



The Record

School District Looks To New Permanent Leader

By: Murrel Bland

The Kansas City, Kansas, School Board is searching for a new superintendent after the abrupt departure of Dr. Charles Foust late last summer. Dr. Foust left when he still had about a year left on his three-year contract.

When Dr. Foust came, he was touted as a turn-around specialist— someone who could come from the outside and help an ailing district. The Kansas City, Kansas, District has, over its long history, had reasonably stable administrations. The main reason for that had been strong leadership from the elected school boards. But more recently, changing demographics, including the exist of many members of a strong middle class, have taken a tremendous toll on the School District.

Dr. Valdenia Winn, a school board member who was instrumental in bringing Dr. Foust here, often clashed with him at School Board meetings. Dr. Foust had been a school administrator, but never a superintendent before he came here. He left to become superintendent in New Hanover County, N.C.

The School Board here conducted a national search and has several candidates to consider including Dr. Alicia Miguel, who is the interim superintendent here.

Whoever becomes the permanent superintendent will face some serious challenges in a district that has about 22,000 students. One of the most severe challenges is academic achievement. The district has a graduation rate of only about 69 percent.

My advice to the new superintendent would be to build support groups, both inside the school district and in the community. That is something Dr. Foust did not do.

People who work and live in the district, who invest heav-

ily in schools, will support those things that they help create. The overwhelming yes vote for a recent bond issue showed that.

About one third of a typical property tax bill in Wyandotte County goes to schools. Those taxpayers deserve better than what they are receiving from the Kansas City, Kansas, School District.

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

Severe Cold Weather Causes Many Problems

By: Murrel Bland

I have some good friends who moved from Kansas City, Kansas, to Houston a few years ago. They wanted to be closer to their family. They like Texas but didn't expect to be without electricity for four days. They survived in better shape than some of the natives of the Republic of Texas during the recent cold snap.

Being without electricity isn't fun for anyone. I recently lost electricity for about two hours. That was inconvenient, but nothing like what Texans suffered. I am glad that the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities was in good shape to deal with severe cold weather.

The BPU is part of the Southwest Power Pool, a consortium of utilities in some 14 states which offers a supporting grid during an emergency such as the one suffered last month. Each member utility reduced its power output with selected shutdowns such as the one I experienced with BPU. This was the first time that the Power Pool conducted such an extensive operation—called Level Three.

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Kansas Issues Guidance for Kansans Who Are Vaccinated

TOPEKA – In conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance issued Monday for those who have been vaccinated, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is issuing similar guidance in Kansas.

Two weeks after Kansans receive their completed vaccination (two weeks after the second dose for Pfizer and Moderna, two weeks after the single dose for Johnson & Johnson), Kansans may begin to gather in their private homes with other fully vaccinated people, in small groups, without masks or social distancing.

The guidance also allows for vaccinated people to gather in private homes with unvaccinated people so long as the unvaccinated people are from a single household and are at low risk for developing severe disease.

“These changes are an important step in moving forward,” Dr. Lee Norman, KDHE Secretary, said. “This will allow grandparents to socialize with families, friends and neighbors to gather.”

While private home guidance has changed for those who are fully vaccinated, public health measures in public still apply to everyone, including those vaccinated.

- Wear a mask
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated spaces
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol

“Thank you for continuing to keep your fellow Kansans safe,” Dr. Norman said.

KCK Public Library Buildings To Reopen March 22

KANSAS CITY, Kan. – Kansas City, Kansas Public Library will reopen library buildings to the public on March 22, 2021. The buildings have been closed to public access while providing curbside services since June 1, 2020. The public will be able to engage in most of the previous services offered by the library, though some safety restrictions will continue to be in place while COVID-19 remains a community issue.

The Main Library, South Branch Library, and West Wyandotte Library buildings will have open hours of 9:00am-7:00pm Monday-Thursday and 9:00am-5:00pm Friday and Saturday. Mr. & Mrs. F. L. Schlagle building will be open 9:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday and every third Saturday. Turner Community Library will continue to offer curbside-only services due to the small size of its space.

Members of the public who pass a temperature scan at the entrance and wear a mask will be allowed 30 minutes to browse materials, seek assistance from staff, and use the computers. The number of individuals allowed at one time in each building will be limited and determined by the building's capacity. Meeting rooms, study rooms, and auditoriums will remain closed at this time. The library will continue to quarantine returned items and use enhanced cleaning and sanitization on all library surfaces. The library will also not be resuming in-person programming at this time. Instead, virtual programs and curbside kits will continue to be available. Visit the library's website at kckpl.org for more information on the reopening.

The library is appreciative of the community's support during this difficult past year and proud to have been able to continue to offer the excellent services and materials in creative new ways. The library looks forward to continuing this service with this next phase.

Kansas City, Kansas Public Library was formed in 1895. In 1899, it came under the authority of the Kansas City, Kansas Public School District Board of Education and remains there today. It serves a population of approximately 163,227. The mission of Kansas City, Kansas Public Library is to connect members of a dynamic community with information, tools, resources, and welcoming spaces to enrich lives in Wyandotte County. The library can be found online at kckpl.org

Sue's Sudsy Soapbox By: Sue Reich



I really have been busy today. Took me about three hours to “deep clean” my dining room. I scrubbed all the mopboards, the walls, moved the furniture out, cleaned all the furniture, took up the braided rug and put it on the back porch. Mopped the floor after I drug out the rug. Cleaned the heat vents, fed the dogs, got back to work in the dining room, mopped the kitchen floor after the dogs ate. Mopped it yesterday too. I have to keep myself busy because there isn't anything else to do. I will probably have the cleanest house in Morris. Took a bunch of stuff to the guys that are working on the new building yesterday. Now I know how to get rid of certain things.

Weird thing happened the other day. Mr. Ed was in his room, I was in the front room and we both heard a crash in the kitchen. We both went in and there was our coffee cups and tea glasses laying on the counter on their side. Now, coffee cups just don't fall over like that. We put our cups and glasses there all the time after we use them and rinse them, turn them upside down the counter. But what in the world made them all fall over like that? We have done that for many years and that is the first time that has happened. I told Mr. Ed a long time ago I think this house is haunted and there is something here besides us and our furbabies. One time I was in the bathroom and a cute little bear that has been on an 8” deep niche landed next to my foot. Ok, don't think I am imagining things, but Mr. Ed heard the crash and seen our cups and glasses laying down. I told Fred Broski that I have had hauntings but since he and others haven't experienced anything it is hard for them to believe it. Have any

of you experienced stuff like that? There is a lot more that I won't go into, but I and my late sisters have had things happen.

The other night I was watching tv and it really caught my eye because it was a show about KCK. I perked up and by golly it was right in my old neighborhood down in the east end of Argentine. A body was found on the 12th street bridge. My cousins and I played on that bridge, walked to a store in Armourdale. That was our territory and when that was mentioned, it piqued my interest. My Aunt Evelyn Larson lived right there at 12th and Ruby and was one of the last Larson's to move. After she moved, a body was found behind the church across the street from her place. It really is terrible that all this stuff is happening. It was a wonderful area when we were growing up there. We would play until mom whistled and everyone would go home safe and sound.

Everyone got their vaccinations? We got ours. But we still are going to wear our masks. We want to be safe as long as possible. Some people in our area had it. The whole family. Does that make a person immune if they had that virus? I don't know. I hear conflicting stories. One state has lifted the ban on everything. Kmart at 78th and State has a real good system. Glad Mr. Ed and I went there. Hey, guess what? I haven't turned into a zombie yet. If you read about my dream, you would know what I am talking about. lol. Well, dear people, I am going to sign off and you all watch your p's and q's. Ya hear? Please don't take any chances. I lvy a all and still miss all my buds. I really feel like I live on another planet. It is a strange feeling to be quarantined but at least I am getting some housework done that got away from me when all this hit. In memory of my three sisters: Gayle, Carolyn and Marilyn A sister carries precious bits of people she love carefully stored in her memory. How comforting when you're trouble to have your sister offer some of Mother's warmth mixed with measures of Dad's common sense and Grandpa's humor. Take care everyone, hope to see you soon, Sue



My sister Carolyn painted three different bears for the March of the Teddy Bears. She worked in the Instructional Resource Center Of USD#500. She passed away some time ago but the bear that was at the Kansas Speedway was Repainted and renamed “Digger” and is in the Turner Community garden on 55th & Inland. He is going to get a makeover again this Spring. He will still be Digger.



This is the grand opening of the “new road” that was finally fixed after 11 years. Pat Petty made a speech. It starts at Holliday Drive and turns into Metropolitan Avenue going straight to Argentine. We in Morris was really glad that it was taken care of.

What is the Common Denominator (A fun little game. See how well you do!)

1. Ray Charles, Liberace, Victor Borge'
2. Fred Gwynne, Boris Karloff, Peter Boyle
3. Larry, Mo, curly
4. Eddie Fisher, Larry Fortinay, Richard Burton
5. Marilyn Monroe, Jean Harlow, Jane Mansfield
6. Woody Woodpecker, Rita Hayworth, Lucille Ball
7. Goblet, Flower, Pipe
8. Baseball team, Caves, Belfry
9. Marty Feldman, Eddie Cantor, Barbara Bush
10. U.S.A. flag, Zebra, Convict



A man came around our neighborhood in the east end of Argentine. He set up a little car and took pictures of me, my cousins and neighborhood kids. This little gas station is still there at 12th and Metropolitan.

Comin' & Goin' Turner Style



By Sharon Hoover

It looks to me like life as we used to know it is coming back little by little. Turner Recreation Commission is holding an Easter Egg Fest on March 27, 2021 from 1 pm to 3 pm at 5142 Swartz, Kansas City, Kansas 66016. The notice I saw did not say anything about wearing masks but to be on the safe side family members should have them.

Turner Community Connection is sponsoring a Food Giveaway in partnership with the Dotte Mobile Grocer and New Story Church on March 19, 2021 from 10 am until done. The location is New Story church,

5500 Woodend Ave., Kansas City, Kansas 66106.

In the past few years, a few (over 65) people I know have been turned off by TV news, don't have internet and unaware that three KCK Covid-19 sites are now open to walk-ins with no appointment needed. Open from 10 am to 3 pm, Monday thru Friday, the locations are the former Best Buy at 10500 Parallel Parkway (Legends): former Kmart, 7836 State Ave, and the National Guard Armory 100 S 20th. I heard this morning the Ball's Grocery Stores will be giving the shots but require online registration.

Several weeks ago, I mentioned I had received an Economic Impact Payment Debit Card in my name and was concerned it was a scam. Calvin and I had already received a joint check because we file our taxes jointly. Last week I received a letter from the Treasury in my name only which confirmed that the card was made out in my name. I knew the money did not belong to me. I looked on the internet for my name and was surprised several women had

the same name, one even with my middle initial. I was afraid to call the 800 number of the Treasury because they were the ones who made the mistake to begin with. Not knowing where to turn I called Sharice Davids' office, and they suggested I make an appointment with someone in the local office. When I called the phone number to make an appointment, I actually was able to explain the situation to an agent. She told me to send the card with a note to the Money Network Cardholder Services in Alpharetta, GA which I did. Somehow my address got connected to this other person's name who may have been a non-filer or who was listed as receiving Railroad benefits or Veteran benefits. It may be a coincidence, but I have been getting quite a bit of mail regarding veteran's home loans and cemetery offers. I am concerned because the next stimulus payment is due again and I may be facing the exact problem again.

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: Halfway Through

We are halfway through the regular legislative session. The Senate spent three days on the floor this week working over 40 pieces of legislation, all of which received the constitutional majority vote. These bills now move on to the House for consideration. I will highlight some of the major pieces of legislation we addressed this week later on in this newsletter.

Moving forward, the Senate can only consider legislation that has either been passed by the House or has already been introduced in an exempt Senate committee. These committees are Assessment & Taxation, Federal & State Affairs, and Ways & Means. Legislators will take a short break and return to work on Wednesday, March 10, when we will begin working on House bills in committees.

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

Major Legislation This Week

The majority of the legislation we passed this week was non-controversial and good public policy. That said, there were quite a few pieces that spurred debate.

We began the week addressing the Kansas Emergency Management Act (KEMA). Kansas has been served well by the current emergency management act for decades, but the pandemic has exposed its limitations. Our goal as a Legislature should be to modernize our emergency management statutes to respond not only to COVID-19, but to future, unforeseen emergencies. This should include tools that would allow any future governor -- whether they have a D or an R next to their name -- to quickly and appropriately respond to time-sensitive, life-or-death situations without having to jump through partisan hoops. Unfortunately, the legislation we voted on does not accomplish this goal. Of the many flaws of this bill -- and there are many! -- the pre-approval of all Executive Orders stands out as quite

possibly the most egregious. Times of disaster and emergency require swift action and agility; pre-approval by a partisan committee will only delay the help people need in a time of crisis. The House passed their version of a KEMA bill on Wednesday, and a conference committee is meeting this week to find a compromise bill that both chambers will approve and send to the Governor for her signature or veto.

On Tuesday, one of the major pieces of legislation we took up was SB 235, Senate President Ty Masterson's "Back to School Act," which requires all Kansas schools to offer an in-person learning option by March 26, 2021. This bill is, at its core, politically motivated; currently, only 1 school district in the state does not have plans to offer an in-person option by that date. This legislation is another mandate which overrides local control by our duly elected local school board members, and another example of dramatic overreach by extremists in the legislature who don't like the decisions made by officials chosen and trusted by our communities. I know that school boards have made tough decisions all year with the health and safety of students and staff the driving factor.

We started session on Wednesday by addressing a pressing need for our Kansas communities, which were hit hard last month by the sub-zero temperatures and ensuing energy crisis. This bill establishes the city utility low-interest loan program. This program -- which will be administered by State Treasurer Lynn Rogers -- allows cities to apply for loans for extraordinary electric and natural gas costs incurred during that extreme weather event. Governor Kelly signed this bill into law on Wednesday night.

The big piece of legislation passed on Wednesday was SB 84, which authorizes sports wagering for persons 21 and older under the Kansas Expanded Lottery Act. The Legislature has considered various bills addressing sports wagering over the past several years. I think this is a good piece of legislation that will bring in new revenues to the state from an activity that is widely practiced in other states and on illegal markets.

The Senate also passed SB

238, which establishes certification and funding processes for certified community behavioral health clinics and expands access to telemedicine by authorizing a licensed out-of-state physician with a telemedicine waiver issued by the Board of Healing Arts to practice telemedicine in Kansas. SB238 also addresses needed changes in licensure required for social workers, which they have been asking for. We have a shortage and a high demand for social workers in our communities and we need to keep our trained professionals in Kansas. This is good legislation, and I was happy to vote in favor. I was also proud to vote in favor of an amendment brought by Senator Dinah Sykes (D - Lenexa), which would have also expanded Medicaid. The amendment failed 12-23.

I was very pleased to support legislation introduced by two of our freshman caucus members, Senators Ethan Corson (D - Fairway) and Jeff Pittman (D - Leavenworth). Senator Corson's bill classifies certain public utility motor vehicles as authorized emergency vehicles without a designation by county commissioners, which will make conditions safer for utility and telecom workers. Senator Pittman's bill regulates funeral processions and permits funeral escorts to direct traffic for funeral processions. This is probably common practice for many of you, but this legislation helps protect mourners participating in a procession.

Commissioner's Task Force

I am one of two senators who have been asked to serve on a Task Force created by Commissioner of Education Dr. Randy Watson. This Task Force was created to offer guidance and oversight of school districts' plans for expenditure of federal funds focused on supporting student learning and student needs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commissioner's Task Force on Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II and Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) Funding Oversight consists of 19 individuals, including superintendents, legislators, teachers, local school board members, business managers and private school personnel.

The Task Force will pro-

vide oversight and approval of school district plans for expenditure of the ESSER II (\$368 million) and EANS (\$26 million) funds for pandemic related expenses. The amount provided to each district varies across the state.

The Task Force will remain in place until Summer of 2023.

I am happy to be able to serve as a part of this task force.

Unemployment Updates Additional Server Capacity Enables KDOL to Handle More Claims

Expanded Staff and Availability to Help with Volume of Claimant Claims

Governor Laura Kelly announced that the Kansas Department of Labor is upgrading the agency's server capacity and adding more availability, staff and support at the contact center, which is experiencing ongoing increases in call volume from claimants who are in need of speaking with customer service agents to help with their claims.

KDOL's planned server migration this month will expand KDOL's capacity for customer service representatives to simultaneously engage with the software to handle claim data and information, and upload of pertinent claimant documentation.

"The goal in 2020 was to stabilize KDOL's antiquated technology, while concurrently building out new programs for the federal CARES Act programs. While KDOL had their struggles, they were successful and claimants were paid," said Governor Laura Kelly. "In February, the agency added a security solution to stop fraudsters, and now, it is adding more server capacity to be able to better help customer service representatives work with claimants as we move into the 2021 federal extensions."

Details surrounding the increased staffing and support include:

- The onboarding and addition of more than 500 customer service agents and surge staff, with the plan to have these agents deploying on the phones between mid-March and mid-April. The first 77 of these agents will begin supporting the contact center by the beginning of next week.
- Additional training for certain surge staff members

to handle more complex unemployment insurance benefit cases, also to be fully operational by the beginning of April.

- Starting this weekend, contact center representatives will be available on Saturdays between the hours of 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Sundays between 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm; and starting Monday, March 8, weekday hours will be extended from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm.

Details surrounding the impact of auto dialers on KDOL's contact center:

From Feb. 22-Feb.27, KDOL averaged approximately 358,000 unique calls per day into the contact center. Monday, March 1, twenty phone numbers called approximately 22,000 times, and not one of those calls from an auto dialer was able to get through to a customer service agent due to technical restrictions. Over the course of the past week, KDOL has received over 1.3 million calls from auto dialers. These auto dialers keep other claimants from getting into the system to be able to speak with an operator.

"We understand the extraordinary frustration claimants are experiencing trying to get through to our customer service representatives, and we are continuing to bring on new staff to address the historic volume of callers," said Amber Schulz, Acting Secretary of Labor. "The problem is auto dialers are not compatible with our system. Instead of speeding up call times for claimants, they clog the lines and prevent others from calling in."

The agency's busiest times for the contact center are between the hours of 8:00-9:00 a.m. and 1:00 - 2:00 p.m., daily. If possible, claimants should avoid calling during these hours.

KDOL's highest call volume day of the week is typically Monday, the lowest is Friday.

Amelia, KDOL's chat bot, which can be accessed through the agency's web site, can also answer many claimant questions. As of today, Amelia has served under one million total conversations and has exchanged over five million messages with claimants.

Since March 15, 2020, KDOL has paid out over 4.1 million weekly claims totaling

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Senator Pettey... ...from page 4

over \$2.2 billion between regular unemployment and the federal pandemic programs. For more information, or to apply for unemployment benefits, go to www.GetKansasBenefits.gov

Governor Kelly Encourages Kansans to apply for LIEAP

Governor Laura Kelly encouraged Kansans to apply for funds available through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to help pay high electricity bills caused by extremely cold temperatures. Due to extreme cold, Kansans may see higher than usual utility costs.

LIEAP is a federally-funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per-year benefit. The 2021 LIEAP application period is from Monday, January 4, 2021, through Wednesday, March 31, 2021.

Applications must be received before 5:00 PM, March 31, 2021. To find additional information about the LIEAP program and applications, please click here.

In addition to promoting LIEAP assistance, the following actions are currently being taken to address higher than usual utility costs for Kansans:

- The Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC) has instructed utilities under its jurisdiction (Evergy, Liberty, Southern Pioneer, Kansas Gas Service, Black Hills, Atmos, and the City of Eskridge) to defer the extraordinary costs associated with cold weather.

- Utility companies regulated by the KCC are now required to submit what costs they incurred because of the storm, along with a plan detailing what steps they are taking to mitigate the cost to consumers.

- KCC is working on a plan to spread extra costs out over several months or more to soften the impact on customers.

- Governor Kelly and the KCC asked the Federal Regulatory Commission to investigate the events that led to a utility shortage and aid the state in protecting consumers from high costs.

The following additional resources are available for

Kansans who may struggle to pay their utility bills:

- All KCC regulated utilities are offering payment plans to help customers spread out costs. Kansans should contact their utility provider to explore available options.

- Kansans can find a complete list of agencies and organizations providing assistance in their area here.

- Kansans with questions can contact the KCC's Public Affairs and Consumer Protection Office at 800-662-0027 or 785-271-3140.

Governor Laura Kelly Signs Bill to Protect Kansas Cities from Surging Utility Costs

Governor Laura Kelly signed a bill to protect Kansas cities from potential price surges in electricity bills caused by extremely cold temperatures in February.

Senate Bill 88 establishes a \$100 million low-interest loan program for municipal utilities facing high utility bills after last month's frigid temperatures.

"This loan program was absolutely necessary for our cities to manage the surging utility costs," Governor Kelly said. "It gives cities the immediate relief they need to avoid dire financial decisions while we pursue other, long-term solutions."

The bill details that the loan program will be administered by the Kansas State Treasurer's Office using Pooled Money Investment Board (PMIB) funds.

"My administration is working with the State Treasurer's Office to ensure funds can be distributed immediately," Governor Kelly said. "As we move forward, we will continue to seek solutions to protect Kansans from utility cost spikes."

COVID-19 Updates

The big news on the COVID-19 front is the approval by the Food and Drug Administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which provides strong protection against severe illness and death from the virus. What makes the Johnson & Johnson vaccine different from the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines is that it only requires one dose. This means that it can be deployed more efficiently and open up opportunities to vaccinate a wider swath of the public. Kansas expects to receive more than 23,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, for a total number

of approximately 150,000 doses coming into the state this week.

Last week, Governor Kelly signed Executive Order #21-06, which allows state health-care professionals such as pharmacy students, dentists, paramedics and others who may administer injections or inoculations within their scope of practice to administer a coronavirus vaccine that is approved or authorized by the federal Food and Drug Administration. As our vaccine supply ramps up, this will help ensure as many Kansans are vaccinated as quickly as possible.

There is also an update on Governor Kelly's Back to School vaccination plan for teachers: the state expects to complete first doses by the end of this week, and second doses are expected to be complete by the first week of April.

Executive Order to Support Kansas Veterans

Governor Kelly signed Executive Order No. 21-07 to support Kansas veterans through the establishment of a new state veteran's home in northeast Kansas.

EO #21-07 directs the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs to submit an initial application to the United States Department of Veteran Affairs to have up to 65% of construction costs associated with the new veteran's home paid for with federal funds.

Once constructed, this veteran home will serve a significant population in northeast Kansas. Senator Jeff Pittman from District 5 said it just makes sense to take advantage of the VA cost-share program and at least start the process to have a purpose-built modern facility with all the personnel efficiencies that brings.

Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month! Our caucus is a majority-female group, and our six strong, female Senators work hard every day to create a better future for Kansans. I am grateful for their leadership and for the Kansas women who came before us to shape our great state.

Turner Golden Bear's Wrestling

SHE DID IT! Arianna Ortiz is the FIRST EVER Girl's state placer from Turner High! She isn't done yet but just cemented herself into Turner Wrestling History

Congratulations Arianna Ortiz!

Severe Weather... ...from page 1

Texas is not part of the Southwest Power Pool. In typical Texas style, it has its own grid—but that proved ineffective. The problem was not an excessive turn to green energy. Despite warnings from experts, Texas was not prepared for such an emergency. Extreme cold weather caused equipment to malfunction. Now, an independent agency has said the grid has overcharged utilities an estimated \$16 billion. The largest power cooperative in Texas has filed for bankruptcy protection, citing high invoices from the grid.

The Kansas Legislature is providing \$100 million in low-interest loans to help cities who would risk losing their electricity if bills were not paid.

Here in Kansas City, Kansas, the BPU will not disconnect utility service for non-payment for those facing hardship because of the coronavirus pandemic. BPU reminds customers to take advantage of the Kansas Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. The telephone number for LIEAP is 1-800-432-0043.

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

Guest Editorials

Quotes To Ponder

By: Tom Valverde

"I am signing an Executive Order to make it easier to register to vote and improve access to voting." "The legacy of the March in Selma is that, while nothing can stop free people from exercising their most sacred power as a citizen --- there are those who will do Anything they can to take that power away. We Cannot Let Them Succeed!"

President Joe Biden, Sunday March 7th, The 56th Anniversary of the March on Selma.

It is so very important to this country to further help to protect our Right to Vote. The loss of the 2020 Election has resulted in the actions of Republican lawmakers in 43 States, introducing more than 250 Bills which all have provisions that restrict voting access! They made use of the "big lie," the story of how the Election had been rigged and Biden's win was stolen to justify the new Legislation. The "big lie" is now part of the Republican party platform, in spite of the former president's demands that his photo not be used by the RNC. If these perverse people were left to their own schemes and devices, soon this Country would be a Democracy in name only. Republicans have a long history of 'Gerrymandering' or redrawing voting districts to influence the election outcome in their favor. Two weeks ago, Democrats in the House of Representatives passed sweeping Legislation to update procedures and require States to turn over the task of redrawing Congressional districts to independent commissions as a way to prevent the practice of unscrupulous Gerrymandering.

President Biden's Executive Order also directs Federal agencies to submit plans within 200 days that outline steps to expand voter registration and distribute election information to voters. The U.S. Chief information officer is directed by the Executive Order to, modernize Federal websites and digital services which provide voting information. "Everyone should be able to vote and have their vote counted." "It is shameful what we see Republicans doing now to undermine that basic tenet of democracy." Quote by Mark Elias, DNC Election lawyer.

Nearly six decades after Selma, the fight for equal Voting Rights for all Americans is still an on-going battle. And as President Biden said, "We cannot let them succeed!" Wouldn't you have thought that the United States would be beyond all of these Election maneuvering efforts by the second decade of the 21st Century? The paths taken by the two Political parties, since the November Election has let us know the True nature of each Political party. Scheming in order to win, is no better than Fraud! We Are better than that, and we all deserve better from our elected officials in Washington DC.

Travel Interest Growing Steadily: Vaccine Roll Out Resulting in Increased Travel Optimism

Survey finds 60% intend to travel for leisure in the next three months

March 11, 2021 – One year after the COVID-19 pandemic upended plans for travelers in Kansas and throughout the world, there are new signs that travel dreams won't be deferred. The weekly survey, Coronavirus Travel Sentiment Index, conducted by Destination Analysts and released March 8, 2021, found that the majority of respondents say they are ready to travel. This survey, which tracks how Americans feel about the pandemic and the safety of traveling both currently and in the future, coincides with the steadily increasing requests for trip information being made to AAA travel agents.

“As the vaccine continues to roll out across the country, travel dreams are beginning to optimistically seem more realistic. Well over half, 60% of Americans say they will be traveling for leisure in the next three months, according to a survey done less than a week ago,” said Shawn Steward, AAA Kansas spokesman.

Even more encouraging, an impressive 84% of those surveyed have at least tentative plans to travel in 2021. “The travel industry continues to see a parallel between the vaccine roll out and increased optimism among the traveling public, and a greater comfort level

from travelers seeking to book for the summer or fall of this year,” said AAA Kansas' Steward.

How comfortable are people traveling and when? What about Spring Break?

When it comes to Spring Break 2021, people seem to be holding off on travel and will be staying home, with just 14% of Americans planning to travel for Spring Break, according to the survey.

But beyond Spring Break, there is renewed optimism and a notable change in how safe people feel about travel activities. Last March/April, when the pandemic hit, only 30% of people surveyed felt safe traveling, now 40% feel it is safe to do so. This comfort level is likely to continue to increase as more people are vaccinated.

The Destination Analysts survey from two weeks ago (February 28th) also revealed how travelers feel about when traveling will feel more “normal” and their confidence has continued to increase as the months pass. A total of 36% believe travel activities will return to normal in the June-August time frame, while an even greater percentage, 42%, see fall as the travel sweet spot. In summary, more than three quarters of those in the survey believe that by this fall travel will feel more like what they are accustomed to.

“Clearly this summer and fall will see more people traveling, addressing their need to get away for a break from everyday stressors. AAA expects pent up demand and higher comfort levels among travelers to result in a surge of booking in the coming months,” Steward added. “Traveling dates will vary, according to destination and confidence, with some bookings for this summer and fall and trips for 2022 and beyond.”

What is impacting the decision to travel?

- Continually increasing numbers of administered vaccinations

- Increased level of comfort/safety by travelers

- Pent up demand, the need for a break from COVID and other stressors

- Travel deals: 45% say that travel discounts make them more likely to travel in next three months (Destination Analysts)

“While the decision to travel is a personal one, those who are comfortable traveling will find some great deals as vacation destinations seek to lure travelers back,” AAA Kansas' Steward added.

Where are people going? AAA Travel agents report that...

- Top Destinations: Caribbean, Mexico, Florida as traveler seek fun and sun

- USA destinations: Rediscovering AMERICA continues to be a theme as it was last summer

- Great American Road Trip: The resurgence of road trips, where travelers can control their personal space and enjoy the adventures of the US is expected this year.

- National Parks: Expected to be popular as they allow for family fun and social distancing

These trends are echoed locally, according to Wichita-based AAA Travel agent Matt Bert.

“We have had a number requests for Caribbean and Mexico since many of those countries are open,” Bert said. “We've seen more interest in Key West and Destin, along with Hawaii, more this year than before. I've personally booked 10 trips in the past month or so that all depart at the end of May. We've already booked a few fall trips and even some for Spring Break 2022 – this one specifically a guided 1-week tour of Costa Rica, geared for a family with children.”

AAA's Bert also pointed out that even though some cruise lines have canceled Alaska sailings for this summer, “Alaska is still open, and you can still travel to Anchorage and take a train to Denali and Fairbanks. There are still plenty of guided tours for people to experience Alaska, and they might actually see more on a land tour than on a cruise ship. We can also help arrange a completely private or custom tour of Alaska as well.”

AAA Kansas Travel staff have also been busy helping travelers map out road trips and book hotel stays in a variety of U.S. locations including California, Colorado, Florida, Texas and Washington, among other destinations, Bert added.

What do travelers need to know as they confirm travel plans for 2021 and beyond?

The CDC continues to urge Americans to delay traveling, warning that doing so increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.

Knowledge is more critical than ever when deciding when and where to travel. On March 1st, for example, the CDC added Curacao, Antigua and Barbudato Level 4: COVID-19 VERY HIGH status, warning that travelers should avoid all travel to these destinations. The Bahamas are also still on a Level 3 –HIGH designation where travelers are advised to avoid all nonessential travel.

For those who choose to travel, current CDC guidelines and requirements include the following:

- Travel Restrictions – State and local governments may have travel restrictions in place. Check the CDC's travel planner linking to state and local health departments or refer to AAA's COVID-19 Travel Restrictions Map and TripTik.AAA.com for the latest travel restrictions and to help determine which rest stops, gas stations, restaurants and hotels are open along your route if driving to your destination. Prepare to be flexible, as restrictions and policies may change during your trip.

- COVID-19 Vaccines – If you are eligible, consider getting vaccinated for COVID-19. The CDC says to wait two weeks after getting your second dose to travel for your body to build protection after vaccination. Even if you've been vaccinated, continue to follow all official travel requirements and guidelines.

- Testing – The CDC recommends taking a viral COVID-19 test 1 to 3 days before your trip. Do not travel if you test positive. Keep a copy of your negative test results with you during your trip and make plans to get tested again with a viral test 3 to 5 days after you return. Self-quarantine for a full seven days after trip, even if your test is negative. If you don't get tested, the CDC advises staying home and self-quarantining for 10 days.

Tom's Tasty Treats

By: Tom Valverde

This week's tasty treat recipe is always an easy to make, scrumptious, favorite. Perfect anytime, and especially in the early Spring. A great dessert for Easter also. Please give this recipe a try, you will be glad that you did!

Lemon Pound Cake With Lemon Glaze

Ingredients:

1 c Butter
2 1/2 c Sugar
3 lg. Eggs
1 t Vanilla
1 t Lemon Extract
1 c Lemon Yogurt*
1 T Lemon Rind, finely grated
Juice of 2 Lemons
1/3 c Milk
3 c Flour
1 t Baking Powder
1/2 t Baking Soda
1/2 t Salt
Yellow food coloring
* 1 c Sour Cream may be used instead

Glaze:

1 c Powdered Sugar
2-3 T Lemon juice.
1/2 t Lemon Extract

Directions:

Set oven to 350°. Grease Bundt pan with Crisco and dust with flour. Or use 2 loaf pans

All ingredients should be at room temperature.

Cream the butter and sugar until fluffy and creamy; beat 4 minutes. Beat in the eggs, one at a time beating well after each addition. Beat in the vanilla, lemon extract, lemon juice and the grated rind.

In a large bowl combine and whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. On low speed, add the flour mixture alternately with the yogurt and milk. Beat until just combined. If you desire a cake that is more yellow in color, add 4-6 drops yellow food coloring and mix in until blended.

Spoon the batter into the prepared pan. Smooth the top and tap the pan on the counter to help release any air pockets.

Bake at 350° for 50-60 minutes. Test with a wooden skewer; cake is done when it comes out clean.

Place the cake on a rack to cool for ten minutes. Invert the cake onto the rack and cool completely.

Mix the glaze in a small bowl. Drizzle over the cooled cake.

This cake is the taste of Springtime! If you want to “gild the lily” serve with real whipped cream and some sliced strawberries or one or two spoonfuls of fresh blueberries. No need to worry about keeping, the cake will be all gone after it's enjoyed by your friends and family! Happy Spring!

LEGAL PUBLICATION

LEGAL PUBLICATION

ACCEPTING SEALED BIDS

The Board of Education, Unified School District No. 500, Kansas City, KS will accept sealed bids for: IFB 21-006 – RTU Replacement – Various Locations. Sealed bids should be addressed to: Purchasing Department, Board of Education, 2010 N. 59th Street, Room 370, Kansas City, KS 66109 - “IFB No. 21-006 – RTU Replacement”

Pre-Bid Conference: 2220 N 59th St, Ste. 229, Kansas City, KS 66104 03/18/21 @ 9 AM

Proposals will be opened 03/31/2021 @ 10:00 AM in the Purchasing Office.

Solicitation Documents Available at: www.kckps.org

(First published 3-18-21)

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