN US:
1 Year \$76.00
6 Months \$42.00
Student (9 Mo.) \$57.00
Less than 6 Mo. would be \$15 per month
TAX IS INCLUDED