



The *A newsletter for and about the members of Kansas Municipal Utilities*

# KMU Dispatch

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## Kansas Electric Rates Below National Average

Electric rates for the customers of Kansas public power systems continue to be lower than national averages, recent data from the Department of Energy (DOE) indicates. The average electric rate for all Kansas municipal electric utilities (residential, commercial and industrial classes) was 6.4 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in 2004. This compares favorably to national averages of 7.2¢/kWh for public power systems, 7.6¢/kWh for investor-owned utilities, and 7.4¢/kWh for rural electric cooperatives.

Public power rates also ranked favorably within Kansas, but less so due to the low retail rates of several private utilities in Kansas. Kansas investor-owned utility rates were 6.7% lower than municipal rates. Meanwhile,

Kansas rural electric cooperatives (RECs) averaged 34.4% higher. One apparent weakness for Kansas municipal utilities was the average residential rate. For 2004, Kansas public power utilities supplied power to residential customers at an average cost of 8.6 ¢/kWh, approximately 5% higher than the national public power residential rate of 8.2¢/kWh. Kansas municipal residential rates were also nearly 21% higher than residential rates for Kansas investor-owned utilities (but 16% less than those for Kansas RECs).

The electric rates used for comparison are based on calendar year 2004 information as reported to DOE. A full electric rate comparison, broken down by each individual utility, will be included in the 2006 KMU Membership Directory.

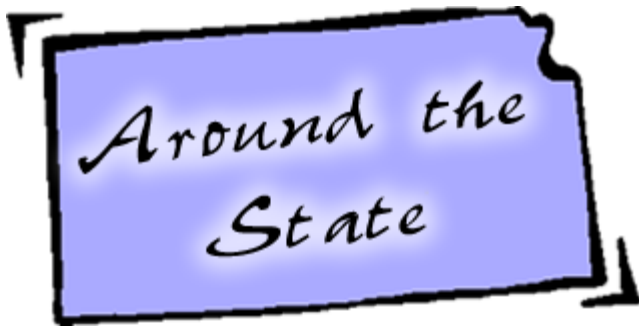
## Legislative Rally Coming Soon

The annual KMU trip to the Capitol is quickly approaching. Held in conjunction with the American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally from February 28<sup>th</sup> through March 3<sup>rd</sup>, the rally provides an important opportunity for KMU members and staff to communicate issues and concerns with Kansas Congressional offices. This

year, we expect to address the critical issues of RTOs, implementation of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, natural gas supply concerns, water & wastewater regulations, and more. Members are encouraged to attend. Please contact Colin Hansen at 620/241-1423 or [chansen@kmunet.org](mailto:chansen@kmunet.org) for additional information about the rally.



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## Low Missouri River Water Levels a Cause for Concern in Kansas City Area

Cold temperatures and upstream drought have significantly affected water levels in the Missouri River this winter. The surface stage level, a measure of the elevation of the water surface, has shown a troubling decline, with a record low of 3.66 feet set in early December. Not only is the quantity of water declining, but the movement of the water is also scouring the riverbed and causing it to sink lower. Ten feet of water in the shipping channel appears to be sufficient for now, but Tom Schrempp, production manager for WaterOne (Johnson County Water District No. 1), is more concerned about the water level at the shore and near the water intakes. The intake pipes, used to supply businesses and utilities with water, were put in place at a time when the water level was much higher. Fortunately, it appears that adequate planning has been done and that there will be no shortages. In 2003, Shrempp's district invested more than \$2 million in a system of low-water pumps, which will be needed for the first time if the water level drops six inches lower.

Further to the north, the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (KCBPU) is also relying upon emergency pumps to handle the decreasing water levels. KCBPU uses water taken from the Missouri River to cool the boilers at its coal-fired Nearman power plant. While no problems with the low-level pumps have been detected, construction of a cooling tower continues to progress. The cooling tower will recycle the hot water from the boilers and send the cooled water back to Nearman Creak Power Plant. The tower will be available in emergency conditions and when river levels are low.

## Osage City Welcomes Silcott as City Manager

Osage City welcomed a new City Manager in early January. Brian Silcott comes with three-and-a-half years of experience as the city manager for the City of Sterling. Prior to his employment in Sterling, Silcott served the City of Wichita in various capacities, as a budget and research analyst for the Department of Finance, a neighborhood assistant in the city manager's office and a firefighter. Silcott received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Wichita State University.

## Gardner Helps Customers Reduce Lead Levels in Home Water System

Every three years, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires cities such as Gardner to test the tap water for lead levels. In Gardner, this includes 36 residences built prior to 1986. Beginning in 1986, materials containing lead were not allowed by the federal government in household plumbing. However, the corrosion of lead pipes or solder joints can still pose a problem in older homes. Late last year, six homes tested in Gardner showed high levels of lead in their tap water. Melissa Mundt, assistant city administrator, made it clear that the source of the lead was not the city treatment plant. "Lead is not in the city's water system, it's from within private residences," she said. "The city doesn't have any lead in its pipes. The city doesn't have any lead in its solder joints." However, by recently raising the pH of the water in its system, the city has acted to assist these customers in slowing the rate of corrosion in older pipes. Since it made these adjustments, tests from two of the original six houses have come back clear. According to Mundt, the pH level of the city's water had been at an acceptable level in the past but was probably too low to prevent leaching. "We've been running at that level for several years and never had a problem," she added.

## Kansas City BPU Sets Winter Peak Record

On Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m., the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities reached a new winter peak record of 385 megawatts (MW). The temperature at the peak was ten degrees Fahrenheit. The previous winter peak, set on January 14, 2005, stood at 367 MW. Peak usage for a utility is the hour during a year or a season in which the highest demand for electricity is recorded. BPU's overall peak record of 520 MW was set on August 21, 2003.

## Andover Establishes Stormwater Utility

At its meeting on December 13, the Andover City Council approved a new stormwater utility and voted upon a workable fee structure to support it. Creation of the new utility was required by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. The stormwater program is intended to maintain and improve the quality of surface and groundwater and to prevent contaminants from entering the sewer system via stormwater runoff. The city council worked with city staff members prior to the meeting to consider several fee structuring options. In the end, the staff recommended that rates be based on the size of each lot, with the same fee charged for both commercial and residential properties. Council members agreed by a vote of 5-1. Property owners will be responsible for the charges which will be included on residents' March sewer bills.

## Baldwin City Enters Agreement with KMEA

A power plant built several years ago by Baldwin City appears to have proven itself as a wise investment for the city as it enters into a new energy agreement through the Kansas Municipal Energy Agency (KMEA). The city joins with Gardner, Garnett, Osawatomie and Ottawa to form a power pool for the purchase and sale of energy. Baldwin City comes to the table in a strong position since it is currently capable of generating electricity cheaper than it can acquire it on the market. There are, however, a number of instances in which energy must be purchased, and in those cases, the new agreement will be beneficial. Because KMEA is tracking the usage of energy for the entire group, Baldwin City will also save on the manpower costs of monitoring the system.

City Administrator Jeff Dingman hopes that the new arrangement will help the city to maximize its efficiency in the face of new restrictions and regulations. "Joining this pool only affects our ability to purchase wholesale power and get it delivered to the city," Dingman noted. "The pool will not dictate our retail rate for energy sales to our customers." In fact, he expects that Baldwin City may now be able to maintain its current rates for a longer period of time.

## Kingman Proceeds with Tie Line Project

After an 18-month delay, Kingman city commissioners voted in late November to move forward with the financing of a key electrical project. The original plan to build a 22-mile tie line connecting Kingman to the Aquila grid in Cunningham was put on hold after the supply company responsible for providing composite poles for the project declared bankruptcy. Having found substitutes for the poles and worked through several legal issues, the city is now proceeding with the financing phase of the project. Commissioners have approved a general obligation bond issue. At the November 29 commission meeting, acting City Manager Joe Palacioz set forth a plan to award a contract by March 15 and begin construction in mid-May. "The end goal is to have construction completed by fall to avoid another winter of high fuel surcharges," he said. In May, a rate study will be conducted to determine how much rates will have to be increased. Palacioz, who was replaced by Frank Soukup of Lakin as the Kingman city manager on January 1<sup>st</sup>, reacted positively to the commission's vote to issue bonds. "The tie line needed to be done," he asserted. "Down the road it will pay for itself."

### Local Utility News to Share?

Call us at 620/241-1423, fax us at 620/241-7829  
or email a story to [kmu@kmunet.org](mailto:kmu@kmunet.org).

**APPA**

American Public Power Association

# 2006 Legislative Rally

**February 28 - March 3, 2006  
Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel  
Washington, D.C.**

**APPA** is heading to Capitol Hill. Join hundreds of your fellow utility managers, board members, mayors, and city council members from public power communities as we set APPA's legislative priorities and communicate the value, benefits and needs of public power to your Members of Congress. Don't be left behind—Register Today!

For more information, contact Joy Ditto at 202/467-2954, [jditto@appanet.org](mailto:jditto@appanet.org). Or register online, [www.APPAnet.org](http://www.APPAnet.org).

## KMEA News

Kansas Municipal Energy Agency (KMEA)  
Monthly Update

by Jim Widener, General Manager

### Girard Power Purchase

Aided by KMEA, the Nearman Cities of Ottawa, Osawatomie and Baldwin City began sales of cost-based power to the City of Girard in December. The sales are on a month-to-month basis and require KMEA to work with the City and Westar to put in place the sale and expedite future sales.

### Neodesha Power Sale

In December, the City of Neodesha and KMEA executed an amendment to the City's Nearman Power Sales Contract to allow for long-term redirection of power to the City of Burlington.

### SPP Task Force

Bob Polys, as a task force member, participated in the SPP Base Plan Guidelines Task Force, which met for the first time on January 3 in Kansas City to review its scope of planned actions. The three-month mission of the task force is to review and perhaps fashion new guidelines that more specifically identify projects to be included in SPP's transmission base plant.



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## Kansas Power Pool (KPP) Update

by Colin Whitley, General Manager

On October 11, 2005, the Kansas Power Pool (KPP) Board of Directors accepted the applications of eight new Kansas cities for membership in the KPP. With the addition of Chanute, Hillsboro, Hoisington, Lucas, Luray, Osborne, Russell and Stockton, membership now stands at fourteen cities. Five others—Beloit, Chapman, Cimarron, Holyrood and Washington—have taken council action for membership. An additional seventeen have presented letters of intent to join. Currently, eight cities are requesting inclusion in the next Southwest Power Pool (SPP) Aggregate Study. The total load of these cities is expected to exceed 317,000 kW by 2010.

KPP, serving Kansas municipalities promoting public power in Kansas, was founded by seven proactive and progressive utilities acting on a perceived need for a state power pool. The seven original cities—Augusta, Burlington, Chanute, Clay Center, Neodesha, Wellington and Winfield—have so far invested over \$180,000 to initiate KPP's formation.

You, too, can reap the benefits of this effort. For more information regarding your opportunity to participate in the continued growth of public power in Kansas, please visit the KPP web page at [www.kansaspowerpool.org](http://www.kansaspowerpool.org). Any of the individuals listed as contacts will be able to answer your questions or point you in the right direction. See you at our next meeting!

*Meetings of KPP Board of Directors are held on the third Thursday of each month and are open to the public. Please see the KPP website for details.*



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## The Year in Review

*APPA Washington Report*  
**by Robert Varela**  
**Editor, Public Power Weekly**

Since this is being written in December 2005, my year in review begins in December 2004, more specifically Dec. 9, when APPA released its white paper, *Restructuring at the Crossroads: FERC Electric Policy Reconsidered*. The white paper was APPA's effort to marshal in one place its arguments against, and recommendations to fix, the commission's unrelenting push for regional transmission organizations—in effect a push for its standard market design proposal.

"It is not too late to reform existing RTOs, or to support RTO alternatives that better meet regional needs," said APPA Chair Jan Schori in unveiling the white paper. "We're at a crossroads and FERC should seize the opportunity to take a different path if it wishes to ensure long-term consumer benefits."

While it's difficult to say how much impact a report ever has, *Restructuring at the Crossroads* generated a good deal of buzz, including favorable mentions by then-commissioner and now Chairman Joseph Kelliher. And, most importantly, the tide has turned at FERC.

Probably the major reason for the policy shift at the commission is another significant set of events from the past year: the departure

of Pat Wood and the selection of Kelliher to succeed him as chairman of the commission. The difference in their approaches was illustrated by a comment Kelliher made as the commission approved an accounting rule intended to make RTO costs more transparent: "I believe in RTOs, but I don't believe they are predestined to succeed."



The upshot is that the commission has stopped focusing all its energy on promoting RTOs with "Day Two" markets and instead is working on reining in RTO costs, developing long-term transmission rights, and reviving Order No. 888, its open access transmission rule.

Public power also appears to have gained some traction at the commission with arguments and requests that consumer-owned utilities be given a fair opportunity

to invest in transmission in return for ownership or equivalent rights.

"Our focus should not be on mergers but on creating new opportunities to allow [public power utilities and rural electric cooperatives] to participate" in transmission investment and ownership, Commissioner Nora Brownell said Dec. 15, 2005 during a discussion of PUHCA repeal. She lauded the public power utilities that have offered to invest to help rebuild Entergy's transmission system in ways that would allow the utilities to build and own portions of the grid. "I hope we see more of those offers," Brownell said. The commission should make sure it eliminates any barriers to entry, she added.

While the changes at FERC were a big story, the biggest story—and surprise—of 2005 was the enactment of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the first comprehensive energy bill in 13 years. Even though Congress had come close in recent years, an awful lot of people didn't think they could do it last year since at least one deal-breaker issue—the gasoline additive MTBE—loomed. Give credit to House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton, R-Texas, who chaired the conference committee on the bill, and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M.

## Washington Report *(continued from page 5)*

APPA strongly supported the bill, which was a vast improvement over some earlier versions. The fly in the ointment was repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935. However, APPA said it was especially pleased that the bill included provisions for:

- a new Clean Renewable Energy Bond mechanism;
- long-term transmission rights for load-serving utilities;
- reform of the hydroelectric licensing process;
- mandatory and enforceable reliability standards;
- voluntary participant funding of transmission;
- new FERC authority to address market manipulation; and
- enhancements to FERC's merger review authority.

More recently, the story has been a spate of rulemakings by FERC and other agencies to implement the new law (which prompted a spate of comments by APPA in response). Of particular note, the commission at its last meeting of 2005 approved a final rule on repeal of PUHCA, implementing its new books and records authority, and the Treasury Department/Internal Revenue Service issued a notice Dec. 12 that provides preliminary information on how they intend to implement the Clean Renewable Energy Bonds program. Also of note are APPA's comments (filed in November) to an interagency task force charged with making a report to Congress on wholesale and retail electricity competition.

On environmental issues, the big stories of the year just ending are the ongoing fights over mercury emission regulations and New Source Review reform, the failure to pass the administration's Clear Skies bill and increasing congressional support (particularly in the Senate) for controls on greenhouse gases. In 2005, APPA continued one special program—the Public Power is Good for Business campaign—and launched a new one, the Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) program. RP3 is APPA's program to recognize public power systems that demonstrate basic proficiency in four important disciplines: reliability, safety, training and system improvement.

Outside Washington, the big news of the year was bad—the huge increases in natural gas (and to a lesser degree, coal) prices. Dealing with those price increases will be a challenge for public power utilities and their customer-owners for some time to come.

Helping your customers use energy wisely is the best strategy for dealing with dramatically higher prices on all fronts, from fuel to environmental controls to labor costs. APPA offers a variety of tools to help public power utilities develop strategies to aid their communities and to help end-use customers to manage electricity bills. The resources and services available from APPA include publications and educational materials; meetings and utility education courses; participation on the Energy Services Committee; membership in APPA's DEED (Demonstration of Energy-Efficient Developments) and Tree Power programs; and electronic resources available through APPA's Web site. A good place to start is the Web site, [www.appanet.org](http://www.appanet.org); the Utility Operations section includes subsections on DSM/ Energy Efficiency and on Low-Income Energy Assistance.



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# Employment



## Water/Wastewater Utilities Department Superintendent

City of Burlington (2900) hiring Water/Wastewater Utilities Superintendent responsible for operations, maintenance and improvements of water/wastewater department. Superintendent has control over water production, water distribution, wastewater treatment facility and sewer collection system for city. Six years of water production and/or distribution experience & Class III Water Operator Certification required and/or wastewater treatment and sewer collection experience and Class II Wastewater Certification required. Salary dependent upon qualifications and experience. Applications obtained by calling 620-364-5334 or to resume to City of Burlington, P.O. Box 207, Burlington, Kansas 66839-0207. Closing date for filing is February 28, 2006. EOE.

## Resource Enhancement and Planning Director

The City of Osawatomie is accepting applications for the position of Resource Enhancement Director. This position will be under the general direction of the City Manager. Coordinates and administers the small business financial assistance programs, acts as liaison to citizens and developers in the City's development review process. Meets with prospects, developers, and business representatives to discuss opportunities; provides information regarding development sites, economic indicators, and growth projection; answers requests for additional information. In conjunction with other staff, provides information on zoning, City regs, trans. policies, and other dev. policies of the City. Receives and reviews dev. proposals, applications, and zoning and variance requests; interpret and explain code requirements; recommend modifications as appropriate. Confers with and advises developers, contractors and the general public on acceptable site plans; reviews building plans, parcel maps, tract maps, and subdivision proposals; ensures compliance with regulations and ordinances; recommends modifications, as appropriate. Candidates must possess a bachelor's degree in public/business admin., planning, finance, or related field, plus two or more years experience in economic development,

grant administration, city planning, or related field.

Related combinations of experience and education may be substituted. The city has an outstanding benefits package. Starting salary for this position is based upon qualifications. Full salary range is \$40,000 to \$50,000 annually. Applications will be taken until position is filled. Send resume to: City of Osawatomie, Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 37, Osawatomie, KS 66064. Applications available. EOE

## Wastewater System Operator I

The City of Colby is seeking an employee with a Class I or higher Wastewater Operator License. The City will be constructing a new, state-of-the-art wastewater facility in 2006, and individual hired for this position will have the possibility of advancement in the future. Salary range will be dependent on qualifications and experience. Application review will begin on February 15, 2006; applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The City is an EOE with an excellent benefit package. Additional information or application forms can be obtained online at [www.cityofcolby.com](http://www.cityofcolby.com) or from the office of the City Manager, 585 N. Franklin, Colby, Kansas 67701 (785-460-4410).

## Electric Lineman

The City of Neodesha has an opening for an Electric Lineman. This position performs work in the construction and maintenance of the City's electrical distribution system and assists in other functions of the department as needed. Applicants are required to have a minimum of one(1) year of similar or related experience and at a minimum, a high school diploma or GED. Supplemental training in electric power distribution is preferred. The employee is required to have a valid Commercial Drivers license. In addition to the minimum requirements, the lineman must have a working knowledge of electric power distribution system maintenance and construction. The lineman must be able to operate heavy equipment and other vehicles as well as portable power tools. Must have good communication skills as well as the ability to read and interpret manuals and written instructions. Applications are available at [www.neodesha.org](http://www.neodesha.org) or by calling 620-325-2828. EOE

## Electric Utility Supervisor

The City of St. John is currently accepting applications for Electric Utility Supervisor. Experience should include line work, power plant operation and supervisory duties. Contact the city office at 620-549-3208 for more information. Applications and job description available upon request. Excellent benefit package. Applications will be accepted until position is filled. City of St. John is an equal opportunity employer.

## Wastewater System Operator III

The City of Colby is looking for an ambitious individual with a Class III Wastewater Operator License who would like to be on the ground floor of operating a new, state-of-the-art, wastewater system. This individual shall operate and maintain the wastewater treatment facility in accordance with KDHE regulations. Advancement to the Wastewater Supervisor position is possible in the future. Salary range will be dependent on qualifications and experience; resume review will begin on February 15, 2006, and applications will be accepted until the position is filled. The City of Colby is an EOE with an excellent benefit package. Additional information or application forms can be obtained on line at [www.cityofcolby.com](http://www.cityofcolby.com) or from the office of the City Manager, 585 N. Franklin, Colby, Kansas 67701 (785-460-4410).

## Assistant Superintendent

The Assistant Superintendent position requires knowledge of City operations such as water, wastewater, street and sanitation; or three to five years of similar or related experience. Must have, or be able to obtain, water and sewer certifications and a Class B CDL. The position is subject to drug and alcohol testing and requires City residency within 60 days of employment. Salary will be based on experience with only qualified applicants being considered. Job descriptions and applications are available at City Hall, 406 S. 4<sup>th</sup>, Leoti, KS 67861. Applications and/or resumes will be accepted until position is filled. Applicants should submit application and/or resume and three references to Todd Barker, City Superintendent, PO Box 7E, Leoti, KS 67861. ph 620/375/

## Water/Sewer Department

The City of Osborne is currently taking applications for Water/Sewer Department. Applicant will be required to possess or be able to obtain a valid CDL drivers license. This position is subject to drug and alcohol testing and the applicant chosen will be subject to a pre-employment drug screening. Benefits include vacation, KPERS, health insurance, holidays and sick leave. Contact the City office at (785) 346-5611 for information.



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The KMU Dispatch is published monthly by Kansas Municipal Utilities, Inc. and distributed free of charge to member municipal utility officials, state legislators and regulators, and associate member companies.

## Upcoming Events

- **League of Kansas Municipalities (LKM) City Hall Day at the Capitol**  
January 26, 2006  
*Topeka, Kansas*
- **APPA Legislative Rally**  
February 28 - March 3, 2006  
*Renaissance Washington Hotel  
Washington, D.C.*
- **KMU 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
May 3 - 5, 2006  
*Hyatt Regency  
Wichita, Kansas*
- **APPA National Conference**  
June 10-14, 2006  
*Hyatt Regency Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois*

### Executive Committee

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