KS Organizations and Experts Allied Against Pro-Coal Bills

Topeka, KS. - As testimony from proponents of H.B. 2711 and S.B. 515 got underway in the House and Senate Utilities committees, organizations from across Kansas came together to support a clean, profitable and secure energy economy and the recent Kansas Department of Health and Environment denial of air quality permits to Sunflower Electric Corporation's proposed Holcomb expansion. Johannes Feddema, University of Kansas Geography Professor and contributing author to the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Philip Hanson from the American Lung Association, Craig Volland of the Sierra Club, Margaret Thomas of the Kansas Natural Resources Council, Jerry Rees of the Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition of Greater Kansas City, Pete Ferrell, Kansas cattle rancher and wind farmer, and Chris Cardinal, of the Great Plains Alliance for Clean Energy, held a joint press conference on the south steps of the Capitol today to discuss various aspects of the pending legislation.

Allied members focused their discussion on the short-falls of the legislation and pointed out that H.B. 2711 and S.B. 515 do not reflect the views of a vast majority of Kansans. A recent poll commissioned by the Climate and Energy Project of The Land Institute showed that Kansans support the KDHE's decision to deny air quality permits for two proposed 700MW coal-fired power plants by a ratio of 2:1.

Most participants also expressed concern that legislative introduction and review of the bills has not provided enough opportunity for an informed, open, and comprehensive discussion of Kansas' energy opportunities for the future.

Referring to global warming, Professor Feddema explained that, "the scientific consensus on this topic is clear: based on basic laws of physics, the addition of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to our atmosphere, there will be changes in the climate system. Globally, this will lead to increased energy retention in the earth system and this will warm the planet."

Discussion also highlighted multiple negative aspects of the proposed Holcomb plants, which the legislation would explicitly allow, overturning the KDHE ruling.

"Air pollution has many serious health impacts," said Hanson of the American Lung Association. "Additional coal fired power plants will produce significant particulate matter emissions and others, like nitrogen oxide, sulfur dioxide and volatile organic compounds that mix to form ozone. The only compromise that this legislation represents is that it compromises the health of Kansans."

"What is Kansas' most limited resource?" asked Margaret Thomas from KNRC. "Water. If the Holcomb decision is reversed, 16,000 acre feet or five billion gallons per year from the Ogallala aquifer will go up in steam to make electricity."

According to Jerry Rees, "People of faith increasingly regard global climate change as the overarching moral, social, economic, and environmental issue of our age. Because it is happening more rapidly than projected even a year ago, some have suggested that is accelerating scenario goes beyond "our age," that it is biblical in scope, magnitude, and consequences - affecting the entire arc of human history."

Speaking directly about the current legislation, Chris Cardinal said, "This legislation costs a lot and provides very little, it is not a compromise, it does not provide comprehensive energy policy for the state of Kansas. Kansans deserve leaders who can resist political gamesmanship favoring the coal industry at our expense."

Sierra Club representative Craig Volland said, "The real question, and the white elephant in the room nobody is talking about, is why Sunflower is still trying to build coal plants at all. Some 31 coal plant proposals in the US were abandoned in 2007 due to soaring construction costs and the impending regulation of carbon by the US Congress. Those citizens of Kansas who oppose the Holcomb project are not standing..."
in the way of progress; we are doing the economy of western Kansas a big favor. Our future lies with homegrown renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies."

"Will our children thank us for scalping the planet? Will they thank us for putting more mercu-
Students in the news

LAWRENCE — More than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2007 semester.

The honor roll comprises undergraduates who meet requirements in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and in the allied health; architecture and urban design; business; education; engineering; fine arts; journalism; nursing; and social welfare schools. Honor roll criteria vary among the university's academic units. Some schools honor the top 10 percent of students enrolled, some establish a minimum grade-point average and others raise the minimum GPA for each year students are in school. Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours to be considered for the honor roll.

Fredonia students named to the honor roll include Megan Ann Fowler, daughter of Doug and Nina Fowler, a junior in liberal arts; Erica Lynn Henderson, daughter of Laura Henderson, a sophomore in liberal arts; Whitney Lyn Runer, daughter of Victor and Terri Runer, a junior in education; and Tiffany Marie Wambsganss, daughter of Roger and Betty Wambsganss, junior in education.
KU Honor Roll Announced

Whitney N. Pankratz of Hesston was among more than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas who earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2007 semester.

Pankratz, daughter of Timothy and Katie Pankratz, is a sophomore Liberal Arts student.

The honor roll students, from KU’s Lawrence campus and the schools of allied health and nursing in Kansas City, Kan., represent 96 of 105 Kansas counties, 43 other states, the District of Columbia and 38 other countries.
KU Awards
Scholarships

The University of Kansas has extended scholarships to two Mulvane students for the 2008 Fall semester.

Mike Humbolt, son of Todd and Maureen Humbolt and Susan Humbolt, all of Mulvane, has been awarded the $3,000 per annum Freshman Achievement Scholarship. Aaron Elston, son of Christine and Scott Elston, has been awarded the $1,500 per annum Freshman Achievement Scholarship.

These scholarships are provided through donors to KU.
KU Announces Fall Honor Roll

More than 4,500 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the Fall 2007 semester. Among those students are several from Mulvane.

Mulvane honor roll students include Natasha Parman, daughter of Craig Parman and Dena Parman. Parman is a senior majoring in education. Amber Abel, daughter of Gary and Joyce Abel is a senior majoring in liberal arts. Wade Sanner, son of Dawn Sanner, is also a senior majoring in liberal arts.

Kara Schippers is the daughter of Robert and Becky Schippers. She is a freshman who is a liberal arts undergraduate. Kraig Stoll, son of Stacy Stoll and Tom Stoll, is a sophomore majoring in liberal arts. Joseph Myers is the son of Michael and Margaret Myers. He is a freshman and an engineering undergraduate.
Andrew Stangl, 22, and Matthew Agnew, 21, both of Wichita, will be helping Rep. Raj Goyle, D-Wichita, this legislative session, which started Jan. 14.

Stangl is a senior at the University of Kansas majoring in political science, French and international relations.

Agnew is majoring in political science with an emphasis on international relations and women's studies at Wichita State University.
Help Wichita train doctors, pharmacists

Among the year’s legislative proposals is one that would ensure Wichita continues to be a key supplier of physicians to the state, and another that would make Wichita a partner in meeting Kansas’ demand for pharmacists. But both issues are bigger than Wichita, and they deserve high-priority status this session.

Graduate medical education

The Wichita Center for Graduate Medical Education, which coordinates 13 residency programs in Wichita and one in Salina, has become well-known for producing primary care physicians. And a standout 55 percent of the residents who train in Wichita remain in Kansas, serving 70 counties as of 2006.

But the program — involving 272 doctors and the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita, Wesley Medical Center and Via Christi Regional Medical Center — long has relied on mostly volunteer faculty, something incompatible with new accreditation requirements. The new expectations also make it urgent that Wichita’s medical residents do more scholarly research. Wesley and Via Christi recently have ensured the program’s annual $48 million cost is covered. But they need and deserve help from the state to make up a shortfall.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius included $1 million for the program in her 2009 budget proposal, but the need is for $9.6 million this year and $12.5 million next year.

At a recent House Appropriations Committee hearing, three northeast Kansas lawmakers signaled skepticism that the state could provide the needed dollars. But as Hugh Tappan, president and chief executive of Wesley Medical Center, recently told The Eagle: “The issue is about education for the state and about physicians for the state.”

Shortage of pharmacists

Six Kansas counties have no pharmacists, and 30 have one each. The baby boomer retirements will worsen the situation. So KU wants $50 million to build a new School of Pharmacy facility in Lawrence and to add a pharmacy program at the KU Medical School in Wichita. The Wichita program would take $5 million, start with 20 students in 2009 and later expand to 40 students.

Sebelius’ 2009 budget includes $1 million to start the expansion, and she has proposed the state back $50 million in construction bonds; millions more might come from private and federal sources.

As it is, 63 percent of KU-trained pharmacists stay in Kansas. “The difficulty has been getting them to move to the western part of the state; most of them have remained in the northeast. We’re hoping the Wichita school will address that,” Kenneth Audus, dean of the KU School of Pharmacy, recently told the Kansas Health Institute News Service.

Dealing with the graduate medicine and pharmacy issues will take foresight and funds, a combination that invites legislative procrastination in an election year. But not dealing with them could prove very bad for the state’s health.

— For the editorial board, Rhonda Holman
A BETTER WAY TO BUILD KANSAS ROADS AND BRIDGES

Governor Kathleen Sebelius and Lt. Governor Mark Parkinson announced recently a redoubled effort to eliminate wasteful government spending and make the state government operate more efficiently.

They are calling this effort BEST II after the Budget Efficiency Savings Teams (BEST) that worked most actively from 2003 to 2004.

State spending on roads offers BEST II and Kansas taxpayers the best target for saving money. Kansas taxpayers fund about $1 billion per year in road-related spending, one of the biggest line-items in the state budget.

More than 75 percent of the savings claimed by the first BEST effort came from renegotiating better terms for road-related debt.

But Kansas has no formal method for economically evaluating or prioritizing road projects. BEST II can fix this problem through benefit-cost evaluation for new road projects.

Benefit-cost evaluations are similar to investment evaluations of any type. An investment worthy of the name must produce benefits greater than the cost. Benefit-cost evaluations are a well-accepted technique for evaluating investments that will not necessarily generate any cash flow, like a road project that will not charge a toll.

No one questions the economic importance of building and maintaining good roadways and safe bridges. However, it is a mistake to think that every road is a "good" road from an investment perspective.

The Center for Applied Economics at the University of Kansas School of Business evaluated studies related to road spending and economic growth. In general, over the past several decades, road spending in the United States has had little added impact on economic growth.

This finding implies that building additional road capacity amounts to wasteful spending once a certain amount of road capacity has been built.

In 1999, Kansas lawmakers committed $13.6 billion to a Comprehensive Transportation Plan that will be complete in two years.

None of the projects related to this plan have been subjected to the discipline of a benefit-cost evaluation. Consequently, Kansans do not know which projects, if any, have added or subtracted value from the Kansas economy.

Every $100 million of road spending in which costs exceed benefits translates into a lost opportunity to fund other government priorities or, say, reduce the sales tax by five percent.

The execution of a benefit-cost evaluation is straightforward, but a well-implemented, sustainable process seems unlikely without committed executive leadership from the Governor’s office. The Kansas Department of Transportation’s just-released draft for a long range plan offers the perfect opportunity to get started.

A disciplined benefit-cost evaluation of future road spending would mark a fundamental change for the better in the way the state does business and promises a huge payoff for the BEST II effort — and Kansas taxpayers.

Arthur P. Hall is executive director of the Center for Applied Economics at the University of Kansas School of Business and a former executive director of BEST. He lives in Lawrence, Kan.
Younger voters trade apathy for involvement

Experts cite Internet, campaign tactics among factors that attract the 18-to-29-year-old demographic.

By EDWARD M. EVELED
The Kansas City Star

Young voters are on a roll this election season. They rolled right through Super Tuesday in record-breaking numbers and are poised for a remarkable, maybe election-altering, turnout in November.

"This is an entirely new generation of young people," said Heather Smith of Rock the Vote, a nationwide advocacy group. "They're finding their voice in the political process now and realizing that when they do turn out, campaigns pay attention to them."

The potential clout of younger voters has long been ballyhooed. The numbers show they might finally be cashing in, politically.

Voter turnout tripled among in the Missouri primary, according to a University of Maryland research center. That's compared with the 2000 presidential primary, the last time similar data was available.

Nearly 191,000 young voters cast ballots in the
**VOTERS:** Young demographic finds political voice

state on Tuesday, compared with 71,000 in the 2000 primary. Turnout among young people was a woeful 7 percent in 2000 and hit 21 percent Tuesday.

The numbers — and the zeal — are expected to grow through the November election.

Smith said Rock the Vote helped register a half-million young voters in preparation for Super Tuesday and is on track to register more than 2 million this year. Most will vote in November, she said.

So far, young voters are playing a strong part in the narrative of this presidential primary season, a trend that started in 2004. Youth voter turnout had declined in all but one presidential election year between 1972, when 18-year-olds first voted and 2000.

"In 2004, something changed," said Emily Kirby, of the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement. "And again in 2006. Now we're seeing this a third time with the primaries and caucuses."

On Super Tuesday, the "youth vote" also tripled in Georgia and Oklahoma and quadrupled in Tennessee, Kirby said. Earlier, Florida and Iowa also saw a tripling in youth turnout, although not every state has had increases. Kirby said her center can't crunch numbers from the Kansas Democratic caucus Tuesday or Saturday's Republican caucus because of a lack of exit poll information.

What's going on with under-30 voters?

Technology — specifically the ease and allure of the Internet — is part of what's fueling participation.

Meghan Whelan of Kansas City, Kan., did her part in upping the numbers, and she doesn't plan to stop now. She's a Barack Obama supporter and is using her MySpace page to keep 240 "friends" informed.

"It's my own MySpace campaign," said Whelan, 26. "I talk about how Barack Obama inspires me and how we need to show people that as young voters we do care, that we need to go against the stereotypes."

Then there was the YouTube video called "Yes We Can," a musical adaptation of an Obama speech. Made by a member of the Black Eyed Peas, the video has been watched more than 2 million times in the last week.

"It was really powerful, so I made sure I put it up for everybody to watch," Whelan said. "We don't necessarily have the money to donate, but we can put time and energy into this."

Nathan Lipsky, 17, was one of hundreds of Kansans waiting in line Saturday to get into the Republican caucus at the Matt Ross Community Center in Overland Park. He is eligible to vote because he will be 18 come Election Day in November.

His choice: John McCain.

"I like his stand on foreign policy, and I think he's the best candidate for the party," said Lipsky, a student at Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy in Overland Park.

Farther back in the line, Lauren Cantril, 18, of Overland Park said she dragged her mother to the caucuses with her. Cantril said she's for Mike Huckabee because of his anti-abortion stand.

She also was motivated by how she regards the Democratic candidates. "I don't like the Democratic people," Cantril said. "I just don't believe in what they stand for."

The 18-to-29-year-olds have something else: a big — and growing — head count.

The year 1990 marked the highest number of births since the baby boom, which officially began in 1946, and those babies are turning 18 this year. Some 44 million people between 18 and 29 are eligible to vote in 2008, according to Rock the Vote, the young voter advocacy group.

"That's nearly a quarter of the electorate," said Smith, executive director, "and there's a huge surge just waiting at the gates. By 2012, it will be nearly a third of the electorate."

The strength of the youth vote is tipping elections, she said. An estimated 70,000 young voters cast ballots for Obama in Missouri's

**RESOURCES**

Rockthevote.com, a nonprofit organization that encourages youth participation with voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote events.

Votegopher.com, a nonpartisan site that compares the presidential candidates' views on the
It's written mostly by Harvard undergraduates.

Civicyouth.org, the website of CIRCLE, the Center for Information & Research on Civic Life & Engagement, which focuses on the civic and political engagement of young people.

Democratic primary, which he won by just 10,000 votes. Besides online factors — social networking sites, blogs, candidate Web sites, YouTube and so on — here are some of the reasons experts cited for increases in youth voting:

1. In the 2004 election, campaigns began hiring youth directors, who were charged with pursuing this untapped pool of voters.
2. Campaigns altered tactics, using more canvassing and other one-on-one appeals. Research shows that the more personal the appeal the better, especially when one young voter contacts another.
3. Contested elections feel more important, especially to young voters who are more likely to question whether their votes matter.
4. This year's issues seem particularly relevant to young voters. In a recent Time poll, 75 percent of under-30 Americans felt the country was going in the wrong direction, with particular concern about jobs, health-care affordability and the war in Iraq.
5. Obama is attracting young voters. In most states so far this primary season, Obama has outpolled Hillary Clinton among young voters.
6. In Missouri, the youth vote was 65 percent for Obama and 30 percent for Clinton. Among Republicans, 43 percent of young people chose Mike Huckabee, compared with 27 percent for John McCain 18 percent for Mitt Romney and 9 percent for Ron Paul.

Conversations with young caucus-goers and voters last week affirmed the analysts' conclusions.
Sara Parton and Annie Fulsom, both 17, were among the youthful Obama supporters who participated in the caucus at Mill Valley High School in Shawnee. They will turn 18 before the general election.

Both said they feel well-informed about the presidential candidates. They read the candidates' Web sites and watched debates. Parton likes Obama's stands on health care and Social Security. Fulsom said she's also drawn by his personal and political skills.

"I like how he can move people with his speeches and how he can talk about change," Fulsom said.

Laurie Gallagher, a 19-year-old University of Kansas freshman, said many students are fired up by Obama but also by, what they consider, the mistakes of the Bush administration. To stay informed, she joined a Facebook group called Barack Chalk Jayhawks.

Mary Opie of Blue Springs, who was a Romney supporter and now undecided, said the wide-open race and the weight of current issues are drawing in the under-30 crowd.

"After a president who's been in for eight years, we're starting over; it's anybody's game," said Opie, 28.

"And with the war, the life issues, the Supreme Court appointments, there's a lot at stake. Especially with the war, I feel that if there are people willing to put their lives on the line, I feel I need to do what I can to contribute."

Tommy Kraus of Independence, a Huckabee supporter, said young people are feeling more informed and connected than even a few years ago. The 21-year-old said he sent a message to Huckabee's MySpace page and got a quick response.

"At least I feel like somebody read it and took the time to respond," he said.

Phil Shafer, a 29-year-old artist, offered another reason.
"The first woman president, the first African-American president, a POW president," Shafer said. "No matter how you slice it, this is the year that will basically set history. If you don't take part, you're missing out on your share of American history."

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During the 10th Senate District Democrat Caucus on Tuesday, 22-year-old Daniela Kelley, from Shawnee, handed out Obama stickers at Mill Valley High School in Shawnee.
I'M A FIRST-TIMER IN SECOND LIFE

ALTERNATE UNIVERSE |
Excuse me? You there, giant dragon thing. May I ask that you stop lashing me with your tail?

So my avatar has "newbie" stamped all over it. "Purple skin, how inventive," the veterans of Second Life must be thinking as I fly over to meet them.

Yeah, I'm with the nosy media, but do not tail-whip me.

Who knew that avatars had feelings?

My editor in RL (that's shorthand for real life) assigned me to go, as Second Lifers say, "in world" (meaning online) to do some avatar-on-the-street interviews. Stacey Fox of the University of Kansas art department helped me get started.

Sorry, but I hastily chose a first name that's a journalistic cliche. And I dispassionately plucked "Hoobinoo" from a list of eligible last names, and maybe I spent all of four minutes constructing myself. That doesn't give seasoned avatars the right to taunt.

It's all just a game, right?

There I miscalculated.

Her name was Loris, an attractive female avatar in a V-neck sweater and slacks. She worked on a Second Life island that helps newbies find their way. She said she was Italian and that her avatar was a fairly accurate reflection of her real self.

When I messaged Loris that one of her co-workers — a lavender, pointy-eared beast with a Mohawk — looked dangerous, she sweetly typed back: "Nothing will hurt you here."

After the interview, I checked Loris' online profile. It suggested that, in RL, she might be a he.

(Back in the real world at my laptop, I turned to my tutor and said I needed to go back to Loris and ask whether she was, in fact, male.)

("I wouldn't do that," warned Fox. "Wouldn't it be rude to ask someone you just met on the street about his or her sexuality?")

(A very good point. But I'm the nosy media. I needed to ask.)

Loris took my question and then silently walked away.

Oh no. I had offended a perfectly kind avatar, in a way I'd never think of doing in real life.

And for the first time in my second life, I felt I had no right being here.

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