



The Record

Kansas Department of Labor Releases Unemployment Fraud Attempts, Fraud Payments

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) today issued data on the number of fraud attempts, the estimated amount of fraud payments the agency has paid, as well as law enforcement referrals.

Following an in-depth analysis and IRS Form 1099-G reconciliation, KDOL has determined that from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 31, 2020, about \$140 million in fraudulent claim payments were made from the Kansas regular unemployment insurance program. Additionally, more than \$150 million in fraudulent payments are attributed to federal benefits programs, for a total of \$290 million.

USDOL-OIG estimates that unemployment fraud has cost taxpayers roughly \$36 billion nationwide since the start of the pandemic. The total amount of potential fraud is roughly eleven percent of total unemployment insurance payouts since the start of the pandemic. Other states to have publicly shared their fraud numbers include:

- \$11.4 billion in California
- \$600 million in Washington
- \$330 million in 2020 in Ohio

“Fraud is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. It’s stealing from taxpayers at the worst possible time and all attempts

at fraud will be referred in the strongest possible manner to law enforcement,” Governor Kelly said. “All 50 states have been overrun with coordinated, sophisticated criminal fraud attempts, and that’s why I wrote a letter with fellow Governors, calling on Congress to provide funding to secure and modernize our systems.”

As part of a robust anti-fraud effort the agency has referred over 50,300 cases of alleged fraud to federal law enforcement partners for investigation and possible criminal prosecution and is actively working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG) and the U.S. Attorney’s office to hold fraudsters to account.

“Congress opened the door for this historic level of fraud when they created multiple new pandemic-related unemployment programs, and at the same time prohibited states from asking basic verification questions,” Department of Labor Acting Secretary Shultz said. “It was not until the Continued Assistance Act was signed into law on Dec. 27, 2020 that states were able to take more aggressive action to verify claimant information in the federal programs.”

In early February, KDOL implemented a new fraud mitigation software solution that has drastically reduced the number of fraudulent claims that have been filed. Since its launch, this system has stopped more than 4.8 million bot attacks and fraudulent login attempts. As a result, KDOL’s fraud team has been able to focus their efforts on more sophisticated cases and investigations.

Since the beginning of 2020, KDOL stopped approximately 500,000 fraudulent claims that were the result of identity theft and other unemployment related fraud that could have cost more than \$22 billion. These stopped claims are the result of many hours of effort from the KDOL fraud team who have worked tirelessly to combat sophisticated criminal rings, which have targeted the state’s unemployment system. The number also includes identity theft cases that have been reported by individuals and businesses.

Since March 15, 2020, KDOL has paid out over 4 million weekly claims totaling over \$2.7 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov.



Mr. Ed and I were finished delivering *The Record* on Tuesday, the 23rd. I love to look at clouds and “lo and behold” this was somewhere over Turner/Morris area. I found a place to park and took this picture of it and sent it to my editor. When I got home, I sent it to my friend, Fred Broski. Since he was on tv a lot, I asked him to send it to a weatherman. He sent it to another friend of mine, Gary Lezak. This is what our favorite weather person said. “It is a mid to high level cloud. A Cirrocumulus, combined with a Cirrostratus cloud that had some vertical development around 20,000 feet above us.” Did anyone else see it? I couldn’t believe it. So glad I got a picture of it. Thank you, Fred Broski and Gary Lezak, for letting people know I was telling the truth. Sue

Photo by Sue Reich

Governor Provides Update on PPP Program to Aid Kansas’ Economic Recovery

TOPEKA – Governor Laura Kelly shared details regarding changes in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) that will increase access and relief to businesses with under 20 employees and other business owners who previously had limited access to the program. For the next 14 days, only businesses with fewer than 20 employees will be able to apply for PPP support.

“Small businesses are the heartbeat of Kansas communities and I am committed to using every tool to ensure they prosper now and into the future,” said Governor Laura Kelly. “This targeted PPP support will make a huge difference to strengthen our small business community and economy statewide as we recover from COVID-19.”

The White House also made the following changes that will increase equitable access to the program:

- Revising the loan calculation and setting aside \$1 billion to support sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals;
- Removing the restriction where any owner with 20% or more of the business must not have had a felony within the past year (excluding financial abuse fraud felonies or owners who are currently incarcerated);
- Removing the restriction where any owner with 20% or more of the business must not be delinquent on student loans.

Kansas is already seeing the results of the 2021 available funding. As of January, over 17,000 Kansan small business owners have already been approved for over \$800M in loans. Applications are still open through the end of March, and businesses can be eligible even if they received 2020 funding through PPP.

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Sue's Sudsy Soapbox By: Sue Reich



Thanks for this wonderful weather so far. We didn't get our driveway shoveled or anything and had to wait for Mother Nature to warm us up a bit so that darn snow would melt. Like I said before, I had to push a janitor broom in front of me to make a path so I could get the morning paper and the mail. Mr. Ed is in a weakened state and can't do too much. So ol' Sue has to take over most of the chores. Boy, I will be so glad when I can get out and do all the things I want and need to do. Don't you miss all the things that you did before this pandemic hit? Man, sometimes it just about drives me up the wall.

I miss my buddies that I saw every week, my customers, my domino pals. I do hear from David Young a lot. He is the light of my day when he calls. Sometimes I am busy, but we still connect. I have known David for probably 20 years. His wife Sheila and I played Bunco together with a group once a month, we had potlucks at TRC. David and I were the Elderbearies (not berries, but Bearies,) we cleaned the dump for where the garden is now, we were clowns together. I refer to him as my "little brother". He just lives up the hill from me and would take me to our clown meetings and practices. Boy, we all had a lot of fun. Hopefully, this pandemic thing will die down and go away. I miss my son, daughter in law and my grandkids. I miss my late 3 beautiful sisters. Hasn't this been a heckofa year?

Bless the ones that didn't make it thru this crazy virus that has taken so many of our wonderful friends and family. This coronacovid19 junk has got to go. I know we are all getting cabin fever. I miss going to the Argentine High school All Class reunion. We have missed one already. Love all

those people that are in our meetings when we met at the Argentine library. I miss the library, I miss the garden, I MISS ALL OF YOU!!

What did you all think of that white cloud that looked like a tornado funnel? Did any of you see it? If it wasn't for Fred Broski and Gary Lezak, I would have never known anything about something like that. That was the first time in my life I have even heard about a cloud like that. It just stood there as still as a mouse and people were just driving by, but man, I whipped out my phone and took a picture of it. I know it is a rarity for a cloud to form like that "out of the blue." Glad I got a picture of it or people wouldn't have believed me. Hey Fred and Gary, you two are really great guys, I am glad you are my friends.

Well, my friends and family, guess I'll sign off---watch your p's and q's. Wear those masks and don't take chances, we have to really be careful. Ivya all, Sue. Now, here is another little verse from SISTERS in memory of Gayle, Carolyn and Marilyn Larson. "Words from the Heart. There's a special kind of freedom sisters enjoy. Freedom to share innermost thoughts, to ask a favor, to show their true feelings. The freedom to simply be themselves".

Beware, Cougars and Coyotes

By: Sue Reich

This is not a joke. Someone in Morris, west of Turner, said there is a pack of Coyotes roaming around and last seen around 65th street. One lady in Argentine, had her little dog attacked by a coyote. She saved her pooch, but it had to have surgery. A bobcat, not sure where, attacked a boxer dog and the dog lost an eye, but the owner saved him. I have furbabies and try to watch them when they are outside. We have a six-foot fence but if a coyote or any hungry wild animal wants to get them, they probably could jump that fence. I am an animal lover and want to keep my furbabies safe. If you have pets, keep them warm, fed and sheltered. Please keep them safe.

What Next?

By: Sue Reich

Why just because a person becomes 21 years of age, they lose their rights? Especially and I mean especially if they are physically and mentally handicapped. A poor "child" turned 21 and was ousted

out of the foster program system. He needs to be fed, pottied, bathed, etc. But yet he seems to have nowhere to go. Our system here in our USD#500 takes good care of our Special Education kids. I worked with them 10 years at Harmon and they needed all the help we could give

them. Kathryn, one Special Education teacher started another program for those who graduated, and they even have a house where they operate from in Argentine. Surely there is someplace they can put that 21-year-old "child". I surely hope someone comes across for him.



This is a new business in Argentine. All Western wear.



Happy Nigro family. Business is still good.



Darlene is enjoying one of the last nice days in the fall.



Family gatherings have dwindled down. This is part of the Larson Clan.

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

The Kansas City Kansas Public Library recently offered two excellent virtual interviews with authors. The first was how DNA testing is upending who we are "The Lost Family" by Libby Copeland. The second was "Caste: The Origins of our Discontent" by Isabel Wilkerson.

I read both books before each interview and both affected me in different ways.

I had gone the DNA route with Ancestry.com and found my makeup was completely different than what I thought. I was able to trace my mother's side back to the 1700's in

America but my dad's was a little different since his parents came to the United States in the late 1890's so I stopped there. However, Ancestry continues to send me names of second and third cousins I have never heard of. I have received many names of 3rd & 4th cousins. My great grandfather on my mother's side was married twice and started a second family, so I am guessing some of those names are from that branch of the family along with descendants of previous generations. I recognized one name outside our immediate family, so I know the information they are sending me is probably accurate. I was gung-ho in the beginning, but I just petered out and I haven't followed up.

The "Caste" book blew me away. I had never given much thought about how people really see each other. I had heard stories from my father about how his parents were treated when they came to America from Italy. My grandmother had said they were treated like cattle in the ship coming over. So, it was with each group of people once they arrived on our shores - the

Irish, the Scots, the Russians, the Poles, the Italians, etc. Each faced discrimination in their day, but the Blacks suffered the most as an enslaved people. When you think of a caste system, you immediately think of India. America does have a caste system, established by our white forefathers' generations ago for people who did not fit their profile and categorized them as lesser than themselves.

This book led me to another of Isabel Wilkerson's "The Warmth of Other Suns" which I am now reading. It tells the history of the migration of Blacks from the South beginning in 1910 to 1970 through the eyes of three distinct individuals and their families who migrated to the North at different times and the difficulties they encountered in trying to assimilate. Their true stories are told in a narrative that corresponds to the events happening in the United States at that time. I am having a hard time putting this book down.

Time for me to go, so...
Until next time, stay safe and please be kind to those around you.

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SENATE NEWS

By Sen. Pat Pettey

This Week at the Capitol

Like most Kansans, we began the week weathering the effects of the extreme winter cold. We picked back up committee work on Tuesday and began working legislation on the floor later in the week. The Senate met on Wednesday and Thursday to take action on 12 bills and one appointment. The majority of these bills were non-controversial, they all passed, and I voted Yes on all of them.

There was a bit of drama surrounding Senate Bill 66, which extends the angel investor tax credit program. Certain Republicans wanted to shorten the sunset so that the Legislature would review the program again sooner. I am inclined to agree with the chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Senator Rob Olson, who argued that this would disincentivize investors to come to Kansas. This bill is good policy, promotes entrepreneurship, and incentivizes long-term economic growth in our state. It is a tool in the tool box for local economic development.

I welcome your input on any of these issues. Please feel free to contact me at 785-296-7375 or pat.pettesy@senate.ks.gov.

Kansas Vaccine Overview

Vaccines are coordinated at the county level by local health departments. Each county, through local health departments, will decide how their limited supply of the doses will be allocated to the various population groups.

Those in Phase 2 are encouraged to be patient as more information comes out in their local communities. For questions, they should contact their local health departments to learn more about the vaccination process for Phase 2 populations and how they will prioritize within that group or anyone remaining in Phase 1 who has not received the vaccine.

County Allocations

For the week of February 21, approximately 75 counties will receive vaccine. Due to the shipment sizes of vaccine, rural counties have been receiving higher amounts of vaccine per capita than some urban counties.

By decreasing the number of counties to receive vaccine next week, this will allow the distribution lines to be more equitable across Kansas. This distribution pattern will occur on an every-other-week process. This change impacts 30 counties and 3,000 doses.

Unified Government Vaccine Eligibility for Wyandotte County

If you are a resident of Wyandotte County and are 65 years of age or older you are now eligible for the Covid-19 vaccine. Please call 913-347-4347 to find out about your scheduling options. If you are currently scheduled or have already received the vaccine please disregard. For more COVID-19 info visit ughealth.info/vaccine

Federal Retail Pharmacy Program

The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program began last week, with the Federal Government sending vaccines directly to enrolled pharmacies. In Kansas, there are 12 pharmacy chains with more than 400 locations enrolled. Initially, there are 82 pharmacies in 32 counties who have received vaccine from the federal government. The allocation to Kansas pharmacies participating in the program was 8,700 doses last week. These locations are tasked with vaccinating those ages 65+. Kansas has not received any updated information on allocations for this week or future weeks.

Federally Qualified Health Centers

As part of the National Community Health Centers Vaccination Program, about 250 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) throughout the U.S. will be selected to receive vaccine to target underserved populations over the coming weeks. These doses are not part of the states' allocations and the FQHCs will receive shipments directly. The initial phase of this should begin next week. At this time, two FQHCs in Kansas are anticipated to receive allocations next week, though this is still being finalized at this time. Doses and delivery dates are arranged by the federal government and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) does not know further details. Allocations under this program should be within Phase 2 and follow county prioritization protocols.

Back to School Plan

On February 17, Governor Kelly announced her Back to School Plan, in which counties who need additional vaccine specifically earmarked for teachers and school staff, will receive additional shipments. This vaccine is in addition to the doses they already receive from KDHE each week.

Counties will not receive the total number of doses needed to vaccinate every teacher in the first shipment. Counties should continue with their prioritization plans as already outlined --- but the state will help meet the need for teachers and staff.

As a reminder, K-12 teachers and staff are included in the current phase -- Phase 2 -- of the vaccine distribution framework, along with persons aged 65 and older, people living in congregate settings, and other high-contact critical workers.

In addition to the emphasis on vaccinating K-12 teachers and staff, Kansas will also be able to provide free testing supplies to schools. The specific tests provided will be rapid tests -- producing results in about 15 minutes.

The emphasis on getting K-12 teachers and staff vaccinated, the free testing supplies, along with continuing to implement mask usage and physical distancing in schools, will help us bring back to in-person learning students safely. ?

Notably, using the leftover Pharmacy Partnership doses for teachers will not take vaccines away from our elder population or others prioritized during Phase 2.

Kansasvaccine.gov

A vaccine dashboard is available that includes key metrics and will be updated three times a week. Last week, a "Find My Vaccine" tool was launched on www.kansasvaccine.gov. Two clarifiers were added to the dashboard on February 17, the distributed doses were changed to incorporate the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, rather than the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program for Long Term Care (LTC) facilities. This change includes both the LTC program and pharmacies. The doses distributed by county bar chart's title was changed to reflect that this is the number of first doses distributed by county. More additions will be made to the www.kansasvaccine.gov

gov data site soon, so please stay tuned!

Communication

- A new website, www.KansasVaccine.gov has been released and is being updated regularly with new information.

- KDHE is disseminating these weekly updates on vaccine developments to partners every Thursday or other date, as indicated.

- Other communications are in development and will be communicated as available.

Unemployment Updates

The Kansas Department of Labor has released a Frequently Asked Questions document, which will be updated weekly. The document addresses many concerns I've heard from constituents, including PUA, unemployment fraud, and the Continued Assistance Act. You can access this FAQ document [here](#).

Since March 15, 2020, KDOL has paid out over 3.9 million weekly claims totaling over \$2.6 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov.

Rental Assistance Program

On Tuesday, Governor Kelly and the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation announced \$200 million in statewide rental assistance to support housing stability and prevent evictions and homelessness. Tenants may qualify for assistance if they earn no more than 80 percent of their area's median income, are experiencing documented financial hardship as a result of the COVID pandemic and may be at risk of housing instability or homelessness without assistance.

Kansans living in Wyandotte and Johnson counties may apply through the Kansas Emergency Rental Assistance (KERA) program administered by KHRC. The online KERA application will open on Monday, March 15, 2021.

ACA Marketplace Reopens

Governor Laura Kelly announced that the enrollment for 2021 health insurance has reopened.

Kansas residents have access to a Special Enrollment Period to sign up for Affordable Care Act (ACA) insurance plans between February 15, 2021 and May 15, 2021,

in addition to Medicare and Medicaid benefits. The Special Enrollment Period was opened by a January executive order signed by President Joe Biden, opening the federal health insurance marketplace for three months starting today.

For all Kansans who are uninsured or underinsured, this is an excellent opportunity to secure coverage as Kansas fights through the pandemic.

All U.S. citizens and nationals are eligible to enroll in health insurance through Marketplaces using the HealthCare.gov platform. Plans of a variety of premiums, deductibles, and services are available. These plans are private insurers made available to the public through the ACA. All Kansans may apply for personal health insurance, as well as for spouses and children. Individuals need a valid social security number or document certifying qualifying immigration status to apply. Kansans can check to see if they are an eligible immigrant [here](#).

Between February 15, 2021 and May 15, 2021, Kansans can apply through the HealthCare.gov marketplace [here](#).

Many Kansans might also be eligible for subsidized coverage through the Medicare and KanCare, Kansas' Medicaid programs as well. All Kansans are encouraged to take advantage of either this Special Enrollment Period, KanCare, and Medicare to gain access to affordable health coverage.

Department of Transportation Projects Announcement

On Thursday, Governor Laura Kelly and Transportation Secretary Julie Lorenz announced the funding of 18 projects totaling \$13.5 million in investment in 2022. The Transportation Alternatives Program funds projects focused almost entirely on planning for and building infrastructure for safe, accessible and connected pedestrian and cycling networks.

Funds for this program come from the Federal Highway Administration and are currently the primary source of KDOT funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects statewide, including Safe Routes to School. The program also funds surface transportation projects of a historical nature

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School District faces many challenges

By: Murrel Bland

One of the most significant challenges for the Kansas City, Kansas, School District is that nearly 9,000 of its 21,000 students do not speak English.

That was the message that Dr. Alicia Miguel brought to a meeting of the Congressional Forum Friday, Feb. 19 via ZOOM. About 45 persons attended. Miguel is interim superintendent of the school district. Another challenge is that 83 percent of the district students qualify for reduced or free meals.

And then there is the challenge of the coronavirus pandemic including the high cost of providing masks and partitions for student desks. Federal funds helped pay for \$8 million of that cost; the district hopes more federal funds will come during the next three years.

Another challenge is that many of the students do not have access to the internet for distance learning. To help solve that problem, the district developed connectivity centers.

Dr. Miguel praised the cooperation of the Unified Government's Health Department in providing vaccinations for the district's staff. So far about



2,200 members of the staff have been vaccinated.

The Kansas City, Kansas, District has a graduation rate of 69 percent—something that Dr. Miguel says must improve.

The cost of educating students is very expensive in Kansas City, Kansas—more than \$17,000 a student according to the district's website. When many district students who do graduate show up at Kansas City, Kansas, Community College, they lack basic skills in areas such as mathematics and reading.

Joe Vaught, a member of the Forum and a Realtor, suggested the district invite real

estate agents to visit schools to help improve its image.

Edwin Birch, the spokesman for the District, touted the various things it does to inform the public including a direct mail newsletter and its cable television channel. Birch is a former spokesman for the Unified Government.

Dr. Miguel said she is opposed to bills in the Kansas Legislature that provide public money for tuition to private schools. Private schools would not be accountable, she said.

Dr. Miguel said students will return to classrooms starting with grade school and senior high students Monday, Feb. 22; middle school students Monday, March 1; and early childhood students Monday, April 5.

Dr. Miguel, a native of Argentina, was the District's Executive Director of the Early Childhood Education before becoming Interim Superintendent.

The Congressional Forum is part of the Kansas City, Kansas, Area Chamber of Commerce.

Murrel Bland is former editor of The Wyandotte West and The Piper Press. He is executive director of Business West.

Senator Pettey...

...from page 4

and scenic and environmental projects, including Main Street beautification projects. Here is the full list of projects slated to receive an award.

Rolling Blackouts in Kansas

Kansas experienced some of the lowest temperatures and wind chills in state history this week, with lows getting down to -17° in our area. The extreme cold created a two-fold energy issue: consumers were using more electric and gas to heat their homes and combat the cold, and suppliers suffered strain from natural gas, coal, and other energy production delays due to freezing and icing. While some national and local political figures suggested that renewable energy sources were to blame for this, energy experts have said this is incorrect. In fact, in Kansas, wind energy exceeded performance expectations during this crisis.

While I am glad the extreme cold has passed, the effects may still be felt down the line in the form of increased utility costs, as natural gas costs increased significantly during the cold snap. If your household makes less than 130% of the poverty level, you may be eligible for energy assistance through the Department of Children and Families. Applications for assistance must be received by March 31, 2021. Learn more and see if you qualify here.

Merriam News

Al Frisby sent me the following news:

"The long-anticipated, exciting, and nerve-wracking landing of Mars 2020 and its Perseverance rover happened February 18th at 12:30 p.m. PST. The NASA/JPL landing coverage can be viewed by the public on on NASA Television, as well as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Daily Motion. See more on how to stream NASA TV."

Al is a retired Kansas science educator, former Merriam City Councilman and a person dedicated to taking care of our environment. His daughter-in-law Jessica has a PhD in Chemistry and his son has a PhD in computer science. Jessica is part of the team managing this Perseverance rover landing and is a product of Kansas public education.

Black History Month

February is Black History Month, a time devoted to celebrating and recognizing the central role of Black Americans in U.S. history.

- Baseball Hall of Famer Charles Wilber "Bullet" Rogan was a Sumner High School graduate who went on to serve in the U.S. Army before being recruited to play for the Kansas City Monarchs. On the team, he was a pitcher and outfielder who helped lead the team to three straight pennants and a Negro League World Series title in 1924.

- Lutie Lyle was the first Black woman admitted to the Kansas bar, and only the third Black woman to be licensed to practice law in the US. She helped form the Colored Farmers' National Alliance and Cooperative Union and lectured for women's groups and local colleges on law related to domestic issues.

Important State Phone Numbers

Here is a list of numbers I often receive requests for during the Legislative Session. I hope you will find this information helpful.

Attorney General
(888) 428-8436

Child Abuse Hotline
(800) 922-5330

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(800) 432-2310

Crime Tip Hotline
(800) 572-7463

Crime Victim Referral
(800) 828-9745

Department on Aging
(800) 432-3535

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Governor Laura Kelly Urges Federal Investigation to Protect Kansans from Future Weather Emergencies and Price Surges

TOPEKA – Today, Governor Laura Kelly urged the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to take all necessary and possible steps to investigate the causes of the system failures during the recent extreme-weather event in Kansas and protect Kansans from natural gas and electricity price surges resulting from increased demand.

Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) Chair Andrew French, Commissioner Dwight D. Keen, and Commissioner Susan K. Duffy also signed onto the letter urging a federal investigation.

"I have directed my administration to use every tool at our disposal to ensure Kansans are protected from price surges, and that our system is better prepared to handle problems created by circumstances like extreme cold weather," Governor Laura Kelly said. "We will remain in communication with the Biden Administration to secure aid and continue to encourage Congress to pass a stimulus package with state and local funding to provide relief to Kansas communities."

"The recent energy pricing and supply emergency will have serious financial implications for all Kansans and the KCC will take every action within our authority to ease that burden," Chairman French said. "However, our jurisdictional reach is limited. We need swift and decisive leadership at the federal level, as well."

Specifically, Governor Kelly and the Kansas Corporation Commission called for the FERC to:

1. Examine the circumstances that reduced the supply of natural gas and compromised pressures on interstate pipelines.
2. Exercise its authority under Sections 4A and 23 of the Natural Gas Act and take all actions within its power to protect consumers and ensure the integrity of natural gas price indices.
3. Work with NERC to investigate whether additional reliability mechanisms are needed to respond to similar events like this in the future.

The Kelly Administration and the KCC look forward to working with the FERC in any way they can to ensure similar adverse public health and economic impacts never occur again because of extreme weather conditions.

Guest Editorials

Trump Investigations Continue With More Than A Dozen New Subpoenas

By: Tom Valverde

The Manhattan District Attorney's office has now issued over a dozen new subpoenas in its on-going efforts to investigate the former president's businesses and their suspected transgressions of the law. Last Thursday, ProPublica and The New York Times ran articles giving an update on the Manhattan District Attorney's probe into Trump's "normal business practices." ProPublica said, "Trump's businesses made themselves appear more profitable to lenders while at the same time, less profitable to tax officials. One expert calls the differing numbers, versions of fraud." He went on, "You get the sense of there being 2 sets of books. One that's for the taxman and one for lenders."

These observations were made after examination of never-before-seen Trump tax documents which revealed, "major inconsistencies" to the attorneys investigating the case. Andrew Weissman Former FBI General Counsel, said "Things are heating up!" In addition, Cy Vance the Manhattan District Attorney had been working with former Federal prosecutor and expert on white-collar crime, Mark Pomerantz on an "informal" basis for months. Vance has now formally added Pomerantz to his legal team and had him sworn in to serve as a Special Assistant in early February. Pomerantz has taken a temporary leave of absence from his career at the Paul Weiss law firm. All of his time as Special Assistant will be dedicated to work specifically on one case, the investigation of the Trump organization. This move by Vance is seen as his wanting to produce the best case possible to take to Court. Pomerantz has experience involving high profile cases and during his tenure as a Mob lawyer, he helped to define RICO prosecution. He is viewed as being a, "Great asset to the already stellar team of lawyers in the Southern District of New York." The team will pour over details of Donald Trump's business practices.

Since January 20th, Trump is no longer president and has lost the privileges of his former office. Trump can no longer put off or

delay the probes into his financial dealings and taxes. Weissman said, "It appears like this is proceeding like any other white-collar case when you are looking at bank fraud and tax fraud." "And it's not complicated. You're going to see when dealing with banks if he artificially inflated assets for loans and devaluing debts." "Additionally, whenever Trump has dealt with tax authorities in New York, has he done the opposite--- in order to pay less taxes." In conclusion Weissman said, "Cy Vance bringing in someone like Mark Pomerantz to the legal team... It's a perfect move!"

Conversely Trump is expected to have great difficulty in assembling his defense team. All of 2020 was used by Trump's lawyers in Courts to prevent the New York Grand Jury from seeing Trump's past tax returns. Two lower Courts ruled that the New York District Attorney's subpoenas are valid and should be enforced. "The State Prosecutor and the Grand Jury should have access to the subpoenaed documents." the court said. The United States Supreme Court declined to block the New York Grand Jury from receiving Trump's company and private Tax records. It accepted the decisions of two lower Courts which had rejected Trump's motion to block the Grand Jury from having access to his tax returns.

Back in October 2020 Trump had filed an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court. Since then, the Supreme Court has held his tax documents. February 22, 2021 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to block the New York Grand Jury from receiving the tax returns. It declined to hear Trump's emergency appeal, and simply said, "This has been referred to the Circuit Justice, Stephen Briar, and denied." The Grand Jury has gathered much knowledge about Trump's business dealings, and with the receipt of these new documents, the Grand Jury will be taking a much broader look at the Trump organization. The New York Times reported that this case has generated more than a dozen new subpoenas.

Months earlier, Cy Vance had subpoenaed records from Deutsch

Bank in Germany. This bank had called in its loan of \$340 million dollars made to Trump. It said that "It would no longer be in a working relationship with Donald Trump." The Times compiled a list of companies and Institutions that have also taken action against the former president. Long-standing ties with Political Action Committee, (PAC) have been put on hold as a result of the January 6th insurrection attack on the U.S. Capitol. Hallmark Cards, Inc. has requested the return of Campaign contributions that it's PAC made to Senator Roger Marshall of Kansas and Josh Hawley of Missouri. Both voted against certifying the 2020 Election results. Hallmark Cards said in its statement: "Hallmark believes the peaceful transition of power is part of the bedrock of our democratic system and we abhor violence of any kind." "The recent actions of these Senators do not reflect our company's values." Coke-Cola Company said that it would suspend its Political giving. It released a statement: "These Events will long be remembered and will factor into our future contribution decisions." Others who have quit their support of Trump: (a partial list): Bank of America, Morgan Stanley, Commerce Bank, Federal Express, Microsoft & Facebook, Marriott Hotels, DOW Chemicals, Blue Cross & Blue Shield, Airbnb, Goldman Sachs, J P Morgan Chase, Citigroup, AT & T, Wells Fargo, and lastly, the P.G.A. has decided to leave the Trump National Golf Club, in New Jersey and announced that in 2022 the Championship would not be played there.

Spineless republicans were too cowardly to see what is so obvious to the rest of America in their not finding Trump guilty of starting the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol. But in the Court of public opinion, Trump is the traitor and guilty of dereliction of duty. Sixty Courts have ruled that this election was fair and because Trump refused to concede and would spend his last two months telling more lies and weaving conspiracy theories about a rigged election, he invited his pro-Trump supporters to attack and will be long - remembered as a disgrace and as the laughingstock among World leaders. May we never witness the likes of another Trump surrogate in the White House. Morals empower leadership and provide the base of empathy and concern that is required of the person who holds the highest office in the land.

Tom's Tasty Treats

By: Tom Valverde

Every year in March, it's time for "The wearing of the green! It's when we all become a little bit Irish and we celebrate Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick, who is credited with ridding all of Ireland of serpents. This week's tasty treat is a National food there and is too good and tasty to only be made for St. Patrick's! It's Irish soda bread and this version has a "bit of the green," baked into it. And it's made extra savory with the addition of some grated aged Cheddar cheese. Make your "Wearing of the Green" on St. Patrick's Day, by baking:

Irish Soda Bread With Thyme & Cheddar

Ingredients:

3 c Flour

3/4 c Whole Wheat flour

1 T Sugar

1 1/2 t Baking Soda (buy a fresh box)

1 t Salt

4 T Butter, kept cold, cubed

1 1/2 c Buttermilk

1 Lg. Egg

1 T fresh Thyme leaves, finely chopped

1 c aged Cheddar cheese, freshly grated.

2 T Oats for topping the bread, optional.

Directions:

Set oven to 375°. Grease a 9" Cast iron skillet or cake pan and dust with flour.

Combine the dry ingredients, except for the Cheddar in a large mixing bowl.

Add the cold, cubed butter and cut in with a pastry blender or your fingertips until coarse crumbs form. Sprinkle in the Thyme and the grated Cheddar, mix in. Form a well in the middle of the dry ingredients.

In a large measuring cup add the buttermilk and whisk or beat in the egg. Note: Since the soda is the only leavener, it begins to act as soon as it comes into contact with the acid in the buttermilk. Once it's added, the bread needs to go into the oven quickly. Always make sure that the oven is well heated and has come to temperature before adding the buttermilk.

Once the oven is heated, pour the buttermilk mixture* into the well and stir with a sturdy wooden spoon to form the dough. If the dough seems to be too wet, add in 1 or 2 more tablespoons of flour.

Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and lightly knead to create a smooth round loaf; about 30 seconds, best not to over work the dough.

Place the dough into the Cast iron skillet. *Leave a tiny amount of this to now brush the top.

With a very sharp knife, score a X into the top of the loaf about an inch deep. Top with 1/4 c Cheddar and the oats.

Bake at 375° for 30-40 minutes. To prevent excessive browning, cover the bread with foil halfway through the baking. This is customary and it ensures that the bread will be baked through. The Irish say that the cross on the top "Will bless the bread and it also is to let the Faeries out! The Irish are full of old superstitions and folklore tales about Faeries as "Good, wee folk." When done, the bread should be golden brown and sound hollow when it's tapped on the bottom. Cool 5 minutes then wrap the bread in a clean Kitchen towel. This will prevent the crust from over-hardening. Serve warm with some good Irish butter and a pot of honey, some preserves, or orange marmalade.

One variation which is called "Spotted dick," is made by adding 1/2-1 cup Golden Sultana raisins. The sugar is increased also to 3 T. Garnish the top with sliced almonds and omit the thyme leaves and cheddar cheese.

Bread keeps for up to three days, well wrapped. And cut into cubes, it's a great addition to a bowl of soup, chili, or to replace croutons in a salad. Irish soda bread is good eating to the last crumb. Happy St. Patrick's Day! Enjoy!



Passings...

By: Sue Reich

Joseph McCoy, age 73, passed away on his birthday, February 16, 2021 Wyandotte High class of 1966.

Richard Lee Trevis, age 88, passed away February 9, 2021. Wyandotte High class of 1951

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