

Think carefully when you get health insurance

With health insurance in the national spotlight, Kansas consumers have much to think about in providing themselves and their loved ones with potential coverage.

Whether you have insurance coverage through your employer (as more than half of Kansans do) or you have to provide it for yourself and your family (which a little more than five percent of our state's citizens do), it's important to think about what you want and what you need.

Below is a list of ideas that are good conversation starters for considering your coverage.

- Make a list of the personal information for yourself and family, including Social Security Num-



Sandy Praeger

• **Kansas Ins. Commissioner**

bers, bank account information and the amount of income from your W-2.

- Assess your prescription drug requirements, including name (brand or generic) and dosage. Does the health insurance plan you are considering cover your required drugs?

- Review your financial condition. Are you able to pay the deductible when at your provid-

ers' office, and how much would you be comfortable paying? Do you want a health insurance plan with low or high deductibles and copays? Remember, a low deductible will increase your monthly premiums, while a high deductible will have lower monthly premiums.

- Know that you are able to purchase health insurance policies outside of the Health Insurance Marketplace. But if you purchase a health insurance policy through the marketplace, you may pay a lower rate based on your income, and you might be eligible for tax

credits or subsidies.

- Evaluate your health needs. Do you have any chronic health conditions, and/or do you need to visit a physician frequently? Does the health insurance policy cover the services you require?
- Talk to your providers' office to make sure the office is part of the insurance health plan network. Be sure to include hospitals and other providers such as laboratory services. Include any specialty physicians or facilities.
- Penalties for no coverage are set to come into play. If you do not have health insurance by March 31, you may be responsible to pay a penalty to the Internal Revenue Service unless you are eligible for an exemption.

• Learn if your employer will be offering health insurance and if the plan meets the "essential minimum coverage" provision.

• Allow time. Enlist help if necessary through a navigator, an agent, the toll-free federal hotline number of (800) 318-2596 or by calling the Kansas Insurance Department at (800) 432-2484.

• Call the Kansas Insurance Department to verify if an agent is licensed to sell policies on the marketplace; if a navigator is certified and has gone through training to help you; or if you have questions regarding policies or coverage, whether offered through the marketplace or outside it.

- Evaluate the policy after you have received it to make sure it is

the policy that you want.

• Go online to the Kansas Insurance Department's InsureKS.org website to look at the information there that might be useful if you are looking to enroll on the federal health insurance marketplace. There you can use a cost calculator and see rate estimates.

Getting the health insurance you need and want can be a chore, I admit. It means taking personal responsibility to learn about the subject and applying the information to your situation. While time-consuming, it is important for yourself and your family.

Water use on the high plains puts Ogallala aquifer at risk

Significant portions of the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the largest bodies of water in the United States, are at risk of drying up if it continues to be drained at its current rate, scientists at Michigan State University note in a recent article.

In the current issue of *Earth's Future*, a journal of the American Geophysical Union, Michigan State experts proposed alternatives that will halt and hopefully reverse the unsustainable use of water drawing down the aquifer. The Ogallala, also known as the High Plains Aquifer, spans from Texas to South Dakota and drives much of the region's economy.

"Already, there are regions in Texas and Kansas where farmers can't pump enough water to meet the demands of their crops," said Bruno Basso, co-author of the article and a Michigan State ecosystem scientist. "If current withdrawal rates continue, such depletion will expand across extensive portions of the central and southern areas served by the aquifer during the next few decades."

Despite the widespread, rapid decline of the water table, the number of irrigated acres across the region continues to increase,

the article said. The situation isn't completely dire, though, as the National Science Foundation-funded research revealed. Basso, David Hyndman and Anthony Kendall, colleagues and co-authors, offered some policy solutions to avert some aspects of this water crisis.

Federal crop insurance could be changed to allow substantial water reductions, especially for crops categorized as fully irrigated. An example of such a sustainable model was recently proposed by the governor of Kansas. It could save significant amounts of water, and it could be adopted across the region.

Another sustainable approach would be to adopt wholesale precision agriculture strategies. These would allow farmers to identify which areas in fields need more water and fertilizer. New precision agriculture strategies combine GPS technologies with site-specific management to apply optimal amounts of water and nutrients, increasing farmer's profitability and reducing environmental impact.

"When you have a cut in your hand and need disinfectant," said Basso, part of the university's

Global Water Initiative, "you don't dive into a pool of medicine, you apply it only where you need it and in the quantity that is strictly necessary. We can do the same in agricultural now."

Lastly, policies should address the issue in terms of crop yield — more crop per drop of water. Selecting crops with higher density can increase yield and decrease groundwater evaporation. Upgrades in irrigation systems can reduce water loss from 30 percent to almost zero. And careful water management can stop excess water from flooding fields and leaching valuable nutrients from the soil.

Simply put, the current water management strategies of the High Plains Aquifer are unsustainable, the article says. For the region to maintain this water source, there has to be a complete paradigm shift, Basso added.

"We emphasize the critical role of science as a foundation for policies that can help mitigate the disaster that is occurring across this region," Basso said. "Policies solidly grounded in science are critical to ensure long-term sustainability and environmental integrity for future generations."

Carbon monoxide a threat in winter

With the arrival of colder weather comes an increase in the number of fuel-burning appliances being used in the home, which can cause dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

In Kansas, over 500 people have been hospitalized and 4 people have died from carbon monoxide poisoning over the past 10 years.

"Carbon monoxide is a silent killer that often strikes us where we feel most secure, in our homes," says Tom Langer, director of the Bureau of Environmental Health.

Important safety tips to protect families from carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Make sure heating appliances are in good working order and used only in well-ventilated areas.
- Don't run a car engine in the garage, even with the garage doors open. If you need to warm up your

vehicle, move it outside first.

- Install a carbon monoxide alarm outside every sleeping area, on every level of your home and at least 15 feet away from every fuel-burning appliance.

• When you check your smoke alarm batteries each month, check the batteries on your carbon monoxide alarms at the same time. Replace the batteries twice a year.

- Never use an oven to heat your home.

• Use Portable generators outside for proper ventilation, not indoors or in a garage.

• Have all gas, oil or coal burning appliances inspected by a technician every year to ensure they're working correctly and are properly ventilated.

• If more than one person in the home suddenly feels ill for no apparent reason, or if a carbon monoxide alarm goes off, get everyone

outside immediately.

For information about carbon monoxide poisoning, go to www.kdheks.gov/beh/carbon_monoxide.htm or call the Poison Control Hotline at (800) 222-1222.

Farm Bureau wraps the year with 95th annual convention

More than 380 Kansas Farm Bureau members wrapped up business for their annual convention earlier this month after debating and adopting policy statements for the coming year.

These policies will now become the organization's roadmap for the 2014 legislative session.

Topics at the 95th Kansas Farm Bureau annual meeting included protection of private data, expanding opportunities for Kansas agriculture, endangered species policy, transporta-

tion funding and energy.

Montgomery County farmer Rich Felts was re-elected as vice president of the organization. Others reelected to the board of directors include:

On Dec. 3, President Steve Baccus set the stage for challenges from Congress and federal regulators in the upcoming year and encouraged members to continue fighting for agriculture and its rich history.

U.S. Sens. Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts updated members on legislative and regulatory issues

and urged Kansas farmers and ranchers to continue to advocate for their way of life.

Executive Director Dan Yunk was honored with a retirement reception. Members contributed more than \$13,000 to the Kansas Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture at two benefit auctions. Other activities included workshops presented by national experts and Farm Bureau staff. County Farm Bureaus and volunteers were recognized for their 2013 achievements.

Nebraska women use crochet skills to turn plastic grocery bags into beds

Scott Koperski

Beatrice Daily Sun

BEATRICE, Neb. (AP) — A group of Beatrice residents have been meeting monthly for crochet sessions, but these women aren't making quilts.

Instead, they're making bed pads out of recycled plastic grocery bags.

Once assembled, the plastic beds are donated to the Orphan Grain Train, an organization known for providing aid to people in need domestically and worldwide.

The idea seems odd, but group member Carlyn Koenig explained

plastic crocheted beds are a logical alternative for many residents of third-world countries.

"Because they're plastic bags, they don't absorb moisture and can lay on the ground," she told the *Beatrice Daily Sun* (bit.ly/1ikvuMR). "You don't accomplish a whole lot in a day, and it takes a lot of bags, but that's less bags that end up in the landfill."

Koenig isn't sure how many bags it takes to make a four-foot by six-foot bed pad, but fellow crocheter Madeline Schmoltd estimated it takes 150 hours for each quilt.

Many of the people who regularly gather on the last Monday of

the month to work on their projects crochet at home as well.

Schmoltd said it's a good project they enjoy participating in, especially considering the end results will be put to good use.

"If you have the time and talent to do it it's a very rewarding cause," she said. "It makes you feel pretty grateful, thinking that at night some people have to sleep on something like this."

The bags are cut into strips and tied together to be used in the bedding. Volunteers at Beatrice State Developmental Center assist in the process, wrapping the bags into plastic balls for the crocheting process.

Public Notice

Notice Concerning Proposed Kansas Air Quality Construction Permit and Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is soliciting comments regarding a proposed air quality construction permit. Tradewind Energy, Inc., located at 16105 W 113th Street, Suite 105, Lenexa, Kansas, 66219, has applied for an air quality construction permit in accordance with the provisions of K.A.R. 28-19-300 to install 10 new spark ignition Wartsila four stroke lean burn (4SLB) reciprocating internal combustion engine (RICE) electric generating units using pipeline quality natural gas. Each engine will be nominally rated at 9.4 megawatts (MW) of electricity for a combined power output of approximately 94 MW. The facility will also include a 3 million British thermal units (MMBtu) per hour gas heater, a 150 horsepower (hp) emergency fire pump, a 324 hp emergency diesel generator, up to 4 circuit breakers, and a 309,000 gallon fuel oil storage tank. The proposed facility, known as the Lacey Randall Generation Facility, LLC (Lacey Randall Generation), will be located in the Southwest Quarter of Section 17, Township 7 South, Range 33 West, Thomas County, Kansas, approximately 3.5 miles northeast of Colby, Kansas.

Emissions of particulate matter (PM), PM equal to or less than 10 microns in diameter (PM10), PM equal to or less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), sulfur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), sulfuric acid mist (H2SO4), hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) and greenhouse gases (GHGs) were evaluated during the permit review process.

The proposed permit is to be issued in accordance with the provisions of K.A.R. 28-19-350, Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD), which adopts the federal standards, procedures and requirements of 40 CFR 52.21 by reference. These air quality regulations apply to major stationary emission sources located in areas designated as "attainment" under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA). Attainment areas are areas where the air quality meets or is better than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The PSD regulations require evaluation of emission reduction techniques to identify the best available control technology (BACT) for each regulated pollutant, including GHGs, for which the emission rate exceeds the PSD significant level. The purpose of BACT is to affect the maximum degree of reduction

achievable, taking into account energy, environmental and economic impacts for each regulated pollutant under review. Evaluation of the estimated emissions for the proposed Lacey Randall Generation project indicates that the emission rates of NOx, CO, PM, PM10, PM 2.5, VOCs and GHGs all exceed the significance levels. The facility conducted the required BACT analyses. The department has reviewed the BACT analyses for the Lacey Randall Generation Project and concurs with its findings as follows:

- For the Wartsila 4SLB RICE, lean burn combustion with clean burn technology and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) is BACT for NOx, oxidation catalyst and good combustion practices are BACT for CO and VOC, combustion controls and low ash fuels are BACT for PM, PM10 and PM2.5, use of efficient lean burn engines, use of pipeline quality natural gas fuel, and good combustion practices are BACT for GHGs;
- For the fuel gas heater, low NOx burners are BACT for NOx, good combustion practices is BACT for CO, VOC, PM, PM10, and PM2.5, and use of pipeline quality natural gas as fuel and good combustion practices are BACT for GHGs.
- For the emergency diesel generator, combustion control is BACT for NOx, CO, VOC, PM, PM10, PM2.5, and selection of the most efficient engines that meet the project needs is BACT for GHGs;
- For the emergency fire pump, combustion control is BACT for NOx, CO, VOC, PM, PM10, PM2.5, and selection of the most efficient engines that meet the project needs is BACT for GHGs.
- For the circuit breakers, use of state-of-the-art enclosed sulfur hexafluoride technology with leak detection systems and a density monitor alarm system is BACT for GHGs.
- For the fuel oil storage tank, the use of a submerged fill pipe is BACT for VOC.

An ambient impact analysis was performed on the potential air emissions of NO2, PM10, PM2.5, and CO from the Lacey Randall Generation project.

- Detailed modeling for the 1-hour and annual NO2 demonstrated that the proposed Lacey Randall Generation project will not cause or significantly contribute to any violation of the 1-hour or annual NO2 NAAQS. It also demonstrated that 4.44% of the annual NO2 Class II area maximum allowable increment is expected to be consumed by the proposed project. EPA has not established a Class II area maximum

allowable increment for 1-hour NO2. Accordingly, no calculation of the potential consumption of such increment is possible.

- Detailed modeling for PM10 demonstrated that the proposed Lacey Randall Generation project will not cause or significantly contribute to any violation of the 24-hour or annual PM10 NAAQS. It also demonstrated that 25.9% of the 24-hour PM10 and 6.41% of the annual PM10 Class II area maximum allowable increment is expected to be consumed by the proposed project.
- Detailed modeling for PM2.5 demonstrated the proposed Lacey Randall Generation project will not cause or significantly contribute to any violation of the 24-hour or annual PM2.5 NAAQS. It also demonstrated that 86.2% of the 24-hour PM2.5 and 27.2% of the annual PM2.5 Class II area maximum allowable increment are expected to be consumed by the proposed project.
- The CO screening modeling analysis demonstrated no significant impact on the 1-hour or 8-hour ambient air quality and that the emissions would not cause or contribute to any violation of ambient air standards. EPA has not established any Class II maximum allowable increments for CO. Accordingly, no calculation of the potential consumption of such increment is possible.
- An analysis of visibility was conducted for Scott State Park. The VISCSCREEN model results indicate no exceedances of the screening criteria. No adverse impacts on soils and vegetation in the area are expected.
- Any federal land manager who has reason to believe they may have a class I area adversely impacted by the emissions from the proposed project has the opportunity to present KDHE with a demonstration of the adverse impact on the air quality-related values of the federal class I area during the comment period.

A public comment period has been established to allow citizens the opportunity to express any concerns they may have about this proposed permitting action. The public comment period is to begin on December 19, 2013, and will end on January 21, 2014 at noon. All comments should be submitted in writing to Mindy Bowman, Bureau of Air, 1000 SW Jackson, Suite 310, Topeka, KS 66612-1366.

Any member of the public may request to hold a public hearing to provide comments on the proposed issuance of the draft air quality construction permit. A written request to hold a public hearing should be sent to the attention of Mindy Bowman at the address

listed above or by FAX to (785) 291-3953 and must be received by noon on January 21, 2014. If a pertinent request is received, a public hearing is tentatively scheduled by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), on Wednesday, January 22, 2014, beginning at 5:00 p.m. and continuing until audience members have an opportunity to submit comments. The hearing is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Colby Community Bldg. in the Little Theater Room, located at 285 East 5th Street, Colby, Kansas, 67701. If no pertinent requests to hold the public hearing are received by noon January 21, 2014, the public hearing will be cancelled. A notice of the cancellation will be posted at the KDHE website at <http://www.kdheks.gov/bar/publicnotice.html>

If a hearing is conducted, all interested parties will be given a reasonable opportunity to present their views orally or by submission of written materials during the hearing. In order to give all parties an opportunity to present their views, it may be necessary to limit oral presentations to a specific time limit. Any individual with a disability may request accommodation in order to participate in the public hearing and may request the proposed materials in an accessible format. Requests for accommodation must be made no later than Monday, January 13, 2014 by contacting the Bureau of Air at (785) 296-6421.

A copy of the proposed permit, permit application, all supporting documentation, and all information relied upon during the permit application review process for the PSD permit are available for public review for a period of 30 days from the date of publication during normal business hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM) at the KDHE, Bureau of Air (BOA), 1000 SW Jackson, Suite 310, Topeka, KS 66612-1366 and at the KDHE Northwest District Office, 2301 East 13th Street, Hays, KS 67601-2651. To obtain or review the proposed permit and supporting documentation, contact Mindy Bowman, (785) 296-6421, at the KDHE central office, or Larissa Parker, (785) 625-5663, at the KDHE Northwest District Office. The standard departmental cost will be assessed for any copies requested.

These same materials are available, free of charge, at the KDHE Bureau of Air website, <http://www.kdheks.gov/bar/index.html>

Robert Moser, MD, Secretary Kansas Department of Health and Environment

(Published in the Colby Free Press on Thursday, December 19, 2013)



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