

from our viewpoint...

The practical side of coal power plants

Someone from eastern Kansas called *The Goodland Star-News* last week wanting to know our thoughts about the fuss in Lawrence over huge new power plants Sunflower Electric Power Co. wants to build at Holcomb.

We have watched the stories about opposition to the plants over the past weeks, including two days of packed hearings in Lawrence-on-the-Kaw. Then the Lawrence City Commission voted 3-2 to oppose the plants.

We don't see any reason to boycott Lawrence — as one overwrought Sunflower official wanted to do — but we are dismayed that elected officials 400 miles northeast of Garden City would object to this economic development efforts.

The letter from Lawrence is one of many being added to comments of over 300 people who attended the two days of hearings by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in a public comment period that runs through Thursday.

Sunflower officials seemed surprised at the vehement reaction, but what did they expect in a liberal college town?

The process is familiar to those in northwest Kansas.

Back in February, a planned coal-fired power plant being built by Goodland Energy Resources west of town went through a similar hearing and comment period. There was a little local opposition, and there were a few letters from the Sierra Club and other environmental groups.

Opposition to the Goodland plant was similar to what has been said about the Sunflower proposal, but on a much smaller scale. The plant here will produce about 25 megawatts of power, while the three at Holcomb will each produce 700.

The city has a contract to buy all the power used by each business and household in town from Sunflower. After the coal-fired plant gets up next year, Goodland plans to purchase power from it, but will keep an interconnect to Sunflower as a backup.

Environmental questions were raised about the Goodland Energy plant, but the amounts of mercury and carbon dioxide are hundreds of times higher for the three big plants being proposed. While researching the questions raised in February, though, we found that Sunflower is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to reduce mercury emissions at the Holcomb plant.

Lawrence City Commissioner Mike Rundle, who proposed the letter opposition, claims the Holcomb plants will contribute to global warming by producing carbon dioxide, and that the mercury emissions would blow toward eastern Kansas.

We can understand the mercury questions and believe Sunflower will do their best to reduce these as much as practical. Carbon dioxide is not targeted by the federal Clean Air Act. It seems unfair to apply a restriction to these power plants while others in the country — including the one near Goodland — face none.

If carbon dioxide needs to be regulated — and it might — we suggest the Lawrence City Commission take that up with Congress.

We feel these power plants are good economic development for western Kansas. Most of the power will be sold to Colorado, Texas and New Mexico, but that is the same with any industrial plant. And there will be enough to provide growth for Sunflower customers out here.

We wonder if the person who called really wanted to know what we thought about the Sunflower power plants — or if we were canceling a trip to Lawrence. — *Tom Betz*

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Do we need 'center' parking downtown?

Some days you wonder.

One city councilman wants to allow center parking downtown for long vehicles.

The police chief doesn't like the idea.

Others say we "allow" center parking for pickup and delivery, but not just for parking, at least where there is angle parking.

The city attorney points out that the current ordinance makes center parking illegal *all* the time.

And the mayor says to leave it be.

Who's right?

Councilman Jay Anderson wants a place for people with big rigs, recreational vehicles and the like, to park while shopping. He's got a good point. We want more shoppers downtown.

You could do that; there's room for center parking AND angle parking downtown.

But Penn Ave. might get a little crowded with a bunch of camper rigs parked down the center. The police worry about emergency access, and that's legitimate.



steve haynes

- along the sappa

The mayor's suggestion to block off spaces either north or south of the "main" block makes more sense.

We still need center parking in front of stores for deliveries and loading. That will take care of people buying or selling antiques and unloading them from stock trailers or pickups, as well as UPS and FedEx.

All-time parking down the middle?

Probably not.

Whatever the council decides probably will work, but once they decide, they ought to write it into the ordinance. That's not something done on a whim, since ordinances are not that easily changed.



will durst

- raging moderate

some of those factions also believe the same is true of Fidel.

The best way to analyze "The City," as we presumptively call ourselves, is to look to the movies. Like in "The Wizard of Oz," when Dorothy says, "we're not in Kansas anymore," that's our motto. Then, at the end of "Peter Pan," where Tinker Bell almost dies and the only thing that can save her is audience applause. Well, that's us too. We're not Kansas and we clap for fairies. So what? Big deal. Who cares?

San Francisco believes center on the rights of the individual. Our biggest moral flaw is we hate judgmental people, a bit of an internal fallacy, I'll admit. We go out of our way not to place restrictions on people or their actions or

It does not seem like good government, however, to agree to leave the ordinance as is, but "wink" at those making deliveries. It's either OK to park in the center for that reason, or it's not. Let's not have government by wink.

What the council should do, of course, is what's best for the town, best for business and best for public safety. Reasonable minds might disagree on what that is, but I'm confident the members can figure it out.

And write an ordinance that will work.

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After all those years of Vince Gibson and Bill Snyder and invincible K-State teams, it sure is sweet for Jayhawk fans to be in the race again. Tradition and simple math give the 'Hawks a 2-1 edge in the 104-year-old series, but it hasn't been that way the last few decades.

Now the Catbackers will have to take up our old battle cry: "Wait until basketball season."

Of course, that might actually be a contest this year, too.

San Francisco values

Hope you were hanging on to something solid last week, because this country lurched so hard to the left that half of Washington woke up with a wicked case of whiplash.

No, make that most of Washington. And all of K Street. And the Republicans should be grateful. Because if it weren't for Democratic persistence, they wouldn't still be able to file for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The electoral semi-tsunami means new Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is next in line after Dick Cheney in presidential succession. In other words, she's only two chicken bones away from the presidency. And Bush does not look like a picky eater. Does the term "unchewed pretzel" have any meaning here? Not to mention one loud noise takes Cheney out like that, leading to... President Pelosi. And to conservatives, that's got to be scarier than a raw-meat bathing suit in a shark tank.

Since she's the human embodiment of what right-wing talk show hosts refer to as (cue theme music from "Psycho") the extreme agenda of San Francisco values, people all over the country are curious as to what exactly are these alarming values?

Glad you asked. Pull up a chair, plop the kids in front of "CSI: Topeka" and let me tell you about Ms. Pelosi and the den of iniquity she represents that serves as my home, the city named after Saint Francis of Assisi.

For those of you who can't wait to get Nancy Pelosi down on the ground to shave her head and expose her horns, I regret to inform you they aren't there. She's a kindly old grandma now, and although her smile does look like some fiend is twisting a knobby pole inserted up her butt, the ironic part is, in San Francisco, this supposedly frighteningly extreme liberal is considered a moderate and often is protested by leftist factions for planting herself too deep in the mainstream and selling out. And yeah,

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