



House and senate pass new energy package

As Kansas legislators move bravely into the new world of consumer-generated energy, we hope they take care to protect the future of our electric grid.

An energy package passed by the House and Senate and just vetoed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius included provisions for "net metering" homes with "cogeneration" equipment.

At first, this will include solar generation, but it can be expanded to cover wind generators and other sources a homeowner might install. There's no doubt these will become more important as time goes by, and energy becomes more and more expensive.

That's a good thing, but the state has to be careful not to force utilities to pay too much for this homeowner-generated power. Current Kansas law allows consumers to buy power at retail rates and sell power back to a utility at the wholesale rate paid for other power. This can be quite a difference in the utility's favor, and people don't like it.

The state is stuck between taxpayers who want a "fair" deal for power and utilities that have to buy at wholesale and sell at retail to make a profit. The law needs to be fair to both. Even customer-owned cooperatives have to make a margin to stay in business.

To be able to supply power at all, a utility has to build generation plants, transmission lines, switching and control facilities, offices and yards, and hire people to run them. It depends on the spread between wholesale power costs and retail charges to pay the bills.

Consumers, even those with a wind generator or solar power grid, depend on the utility's lines to get them through dark nights and still, quiet evenings when they can't generate power — and to take away their excess when they can. They need the service, even if they don't buy much juice.

It's only fair that they pay their share for the

power grid, no matter how much of their own power they generate. Some utilities have created a monthly minimum "wires and facilities" charge to cover their costs, billing for power at a lower retail rate. That might help.

But the state has to be careful not to force utilities to buy power back at full retail rate. They need a spread between buy and sell rates. The state also wants to encourage people to make their own power from renewable sources like sun and wind, especially solar power.

Solar power really is free, except for the cost of capturing it as electricity. It has less environmental impact, since most solar energy will be absorbed by the earth one way or another. Unlike burning fossil fuels such as coal or oil, which releases energy stored millions of years ago, solar does not much change the net load on the planet. It just shifts it around some.

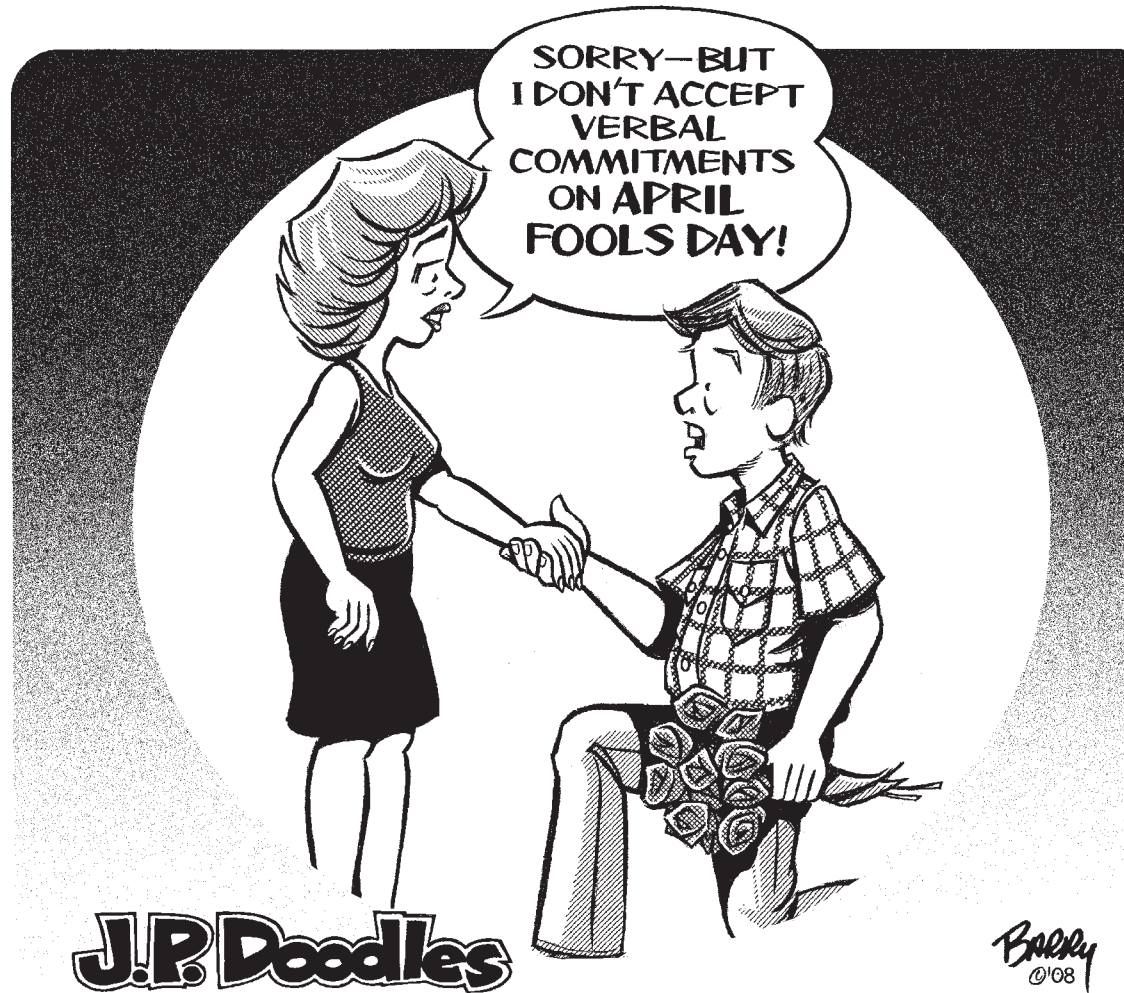
The Legislature will have to balance the needs of homeowners and utilities in a way that encourages people to make electricity at home and ensures that the power grid will be maintained for everyone.

In Colorado this year, the governor claims, that utilities and users got together and agreed on a "net metering" bill. That kind of cooperation Kansas needs, not the sort of fight we are in today.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius seems determined to push her national agenda by blocking construction of two coal-fired power plants near Garden City. While older plants serving eastern Kansas are much dirtier, the western Kansas plants have become a symbol for both sides.

There seems to be no room for compromise, at least on the governor's part. Her efforts so far have been laughable, unworkable and unhelpful.

Down the road, though, the net metering issue needs to be resolved to the benefit of all concerned. — Steve Haynes



J.P. Doodles

Baldy '08

News From the Past

65 years ago - 1943

Local merchants report that our citizens are cooperating well with the rationing program, and that buying of canned goods is normal with very few attempts of hoarding.

Ray Andrews is advertising that he will hold a public sale at the Gurney Station out on Highway 36 at which time he will dispose of the remainder of his grocery stock and other goods and his entire equipment for his service station. He is doing this because the tire and gasoline rationing has cut traffic down on the road so the business will be unprofitable.

Thirty boys of the 18-year-old group have registered with the Selective Service Board during the December registration. Those registering include Paul Zeilinger, Leonard Amsterry, James Byerly, Glenn Glasco, Dale Harkins, Willard Miller, Billy Randall, Haddon Leibbrandt, Wayne Queen, Edward Maupin, Calvin Zimbelman, John Elley, Edwin Nelson, Charles Meyers, Jack Maring, Gordon Fishel, Wilmer Krien, Ervin Hopp, Charles Danison, Melvin Miller, Walter Warner, Ralph Stunkel, Donald David, George Garner, Robert Morrell, Ervin Peters, Bernard Kram-

er, Earl Gorman, Lawrence Westrand and Virgil Fritchel.

60 years ago - 1948

Workmen were busily engaged this week preparing the west room of the building now occupied by Frederick's Jewelry into the new office quarters for Dr. Charles W. Wilson, who is to have his own doctor's office within the near future. He has been associated with Dr. Peck until his decision to establish his own quarters.

The following girls were initiated into Girl Scouts, Nancy Potts, Lucy Rueb, Marilyn Baxter, Jelia Vaughn, Alma Bartholoma, Audrey Matzler and Maxine Bandel.

Hangin' With Marge

Cats

By Margaret Bucholtz



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Some of you might wonder if I really like cats after you read this story, but the answer is "yes I do." I like dogs also but I don't want them to touch me.

As a child my mother was afraid of cats so I really never had one for a pet. We did have wild cats that lived out in the

barns, but they were so wild you couldn't play with them.

When Kurt and I moved to the farm, someone gave us a couple of cats to put in the barn to hunt mice. It wasn't long until we had baby cats. I thought they were cute and even played with them a little.

One day I was headed outside

with a huge basket of clothes to hang on the line. The basket was heavy and I was just in my own little world when all of a sudden I felt something on my leg.

It was pretty scary and without looking to see what it was I just kicked my leg to try and get it off. After all I couldn't see what it was because of the basket of wet clothes. As soon as my leg hit the air I saw this little ball of fur flying. It flew to the clothesline when it caught and swung three loops around the wire until it fell to the ground.

I dropped the clothes and ran to the poor little kitty which took one look at me, hissed and ran off.

I sure felt guilty about kicking that hard as I didn't mean to do it, but the little kitten grew up and I think she forgave me.

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Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



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I can't help watching the national news on television. The networks provide a quick overview of what is happening across this great land.

But then their bias comes through like a slap to the face.

The other morning, while I was getting ready for work, the television caught my attention. The broadcaster was talking about the war in Iraq and how the total number of United States service personnel who have died has reached 4,000.

She then said that this conflict has lasted longer, five years, than either the American Civil War or the United States involvement in World War II.

Her take was wrapped up with a comment about how it seems

that Americans aren't "focused" on the war and that the economy has "gotten in the way."

Since she brought it up, how about comparing the three wars.

The numbers of soldiers killed during the Civil War are staggering. Weapons had out-paced military strategies and both sides were from the same country, obviously.

During the four years (1861-1865) 620,000 Union and Confederate troops fell.

The United States entered World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in late 1941. The European conflict ended before the Japanese surrender in mid-1945.

American losses were 416,800.

So on a yearly basis the Civil War averaged about 155,000 lives

per year. World War II was close to 104,200 each year. The current Iraqi War is around 800.

This is not to down play the important job that the American military is doing today. Maybe a little positive public support from the networks would make their job a bit easier.

Throughout history there has been war. It is a sad fact in an imperfect world.

But until the day comes that there are no more tyrants and war lords, that there are no more Hitlers, Tojos, Mussolinis, Saddam Husseins or Osama bin Ladens, there will be a need for nations that hold liberty and freedom dear to oppose them.



GOD SAYS
Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope. Psalms 119:116

The Saint Francis Herald

(USPS 475-960)

A Century of Service to Cheyenne County

P.O. Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050

Published each Thursday by Haynes Publishing Co., 310 W. Washington, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050. Entered as periodicals matter at the post office at St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050, and at additional offices.

Official newspaper of Cheyenne County. Member of the Kansas Press Association, National Newspaper Association, Colorado Press Association and Inland Press Association.

Subscriptions: One year \$33 (tax included) in Cheyenne and adjacent counties; \$38 (tax included) elsewhere in Kansas; \$42 elsewhere in the U.S. Foreign subscriptions, \$25 extra per year (except APO/FPO). POSTMASTER: Send change of address to Box 1050, St. Francis, Kan. 67756-1050



Nor'West Newspapers

8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
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