



Higher gas bills expected in next couple of months

Predictions of higher natural gas bills this winter are coming true but, Bob Helm with Midwest Energy in Hays said the increase is not as big as the price spike in 2001.

“That spike took natural gas commodity prices to nearly \$10 per unit,” he said.

This year, natural gas prices are expected to be nearly half that, but still approximately 10-15 percent higher than last year. Combined with a colder than normal January beginning, customers can expect to see higher bills the next couple of months.

Helm said there are several reasons for the escalating cost. One, there is increased demand for natural gas to fuel electric power plants. Natural gas-fired electricity production is faster and cheaper to build than coal or nuclear power plants.

“It also is more environmentally friendly, can be built in smaller units and is under less risk of regulatory disallowance,” he said.

Two, exploration and production of natural gas has increased the last few years, but has not yet caught up with demand. Three, a cold start to the winter has fueled the price spike.

He said according to Midwest Energy analysts, the total price of the natural gas to western Kansas customers may increase by as much as 10-15 percent more than last year.

“Even though the price of the natural gas is increasing, other portions of the bill remain the same. The actual commodity portion of the bill is approximately 60 percent of the entire bill,” he said.

Midwest Energy’s delivery charges are the lowest in the state

“Even though the price of the natural gas is increasing, other portions remain the same.”

Bob Helm,
Midwest Energy

and will not increase. The price the company pays for natural gas is based on market forces and supply and demand. Midwest Energy does not make a profit on the cost of the gas.

Helm said one concern in western Kansas is the fact that the last several winters have been relatively mild.

Even with constant prices, a return to normal or colder than normal weather will cause higher use and that will result in higher bills this winter.

“If customers have difficulty paying higher bills this winter heating season, they should check with their local Midwest Energy office,” he said. Midwest Energy has several options available to provide assistance. One of the best options is to apply for the Budget Billing Plan.

This allows for a twelve-month average bill, thus smoothing out the peaks and valleys of high bills in both the summer and winter.

“There is no doubt bills will be higher this winter. How much is somewhat uncertain. Customers should try to do all they can now to manage the increase so the impact is lessened on overall household budgets,” Helm said.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Members of the 2003-04 Leadership Thomas County class attended the Colby City Council meeting on Tuesday to learn more about how city government operates. In recent weeks, the leadership class has had the opportunity to interview professionals in the educational field to include the Rexford and Colby super-

intendents, Roger Baskerville and Kirk Nielsen respectively, along with principals in the Colby Public School system and Dr. Mikel Ary, president of Colby Community College. Class members in the leadership program also participated in a government day last month.

Governor says highway program ‘unrealistic’

TOPEKA (AP) — The state had “unrealistic expectations” when it began its comprehensive transportation plan, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said Tuesday in touting her proposal to issue \$465 million in bonds to keep the program on track.

Legislators created the \$13 billion, 10-year program in 1999, anticipating that the state would dedicate a portion of its sales tax revenues to highway, airport and public transit improvements. However, legislators have diverted some of

those revenues to other government programs.

“This plan was passed, I think, with unrealistic expectations about all the finances,” Sebelius said at a news conference.

“What we tried to do is say, ‘What

is realistic?’”

Sebelius said her proposal would allow completion of all major projects promised in 1999 while dedicating less sales tax revenue to transportation, so that other government programs do not suffer.

Check each issue of the Free Press for additional TV Listings

TV LISTINGS sponsored by the COLBY FREE PRESS

WEEKDAYS												JANUARY 20 - JANUARY 26											
	6 AM		6:30	7 AM		7:30	8 AM		8:30	9 AM		9:30	10 AM		10:30	11 AM		11:30					
KLBY/ABC 4 8	News			Good Morning America						John Walsh Show			The View			Holly-wood		News					
KSNK/NBC 3 5	News Cont'd			Today									Live With Regis and Kelly			Martha Stewart Living							
KBSL/CBS 12 11	News						Early Show			700 Club			Price Is Right			Young and the Restless							
K15CG (3)	World News		Priscilla-Yoga	Body Electric	Caillou		Boohbah		Barney-Friends	Dragon Tales	Lions		Sesame Street		Clifford-Red	Teletub-bies							
WGN (13)	Creflo A. Dollar Jr.		Believer Voice	Celebrity Justice	Hillbil-lies	Hillbil-lies	Happy Days		Matlock			In the Heat of the Night			Rockford Files								
NICK (29)	Oddpar-ents		Rocket Power	Rugrats		Spon-geBob	Max & Ruby	Rubba-dubbers		Dora the Explorer	Blue's Clues	Dora the Explorer	Blue's Clues	Little Bill		Varied							
FAM (30)	Digimon		Bey-blade	Power Rangers		Digimon	Growing Pains	700 Club	Varied Programs				7th Heaven		Varied	Full House							
USA (31)	JAG			Nash Bridges		Varied		Movie		Varied Programs													
TBS (37)	Saved by Bell		Saved by Bell	Movie						Dawson's Creek			Dawson's Creek		Saved by Bell	Saved by Bell							
TNT (38)	Lost World			Pretender			Charmed			ER			ER			Judging Amy							
DSC (42)	Paid Program		Paid Program	Paid Program		Paid Program		Assignment Discovery		Christopher Lowell			It's Christopher Lowell!		Rally Round the House								
A&E (47)	Movie			Movie						Murder, She Wrote			Murder, She Wrote		City Confidential								
ESPN (49)	SportsCenter			SportsCenter			Sports-Center		Varied	SportsCenter			SportsCenter		Sports-Center	Varied							
HBO (7)	Movie Cont'd		Varied Programs								Movie		Varied Programs										
DISN (17)	JoJo's Circus		Stanley	Wiggles	JoJo's Circus		Wiggles	Stanley		Rolie Polie	Rolie Polie	Out of the Box		PB&J Otter	Wiggles	JoJo's Circus							
MAX (21)	Movie Cont'd		Varied Programs												Movie								

WEEKDAYS													JANUARY 20 - JANUARY 26												
	12 PM		12:30	1 PM		1:30	2 PM		2:30	3 PM		3:30	4 PM		4:30	5 PM		5:30							
KLBY/ABC 4 6	All My Children			One Life to Live			General Hospital			Dr. Phil			Judge Judy		Judge Judy		News		ABC Wld News						
KSNK/NBC 9 9	News		Family Feud		Days of Our Lives			Passions			Inside Edition		Family Feud		Million-aire Jeopardy!		News		NBC News						
KBSL/CBS 12 11	News		Bold, Beautiful		As the World Turns			Guiding Light			People's Court			Oprah Winfrey			News		CBS News						
K15CG 3	Reading Rainbow		Mister Rogers		Varied Programs					George Shrinks		Beren. Bears		Liberty's Kids		Cyber-chase		Arthur		Zoom		Business			
WGN 13	News			In the Heat of the Night			Street Smarts		Happy Days		Cosby Show		Cosby Show		Fresh Prince		Fresh Prince		Home Improve.		Will & Grace				
NICK 29	Bob the Builder		Dora the Explorer		Rugrats		Rugrats		Hey Arnold!		Yakkity Yak		Oddparents		U-Pick		SpongeBob		Amanda		U-Pick		Hey Arnold!		
FAM 30	Family Matters		Family Matters		Step by Step		Step by Step		So Little Time		Full House		7th Heaven			Switched!		Knock First		Full House		Full House			
USA 31	JAG Cont'd		Varied Programs										PGA Golf			Varied Programs			Walker, Texas Ranger						
TBS 37	Cosby		Cosby Show		Cosby Show		Fresh Prince		Fresh Prince		Steve Harvey		Steve Harvey		Drew Carey		Drew Carey		Home Improve.		Home Improve.		Seinfeld		
TNT 38	Law & Order			NYPD Blue			NYPD Blue			Judging Amy			Angel			Charmed									
DSC 42	Surprise by Design			Surprise by Design			Rally Round the House			Double Agents			Varied Programs												
A&E 47	American Justice			Movie						Murder, She Wrote			Murder, She Wrote			City Confidential									
ESPN 49	NFL Live		Varied		Tennis								Varied		Around the Horn		Interrup-tion		SportsCenter						
HBO 7	Movie Cont'd		Varied Programs			Movie		Varied Programs					Movie		Varied Programs										
DISN 17	Stanley		Rolie Polie		Winnie-Pooh		House of Mouse		House of Mouse		Recess		Lilo & Stitch		Recess		Kim Possible		Proud Family		Sister, Sister		Even Stevens		
MAX 21	Movie Cont'd			Varied		Movie					Varied Programs			Movie		Varied Programs			Movie		Varied				

THURSDAY						JANUARY 22						
	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
KLBY/ABC (4) (6)	(5:59) News	Ent. Tonight	Billy Graham Crusade: (CC)		Extreme Makeover (N) (CC)		Prime-time Thursday (CC)		News (CC)	Nightline (CC)	Jimmy Kimmel!	
KSNK/NBC (8) (9)	News	Wheel of Fortune	Friends (CC)	Good Morning	Will & Grace (N) (CC)	Scrubs (N) (CC)	ER Dear Abby (CC)		News (CC)	Tonight Show (N) (CC)	Late Night (N)	
KBSL/CBS (12) (11)	News (CC)	Friends (CC)	Without a Trace No Mas (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation		Without a Trace Prodigy (CC)		News (CC)	Late Show Matthew Broderick. (N) (CC)	Late Late	
K15CG (3)	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer (CC)	Sun-flower	Kansas Spotlight		New This Old House: Hour (CC)		Frontline: Chasing Saddam's Weapons		As Time Goes By	Keeping Up	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)	
WGN (13)	Becker (CC)	Home Improve.	Movie: Welcome to Sarajevo *** (1997, Drama) Stephen Dillane, Woody Harrelson.				News (CC)		Becker (CC)	Will & Grace	The Sharon Osbourne Show (N)	
NICK (29)	Rugrats (CC)	SpongeBob	Oddparents	Sabrina-Witch	Full House	Full House	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	Roseanne	Roseanne	Cosby Show	Cosby Show
FAM (30)	7th Heaven I Really Do (CC)	Movie: Fletch Lives (1989) A reporter uses a host of disguises to nab a murderer.				Whose Line? (CC)		Whose Line? (CC)	700 Club (CC)		America's Funniest Home Videos (CC)	
USA (31)	JAG The King of the Fleas (CC)	Law & Order: Special Victims		Movie: Six Days, Seven Nights ***½ (1998) A pilot and a high-strung editor are marooned on an island.				A pilot and a high-strung editor are marooned on an island.		Movie: The Real McCoy ***½ (1993, Drama) Kim Basinger.		
TBS (37)	Seinfeld (CC)	Friends (CC)	Movie: Wild Wild West *** (1999, Western) Will Smith, Kevin Kline, (CC)				Movie: Jumanji (1995) A sinister board game puts its players in mortal jeopardy.				Movie: Wild Wild West *** (1999) (CC)	
TNT (38)	NBA Basketball: Sacramento Kings at Cleveland Cavaliers. Gund Arena. (Live) (CC)				NBA Basketball: Los Angeles Lakers at Dallas Mavericks. American Airlines Center. (Live) (CC)				Inside the NBA (Live) (CC)			
DSC (42)	New Detectives: Forensic Science		Extreme: Sense's Touch (N)		Extreme: Sense's Vision (N)		More Than Human A Mighty Wind (CC)		Extreme: Sense's Touch		Extreme: Sense's Vision	
A&E (47)	American Justice		Biography Simon Cowell (CC)		Movie: My Cousin Vinny *** (1992) An inept lawyer tries to free his cousin from a Dixie jail. Joe Pesci.				Cold Case		Biography Simon Cowell (CC)	
ESPN (49)	NFL Live (N) (CC)	NHL Hockey: Philadelphia Flyers at New York Rangers. Madison Square Garden. (Live) (CC)		Baseball Tonight (Live) (CC)		SportsCenter (Live) (CC)		Rome Is Burning (N) (CC)		Rome Is Burning (N) (CC)		
HBO (7)	(5:15) Movie: The Time Machine ***½		Inside the NFL (CC)		Movie: Showtime: ***½ (2002, Comedy) Robert De Niro, (CC)		Big Bounce		Taxicab Confessions 2003		Inside the NFL (CC)	
DISN (17)	Sister, Sister	Lizzie McGuire	Movie: Pixel Perfect (2004) A hologram sings for a struggling band. Ricky Ullman.				Sister, Sister	Boy Mts. World	Kim Possible	Proud Family	Even Stevens	Sister, Sister
MAX (21)	(5:00) Movie: A Beautiful Mind (CC)		Movie: Super Troopers *** (2001) Budget cuts threaten the jobs of five state troopers.				Movie: Ballistic: Ecks vs. Seaver *** (2002, Action) (CC)		All Nude Peep Show		Movie:	

FRIDAY						JANUARY 23						
	6 PM	6:30	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM	11:30
KLBY/ABC (4) (6)	(5:59) News	Ent. Tonight	George Lopez	Married-Kellys	Hope & Faith (N)	Life With Bonnie	20/20 (CC)		News (CC)	Nightline (CC)	Jimmy Kimmel Live (N) (CC)	
KSNK/NBC (8) (9)	News	Wheel of Fortune	Dateline NBC (CC)		Ed (N) (CC)		Third Watch Collateral Damage		News (CC)	Tonight Show (CC)		Late Night (N)
KBSL/CBS (12) (11)	News (CC)	Friends (CC)	Joan of Arcadia Just Say No (CC)		JAG Secret Agent Man (CC) (DVS)		Handler Under Color of Law (CC)		News (CC)	Late Show Planet. (N) (CC)	Late Late	
K15CG (3)	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer (CC)	Wash. Week	Wall-Fortune	Market-Market	Kansas Week		Now With Bill Moyers (N) (CC)		As Time Goes By	New Red Green	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)	
WGN (13)	Becker (CC)	Home Improve.	Movie: That Dam Cat ★★ (1997) A feisty feline holds the key to a kidnapping case.				In the Heat of the Night (CC)		Becker (CC)	Will & Grace	The Sharon Osbourne Show (N)	
NICK (29)	Rugrats (CC)	SpongeBob	Oddparents	Teenage Robot	Adventure-Jimmy	Chalk-Zone	Cosby Show	Cosby Show	Rose-anne	Rose-anne	Cosby Show	Cosby Show
FAM (30)	7th Heaven I Really Did (CC)	Movie: Beverly Hills Cop II ★★½ (1987, Comedy) Eddie Murphy, Ronny Cox.		Whose Line?		Whose Line?		700 Club (CC)		Paid Program		Paid Program
USA (31)	JAG Vanished (CC)	Law & Order: Special Victims		Law & Order: Special Victims		Monk Mr. Monk and the Three Pies (CC)		Law & Order: Special Victims		Monk Mr. Monk and the Three Pies (CC)		
TBS (37)	Seinfeld (CC)	Friends (CC)	Movie: The 6th Day ★★½ (2000) A helicopter pilot is cloned without his consent. Arnold Schwarzenegger.				Movie: The 6th Day ★★½ (2000) A helicopter pilot is cloned without his consent. Arnold Schwarzenegger.					
TNT (38)	Law & Order Mother's Milk	Movie: The Mask of Zorro ★★ (1998, Adventure) Zorro's protege crosses swords with a returning tyrant.				Movie: The Mask of Zorro ★★ (1998, Adventure) Zorro's protege crosses swords with a returning tyrant.						
DSC (42)	Monster Garage Radical vehicles.	Gold Star Racing (N)		American Chopper POW/MIA 2		American Hot Rod (N)		Gold Star Racing		American Chopper POW/MIA 2		
A&E (47)	American Justice: Knew Too Much	Poirot Double Sin (CC)		Poirot Four and Twenty Blackbirds		Between the Lines Secrets and Lies (N)		Third Watch After Time (CC)		Poirot Double Sin (CC)		
ESPN (49)	Sports-Center	NBA	NBA Basketball: Houston Rockets at Indiana Pacers. Conseco Fieldhouse. (Live) (CC)				NBA Basketball: San Antonio Spurs at Phoenix Suns. America West Arena. (Live) (CC)					
HBO (7)	Inside the NFL (CC)		Real Time (Live) (CC)		Movie: The Ring ★★½ (2002, Horror) Naomi Watts, Martin Henderson. (CC)			Curb-Enthsm		Real Time (CC)		Movie: Rage ★½
DISN (17)	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Movie: Toy Story ★★ (1995) Voices of Tom Hanks.			Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian	Barbar-ian
MAX (21)	(5:15) Movie: Road to Perdition (2002)		Movie: The Wash ★ (2001, Comedy) Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg. (CC)			Movie: Executive Decision ★★ (1996, Suspense) Kurt Russell, Halle Berry. (CC)						